

A sermon “The Gift of Steady Work”
From 2 Thessalonians 3:6–13
Preached by Rev. Peter Blank
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There’s a small line near the end of this passage that carries the whole message:
“Do not grow weary in doing what is right.”

Not dramatic. Not flashy. Just steady. And that may be exactly why we need it.

Paul is writing to a church where some folks have stopped doing their part. They aren’t resting because they’re burned out. They’re simply not contributing to the common life. And Paul, like a pastor who loves his people, basically says:

“Friends, this isn’t how the body of Christ works. Your participation matters.”

He isn’t preaching capitalism or hustle culture. He’s talking about something deeper: **the shared work that keeps a community alive.** Work as service. Work as contribution. Work as participation in God’s ongoing creation.

1. Not Against Rest, But For Contribution

First, we need to say clearly: Paul is not against rest.

Scripture is full of rest. God rests on the seventh day. Jesus pulls away from the crowds. The disciples are invited to “come away and rest a while.”

The “idleness” Paul warns against is not about:

- being exhausted,
- being injured or ill,
- being overwhelmed, or
- carrying more than your fair share.

He’s addressing a deliberate *disengagement* from the shared life of the church.

In Paul’s world, work wasn’t just how you fed yourself. It was how you belonged. So to choose not to contribute was to step outside the life of the community.

Paul’s message, then and now, sounds like this:

“You matter too much to opt out. Your gifts, your time, your presence—they are needed.”

2. Steady, Ordinary Work as Kingdom Work

We live in a culture that celebrates the spectacular—big achievements, big platforms, big results. But so much of God’s kingdom is carried on the back of quiet, ordinary work:

- someone makes coffee before worship
- someone opens the doors and turns on the heat

- someone wipes down the nursery toys
- someone sends a card to a lonely member
- someone brings a casserole
- someone waters the plants and takes out the trash
- someone stacks chairs after everyone goes home

Nobody gets a trophy for these. There's no line item in the annual report for "Most Faithful Table Wiper."

But these simple tasks are **kingdom tasks**.

Paul points us away from frantic busyness and toward **meaningful, steady work**. Not individual achievement, but *communal contribution*.

When we share in that work, we are echoing the God who creates, who tends, and who calls creation "good."

3. A Personal Story: The Man in the Blue Jacket

I think of a man from a church I served early in my ministry—I'll call him Bob.

Bob was retired, quiet, and wore the same faded blue windbreaker almost every day. He never stood up front. He never grabbed a microphone. But if the church was open, he was somewhere in the building, doing something.

One weekday morning, I came in earlier than usual. The building was dark and quiet. But I heard this soft scraping sound down the hallway.

I followed the noise and found Bob.

On his knees.

Blue jacket on.

Bucket of soapy water beside him.

He was scrubbing a patch of tile in the hallway.

I said, "Bob... what are you doing here so early?"

He stood up slowly, knees protesting, and said, "Oh, this? People track in mud from the playground. I figured if the floor looks cared for, maybe people will feel cared for too."

That was it. No speech. No need for recognition.

But that line has stayed with me:

"If the floor looks cared for, maybe people will feel cared for too."

Bob understood something Paul is trying to teach us: sometimes the holiest work is the work nobody notices.

Years later, when Bob died, people shared stories:

- “He fixed that broken pew leg and never told anyone.”
- “He was the one who silently took out the trash after every event.”
- “He showed up at my house with soup when I was sick.”
- “He made sure the lights were on and the doors were unlocked.”

He never led a ministry on paper. But he did steady, faithful work that made ministry possible.

When I read “*Do not grow weary in doing what is right*,” I picture Bob in that hallway, in that blue jacket, quietly serving God and his church.

4. Work and Rest in God’s Rhythm

Scripture shows us God at work: forming, shaping, speaking, blessing. Then God rests. Work and rest are both holy.

Paul isn’t calling us to endless motion. He’s calling us to **God’s rhythm**:

- work that blesses others,
- rest that restores us,
- and a community that depends on both.

When each person offers their part—no matter how simple—something beautiful happens: the community becomes whole.

Remote as it may feel, even “small” actions—like wiping a counter, printing bulletins, calling someone who’s been missing—all of these are ways we join God’s creative care for the world.

5. Don’t Grow Weary in Doing What Is Right

Paul is realistic. He knows it’s possible to grow weary of doing good.

Caregiving can wear you down.

Volunteering can feel thankless.

Showing up again and again can feel unnoticed.

So he doesn’t say, “Do more.”

He doesn’t say, “Hurry up.”

He doesn’t say, “Be everywhere at once.”

He says:

“Do not grow weary in doing what is right.”

In other words:

- Don’t let discouragement convince you your small acts don’t matter.
- Don’t let lack of recognition make you quit.

- Don't let the size of the world's problems convince you that your contribution is meaningless.

In God's kingdom, nothing done in love is wasted.

6. A Word of Thanks—and an Invitation

So today, I want to echo Paul and say: **thank you.** Thank you for the work you do that hardly anyone sees:

- the prayers you whisper
- the meals you deliver
- the rooms you set up and clean up
- the rides you give
- the kids you listen to
- the calls you make
- the quiet offerings of time, skill, and care

These are not “extra” or “lesser” things.

They are the very fabric of our shared life.

They are the way we participate in God's creative, steady love.

And if you've felt on the edges—if you've thought, “I don't really have anything to offer”—hear this invitation: **you do.**

Your contribution doesn't have to be large. It just has to be *yours*.

One small, steady act of love at a time.

7. Good News for Tired People

Here's the good news wrapped into this little passage:

- You are not called to do everything.
- You are not called to be impressive.
- You are not called to hold the world together.

You are called to offer your part, as God gives you strength.

And God will be faithful to meet you in that offering.

So may we not grow weary in doing what is right.

May we find joy in steady work.

May we honor the simple tasks that carry Christ's love into everyday life.

And may the God who works and rests, who creates and sustains, give us strength for every good task set before us.

Amen.