

2 THESSALONIANS: THERE'S STILL HOPE



Week Four: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

The end of this letter focuses on what seems to be very practical advice: work and food. This is a reminder that the Good News of Jesus is for all of life, not just soul saving. How we live here and now on this earth God created (and is at work to recreate) matters. Pray for the kids to see their role in God's Story here and now.

- **Big Idea:** The Good News of Jesus' kingdom matters for our everyday lives!

Starter

Have the kids pick one object in the room that is currently being used (chair or rug they're sitting on, lightbulb, toy, etc). Ask them how it got here. Ask whose work or job helped get it here. You may need to guide this discussion greatly. See how many workers you can name for that one object to be in use in your room (glass maker, inventor of light bulb, packaging factory, delivery driver, cashier at store, electrician, etc). Take a moment to thank God for the work of all those people so you can enjoy it.

Sing Together

My Hope Is In the Lord - <https://youtu.be/tJePCzTaQo4>

Story

When Paul wrote to the young church in Thessalonica, he wanted to encourage them to continue in their faith with love, and to remind them of the hope they had. Even though things were difficult for them, Jesus would one day return and make all things right! He reminded them that God had surely saved them from their sin, that he would one day come back to rescue the whole world from sin, and that in the meantime, God's Spirit was with His people to help them live apart from their sin.

One of the ways Paul thought it was important for them to live was how they worked and ate. He wrote that everyone should be working and contributing, not taking from the community but helping to do their part. If someone was not willing to work, they should not expect to eat other people's food for free. This might seem like a strange thing for Paul to bring up at the very end of his letter, but he believed, as Jesus taught, that the kingdom of God is very real and it affects the very real parts of our everyday lives - including how we work and eat!

You see, God made humans to work. Even in the garden before humans rebelled, they had a job to care for creation, cultivate the garden, and show the world what God is like. When they rebelled against that, it changed the way humans did their job. Some now work to show off their own glory instead of God's. Others might not work at all but still expect to eat and enjoy life.

But Paul told the Thessalonians they had been restored by Jesus and can now live rightly! We can work in a way that shows how great God is, not how great we are. We can work in a way that provides food and a home for ourselves, our families, and even help those who are unable to provide for themselves. And guess what - working the way God designed us to actually brings humans joy!

But those unwilling to live the way Jesus calls us to actually threaten the community of God's people. So, Paul told them to not hang out with those people, unless they were willing to change. He told them not to think of them as enemies or hate them, but to stay away so they would learn how much they needed community - and how much they needed to contribute to the community. Once they learned that lesson and were willing to come back, the church should welcome them happily. Because after all, that is how God welcomes us into His community, when we turn back to Him.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- Why do you think people should have to work at all?
- Do you think it's possible to enjoy work?
- How do we know when it is good to share what we've worked for with others, and when to warn them to work for themselves?

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, thank you for making us to be like you. Thank you for your Spirit who gives us strength to do your work. Thank you for Jesus' work which saves us from sin.

- **Craft:**

On the blank page provided, have the kids trace their hands. Then, in each finger, have them write down a task they can do to serve their family, neighbors, friends, or anyone else who comes to mind this week. For example, in the pinky it might say, "take out the trash" and on the next finger, "make a card for mom", etc. Or, "pull weeds for neighbor", and "bring meal to hungry".

In the palm, help them write Psalm 90:17b, "...establish the work of our hands." Then, have the kids color, decorate, and cutout their hands.

- **BLESS Activity:**

For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Eat** rhythm. This lesson talked about eating food that you have worked for. Help your family prepare at least one meal this week. Set the table together and prepare the food as a team. When you sit down to eat, thank God for providing and talk about how good it is to eat as a community/family.

Psalm 90:17, *“May the beauty of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.”*