

December 10, 2016

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Scripture

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

⁶Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, ⁸and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. ⁹This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. ¹²Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. ¹³Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right. ¹⁴Take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter; have nothing to do with them, so that they may be ashamed. ¹⁵Do not regard them as enemies, but warn them as believers. ¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you. ¹⁷I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.

Devotional

At the end of this enigmatic letter, the writer issues a straight forward series of commands that are summed up in the admonition of verse 13, "Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right." Regardless of what issues may or may not have prompted this letter, this word of direction is a timely word for us today, and it is especially relevant for our celebration of Advent. During this season we remember the one who came to be with us, and who, in the power of the Spirit, continues to come to be there for us.

As in every season of life, including Advent, we are not to be idle. We are not to grow lazy with the gift. We are not to become weary in doing what is right. We do what is right when, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we embody His gift to the world. Just as He was and is our hope, our peace, our joy, and our love, so also we are called to witness to that grace and truth by embodying it in the world. The one who has been sent by God into the world sends us to be His body in and for the world.

Prayer

Gracious God, help each of us to enter into this season as persons ready to be disciples of Jesus Christ, ready to take what we have been given and then to give it away to the world in lives of loving service. Let us seek justice, love mercy, and strive to do what is right through the power of the risen Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.