

**Hurst Green**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Mar 20**  
**Do not grow weary**  
**2 Thess 3**

So we come to the end of our tour of the Epistles to the Thessalonians and what a lot it has taught us!

I wonder what you have remembered from it. Don't worry I am not asking you to call out it might embarrass both you and I!

The letters have been full of practical ideas for us and I have used the constant theme of "Live the life" because that is what our faith, and these letters, are all about.

Too often Christianity is portrayed as a list of things you mustn't do – a list of Nos! In fact it is a list of things you can be doing and things you can be doing even better – hence that verse

**1 Thessalonians 4:1 (ANIV)**

*~~1 Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.~~*

God does not want a cowed people living in fear because we have a God and a faith based on love and as John tells us:

**1 John 4:18 (ANIV)**

*18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. ~~The one who fears is not made perfect in love.~~*

And, as we encourage one another to do more and more, we are called to live the life. That is a life full of love and joy as we support one another and make a difference because of who we are and how we live.

So we come to our final chapter and our bibles show this in three sections – Request for prayer, Warning against Idleness and final greetings and while we will touch on these I have chosen a title of "Do Not grow weary" for verse 13 is the key to this chapter

**2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ANIV)**

*13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.*

A great speaker I once heard put it this way "You may grow weary in the work but you must not grow weary of the work." While we may get tired because of all the work we are doing we should never be tired of the work we do.

The work we do in encouraging one another, building one another up, loving each other and loving our neighbour as ourselves is exciting stuff in itself and we should never be tired of this.

The amount of effort we put into may leave us, at times, tired but God knew that and had a plan for it from the beginning:

**Exodus 20:8-9 (ANIV)**

*8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work,*

God knows we need our times of rest and instructed us to set aside one day a week which is a skill we tend to have forgotten.

Actually he went further and instructed us to have Sabbath years but we are a long way from that.

The important thing is that God knows we need our rest and does not ask us to burn ourselves out but he does ask us to do the good works he has laid before us.

So in this chapter firstly Paul asks that we pray.

How quickly do we forget the need to pray preferring to dash around “doing” when we should spend some time in prayer to set ourselves up to do .

Remember the line we sing

“O what needless pains we bear all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer”

The lyrics we sing have meaning!

And Paul asks for prayer in a number of areas

First Paul asks that:

**2 Thessalonians 3:1 (ANIV)**

<sup>1</sup> *Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you.*

This surely is the prayer that we should all be using frequently.

That the gospel we live and preach may spread rapidly and be respected rather than abused.

The first part may happen as we pray for revival and among the prophetic in this country there is a feeling that we may be on the edge of a moving in the Spirit. That would be an answer to a prayer I have held dear for most of my Christian life but we shall see.

But we should pray most earnestly for the spreading of the message of the Lord and we should pray for it personally – there’s the rub!

While we pray for our neighbours, who we love as ourselves, we need to be praying for our opportunities to preach the gospel to them but we also need to be praying for the miraculous – for healings and the miraculous powers which will show the power of our God to those around us that they may believe. Those things we should earnestly desire!

Our prayers reflect our hearts and the goals we have in our lives.

Have you thought about your prayers recently? What is the theme of them? Are you praying God’s Kingdom come?

May we pray that the word of our Lord may be spread mightily throughout the world and that his word may be honoured.

Secondly he asks for prayer for spiritual strength. The Lord is faithful and will strengthen and protect us.

That is also a prayer we should also join in on. It is one of those that intellectually we may agree with but we need it to be a heartfelt prayer – a prayer really believed.

**2 Thessalonians 3:5 (ANIV)**

<sup>5</sup> *May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.*

If we need help – and hands up who does not – the Lord will direct our hearts. The Lord will show us what to do. The Lord will show us how to show his love to the world and to ourselves.

For remember that we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves and therefore we are commanded to love ourselves. Not in the narcissistic way that the world loves itself but in knowing that we are OK with God and that God loves us the way we are because we are this way because God made us and loves us.

God is faithful to us!!

And then this section on warning against idleness!

Many people struggle with this passage but it is here to instruct us and so we need to understand it.

Firstly always understand it is not a condemnation of those who are down on their luck – who are finding life hard. It is not a condemnation of the homeless and the out of work.

What it is is a rebuke of those who choose not work. It is aimed at the brothers (see verse 6) and those among them who have chosen not to work and to rely on the commands that we care for one another.

Such as

**James 2:15-16 (ANIV)**

<sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

And this warning against idleness reminds us of God's view of work.

Remember Exodus

**Exodus 20:8-9 (ANIV)**

<sup>8</sup> "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labour and do all your work,

Work is part of God's plan for us and gives us that opportunity to show our Lord to the world.

I love a story from the life of Christopher Wren – the guy who designed St Paul's cathedral as part of his work for the Lord. He asked a bricklayer what he was doing and was told that he was building a wall but when he asked another what he was doing he replied "I'm building a cathedral to the glory of God."

It is all in our attitude and I know which attitude I want in my life!

Our work matters to God after all he put it before us as part our good works and so our work should be good.

But also our life style matters.

**2 Thessalonians 3:13 (ANIV)**

<sup>13</sup> And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

And this brings us to the core of this message – do not grow weary.

Paul writes to the Ephesians

***Ephesians 5:15-16 (ANIV)***

<sup>15</sup> *Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

The things we do matter. They matter not only to God because we shall have to answer for them but they matter because how we live is our message to the world. It is our witness that validates the gospel we preach.

This is why we need to be living life to the full because in enjoying our lives of service and humility we show the world how they should be living and, hopefully, some of them will see and believe because of it.

Actually hopefully many of them because I want to see a revival in our land and I want to see it soon!

And as we work remember that we only pass this way once.

Anything we do not do now we may never get the chance to do again so any time that you have the chance to show your love to your neighbour, to your brother or to yourself **do it** because you may never have that chance again.

And when you consider life you might look on the Church as a boat and there are two images of what your life might be like on a boat.

The first is a cruise liner where most of the people are passenger. There are a few who are the hardworking crew who actually keep the boat going and make sure it is on course.

But most are passengers. Relaxed watching the scenery float by and waiting for the next meal, entertainment or activity. Life is such a breeze!

But not for the crew working hard to keep it all on track.

Remember the 80 20 rule. 20% of the people do 80% of the work and make sure you are in that 20%.

An alternative is to think of the boat as a life boat – an analogy I have used before and make no apologies for using again.

The crew of the life boat are not there to serve the passengers but they are there to save lives.

There are no passengers for everyone one is part of the crew and they each have a role to perform. 100% of the people doing 100% of the work!

Without each doing their role the life boat will not function and so lives will be lost

Rather like the body of Christ where we each have our part to play and the body will not work if we do not play our role.

We need to be an active member of our church ensuring that we never tire of doing what is right.

And do you know the army of God is the one army you never retire from. Whatever stage of life you are at there is always a role to be played – you are always part of the crew.

I have told you before of a prayer group that faithfully prayed for Margaret and I when we were in the Army. We visited them once and were asked to go and see one couple who were

elderly and house bound. They told us to remember that they could only pray and all we had to do was tell them what they could be praying for.

They did not tire from doing what is good.

And that should be a guiding theme of our lives – do not tire from doing what is good.

