

The Call to Work - #8 Now and Eternity (sermon series on 1 and 2 Thessalonians)

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Text: 2 Thessalonians 3

SERMON NOTES

A. The Call to Work

1. It's a personal call – 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5
 - a. Pastor Derrick traced important steps of his call, from a profound experience as a 10-year-old through college, the apprentice years, ministry growth and people involved (like Pastor Fred Fulford).
 - b. Each of us has a call to vocation, family, a life of service and ministry.
2. It's a call to work – 2 Thessalonians 3:7-19
 - a. Paul's example: he lived a disciplined life with a good work ethic. He had a right to take a wage but didn't insist on that, instead paid his own way.
 - b. The Christian's work – is to benefit society, glorify God, and engage in our calling wherever we are.
 - i. Career doesn't matter; vocation doesn't matter, where God plants you, God wants you in that place.
 - ii. **John Stott** on what is the Christian's work: *"The expenditure of energy (manual or mental) in the service of others which brings fulfillment to the worker, benefit to the community and glory to God."*
 - iii. **Martin Luther**: *"Each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned."* 1 Corinthians 7:17.
 - iv. Our Christianity is seen in our work and ethics. We are the salt of the earth, light in darkness. We are all called to make a difference. There is no retirement in the Kingdom of God.
 - v. When we're working where God has planted us, that work should rejuvenate us.
 - vi. **R. Paul Stevens**: *"In this life work is a wonderful way of getting outside ourselves. Even retired people, unemployed people, handicapped people need to work Sometimes it's the means of deep healing, good for us, good for the world, good for others"* – from *The Other Six Days*.
 - c. The example of Burl Cain, warden of Angola prison. Under his leadership Angola went from being one of the most dangerous and violent prisons in the U.S. to a peaceful productive institution.
 - d. Avoid idleness and the idle – 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15
 - i. Idleness easily leads to more—being busybodies, disruption, agitation.
 - ii. Don't be lured into criticism. Rather, get to work. **Pastor Derrick**: *"Make your home, your church, your city a better place. Be part of the solution, not the problem."*

B. The Call to Pray – 1 Thessalonians 3:1,2

1. Paul requested they pray for two things:
 - a. That the message move rapidly
 - b. That he would be protected from evil men.
2. Our ministers and leaders too need prayer.
 - a. E.g. Pope Francis often requests prayer—has in the past before he became pope and continues to do that.
 - b. **Pastor Derrick**: *"Pray for me."* Pastor ended the service by requesting and receiving prayer from those who gathered around and the congregation.

MINISTRY

1. Pastor Derrick named milestones and people in his life that brought him to his present place of ministry. Identify your spiritual milestones and the people that have brought you to your place of current ministry. Share with each other.
2. What is the purpose of the Christian's work? Discuss the relative importance of a job in Christian ministry versus a secular job. Is one more important than the other? Why or why not?
3. What is the connection between criticism and idleness? What might be one cure for the critical person?
4. Why is it important to pray for our church leaders? What specific things might we put on a prayer list for them?

PRAYER

Dear Father, thank You for the unique calling on each of our lives. Help us to see our work and workplaces as an opportunity to serve You. Help us to be assets to Your Kingdom throughout our lives as we give up our rights, set our minds on lifelong ministry, and stay involved instead of standing back to criticize. We pray for Pastor Derrick and our whole leadership team that You would bless their message and protect them. Amen.