

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 5, 2021 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

Steadfast
CHRISTIANITY
A Study of Second Thessalonians

“Buying Into the Vision”
2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

“⁶ But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³ But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” -2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 (NKJV)

Here is our overview of 2nd Thessalonians briefly... again, just to help us get the picture in historical context...

Overview of 2nd Thessalonians:

- (1) TYPE OF LITERATURE:** A first century letter
- (2) AUTHOR OF THE LETTER:** The Apostle Paul (with Silas and Timothy)
- (3) PLACE OF THE WRITING THE LETTER:** Corinth
- (4) DATE OF THE LETTER:** Written from in approximately A.D. 51-52
- (5) PURPOSE OF THE LETTER:** (1) To deal with false teaching, (2) To encourage believers in the midst of persecution

BRIEF HISTORY OF THESSALONICA: The city of Thessalonica is know today as Salonika and is the second largest city in Greece. It came into being in 315 B.C. Founded by the Greek

general Cassander, who later became king of Macedonia. Thessalonica developed into a major commercial port and military launching point. At the time that 2 Thessalonians was written, Thessalonica was the capital and the most populous city in Macedonia, boasting over 200,000 people. **FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA:** During Paul's second missionary journey (A.D. 49-52), he and Silas persuaded many in this bustling seaport town to follow Christ. The city's jealous religious leaders incited a riot bringing charges of sedition against Paul and Silas for worshipping Christ over Caesar (Acts 17:5-7). The two men were forced to flee by night to Berea (Acts 17:10).



Great leaders have powerful vision. They see the way things are, but they also imagine the way things could be. They skillfully communicate their ideas to others, and people follow them... often sacrificially... because they buy into their vision.

During His ministry, Jesus set forth a vision of the kingdom of God. Everywhere He traveled, He proclaimed “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23). Through His miracles, He offered sips of the coming kingdom... quenching parched lips and whetting people’s appetites for a new world free from sin, pain, and death.

When surrounded by diseased and dying, Jesus healed them. When He encountered the distressed and shepherdless multitudes, He was moved with compassion, and He taught and fed them. He demonstrated forgiveness and love when He touched the heart of the an outcase Samaritan woman (John 4:7-29). And when He washed the disciples’ dirty feet (John 13:5-20). Jesus proved His authority as Ruler of the kingdom when He overcame “the ruler of this world” in the wilderness and defeated him at the Cross (John 12:31, Matthew 4:1-11, Colossians 2:13-15).

As Jesus' disciples, we have tasted the life He offers... the eternal, abundant life available to those who submit to the King's authority. We believe in Jesus Christ and His vision for us and our world. But what does the Lord expect from us now? What are the practical implications of embracing His vision? As believers we must grab hold of and buy into the vision... let's explore the call that Paul gave to these Thessalonian believers, and by application to us today to buy into the vision God has for us as believers and His church.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE KINGDOM

Let me start by sharing a statement with you... listen close to this statement... **"Vision acceptance implies vision involvement"** *What do you think that means?*

Notice the variety of ways that the Scriptures teach us to put our faith into action.

Ways We Are Encouraged in Scripture to Get Involved in Kingdom Work:

1. **Investing our talents** – (READ: Matthew 25:14-30) *What might Jesus be suggesting/implying in this passage/parable about kingdom involvement and putting our faith into action?* Jesus instructed us to get involved in His kingdom ministry by "investing our talents"... in other words, by making good use of the abilities and gifts that He has given us.
2. **Abounding in the work of the Lord** - The apostle Paul taught that we are to abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our toil won't be in vain. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:58, **"⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."** Paul used the analogy from the world of agriculture, encouraging us to sow in order to reap. (READ: Galatians 6:6-9) **"⁶ Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."** *What might Paul be suggesting/implying in this passage under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about kingdom involvement and putting our faith into action?* That we should abound in the Lord of the Lord by sowing good fruit/seed and that it will produce something... it's not in vain... it will have a bountiful increase and produce fruit.
3. **Fighting the fight of faith** – Paul reminds us in 1 Timothy 6:11-12 that we are in a fight, a war, a battle and that we must fight. He says, **"¹¹ But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses."** A part of our kingdom work is to get involved in fight. The reality is we are in a battle... a battle for the souls of man whom God loves and died for, we are in a battle for our families, for the hearts and minds of our children and young people who are daily being assaulted by the enemy by a whole host of immoral and degenerate ideas, philosophies and corrupt teaching. So he tells us that a part of kingdom work is for us to "fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:11-12). And remember, according to Paul in Ephesians 6, we have been given every piece of spiritual armor with which to carry out this fight and win.
4. **Running with patience and perseverance** - Remember the writer of Hebrews tells us as believers in Hebrews 12:1, that we are to **"run with endurance the race that is set before us."**

Paul drew a similar illustration from athletics, exhorting us to run to win, and to compete using self-control in order to gain an imperishable reward. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, “²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may ^[a]obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” A part of our involvement in kingdom work is to not sit on the sidelines as a spectator, but to be an active participant, to get up and get involved in the race... the fight. We are called to it!

5. **Being fervent in love for one another and resisting of the enemies attacks** - (READ: 1 Peter 4:7-11) What might Peter be suggesting/implying in this passage under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, about kingdom involvement and putting our faith into action? 1 Peter 4:7-11, “⁷ But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. ⁸ And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.” ⁹ Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, let him speak as the ^[a]oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the ^[a]dominion forever and ever. Amen.” We are to be fervent and active in our love for one another, as well as alert and resistant to Satan’s schemes. That is too, a part of kingdom work. It really is!
6. **Giving your full-self to the task with all your might** - Finally, we are to throw ourselves into our work “heartily” as unto the Lord. Paul writes in Colossians 3:23 “²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily (energetically, vigorously, wholeheartedly, with all you’ve got), as to the Lord and not to men.”

Notice that the verbs of Christian involvement are vivid and active. Did you notice them? We are to ... invest, abound, fight, run, compete, resist, work. But unfortunately, we might describe the involvement of many believers as more vague than vivid... more passive than active.

A STRONG EXHORTATION TO ALL CHRISTIANS

(READ: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15) “⁶ But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which ^[a]he received from us. ⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone’s bread ^[b]free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. ¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now those who are such we command and ^[c]exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³ But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. ¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this ^[d]epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count him as an enemy, but ^[e]admonish him as a brother.” -2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 (NKJV)

It's comfortable to sit back without feet on our desks in the Christian life. It's easy for us to "go with the flow," remaining neutral on matters that call for action, indecisive regarding moral issues, and irresponsible and lazy when it comes to the workload. But God calls us to step up and get involved!

Some of the Thessalonian believers used the Lord's return as an excuse for inactivity (see 2 Thess. 3:6-15). They believed in the coming kingdom, but they didn't fully comprehend the implications of God's vision for their daily lives. Because they thought Christ's return would be soon, they reasoned that it was futile to work and make long-term plans. The result was that these people began springing off of wealthier church members, becoming a class of Christian beggars. Paul face this deplorable situation head-on.

4 Strong Exhortations to All Christians:

1. **The command (2 Thess. 3:6)** – Paul's exhortation to those living irresponsibly was strong and direct and upfront... notice in verse 6 of our passage, *"⁶ But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us."* Paul referred to the irresponsible believers as those who led "disorderly" or "unruly" lives. According to one lexicon, the Greek word for "disorderly" or "unruly" means "out of order, or out of place... (and was frequently used) of soldiers not keeping the ranks or an army in disarray." Maybe Paul had in mind an image of soldiers who marched to their own beat, who stayed in bed while everyone else reported for duty, who didn't pull their own weight, who others couldn't not count on when the fight got fiercest, and who expected others to take care of the duties they neglected.

Or maybe Paul had in mind another image associated with the Greek word "disorderly" or "unruly," which was also used "of truancy on the part of an apprentice." This word picture describes a young person running off to have fun rather than reporting to school. Some of the Thessalonians believers had become truant. Lazy and irresponsible, they were like kids playing hooky from school, kids who were concerned only with their immediate interests and pleasures rather than doing the hard work of learning and growing.

God commands us to "withdraw from" these... to "keep away"... to avoid, move away, or withdraw from such people. Those are pretty strong words, and maybe a needed and eye-awakening word for even the church today. An example of this form of discipline can be found in Romans 16:17-19, *"¹⁷ Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. ¹⁸ For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹ For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil."* **What do you think about these strong words? Why these strong words? How might this be applied and mis-applied today?** Paul warned believers in Rome to stay away from false teachers who were those who "serve... their own belly" and deceive others by their "flattering speech." In Thessalonica, the threat wasn't posed by smooth-talking shysters but by chattering sluggards, yet the response was the same... "Stay away from them and their bad influence!"

2. **The example (2 Thess. 3:7-10)** – So, whose example were the Thessalonian believers to follow? Paul offered himself and his colleagues as models of Christian responsibility. Notice it in verses 7-10 of our passage... Paul writes, *⁷ For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹ not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. ¹⁰ For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.* During his visit to Thessalonica, Paul worked by day and night so that he would not be a burden to the new converts. 1 Thessalonians 2:9 tell us, *⁹ For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.* He paid his own way and picked up his own tab, even though Jesus had said that preachers might rightfully obtain their livelihood from the work of the Gospel. 1 Corinthians 9:14 says, *¹⁴ Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.* Paul pointed out his right as an apostle to expect support, but he willingly forfeited that right for the sake of setting an example (see 1 Corinthians 9:1-14).

Paul followed his own rule of thumb... *"If anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."* This maxim does not apply to those who can't work, but to those who refuse to work. The emphasis is on the will, and the continuous tense suggest a habitual attitude.

3. **The encouragement (2 Thess. 3:11-13)** – Ironically, the “truants” in the Thessalonian church were not inactive. They were busy, all right... being, in fact, busybodies. Notice verses 11-13 of our passage, *¹¹ For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. ¹² Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. ¹³ But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.* For the third time in this passage Paul uses the same term, here rendered as “disorderly” (see also vv. 6-7). People who have a lot of spare time and skip out on their responsibilities often resort to idle chatter. In 1 Timothy 5:13, Paul says, *¹³ And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.* Interestingly, Paul links idleness to being a busybody. A “busybody” is a person who meddles in the lives of others. Busybodies flit from house to house, often from drama to drama, taking little nectared drops of gossip with them and leaving behind their own residue of irritating pollen.

- ★ *There is a vast difference between putting your nose in other people's business and putting your heart into their problems.* Paul's advice to the Thessalonians here is similar to the advice he gave in his first letter in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, *¹¹ That you (as a believers may) also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.*

He concluded his comments to the dutiful troops with the following, *"... do not grow weary in doing good."* The words are reminiscent of those written to the Galatians in Galatians 6:9, *⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not*

lose heart.” The doctrine of the Lord’s return should not discourage us from working but strengthen us... it should not make us idle but patient and more focused on our priorities.

4. **The admonition (2 Thess. 3:14-15)** – Verses 14-15 bring Paul’s message full circle... notice it there, *“¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵ Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”* Paul repeat his command for us not to “keep company” (or associate) with those who fall out of the ranks. If we do, we’ll reward their foolishness with our attention, and we’ll get out of step as well! He reminds us to “admonish” the offender as “a brother” (or sister), and to not treat him or her as “an enemy.” With a brother (or sister) in Christ, the ultimate goal is always... always restoration.

There’s a fine line between putting a person to shame (“You’ve done a bad thing!”) and shaming a person (“You’re a bad person!”). When we’re put to shame, we feel sorry for our sin and the hurt they cause others and we yearn to make things right again. But shaming a person leaves no room for restoration. It is a life sentence that can never be appealed or overturned. Paul urges us to treat one another like family members... with our arms wide open when our brother or sister comes back home.

SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

2 Practical Implications for Believers and the Church:

1. **Buy into Christ’s vision for your life and for the world** - Have you bought into Christ’s vision for your life and for the world? You say, “Well, I don’t know what that is? How can I buy into it?” Here it is... FIND OUT what it is! It’s right here in His Word. Make that your pursuit to find out what God’s vision is for your life and this world. I can help you a little bit. According to **Romans 8:28-29** tells us, *“²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”* A part of His vision for your life is that you be *“conformed to the image of His Son.”* Start growing in Christ and becoming more like Him. Make that a part of your life pursuit.
2. **Get involved in making Christ’s vision for your life and the world a reality** - If so... if you have bought into Christ’s vision for your life and for the world, how involved are you in making that vision a reality? Again the vision for your life is pretty clear in Scripture... to conform you to the image of His Son, to make you like Jesus. And the vision is pretty specific for the world also. **Matthew 28:19** says it, *“¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* His vision for the world... to *“make disciples of all nations”* (Matthew 28:19)... and your involvement can take various forms depending on the abilities God has given you. In the church and community, your family and your neighborhood, you can carry on the ministry and vision of Jesus.