

“DOING What Is Right”
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19

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At your workplace, is there someone who isn't pulling their weight? Someone making a big show of doing nothing? She's always at her desk, but she's always reading a magazine? He's always there, but he's always wandering around with a cup of coffee, bothering people? Pleasant people, but not doing what is right!

It happens in families. Parents who aren't taking care their kids. Children who aren't looking after their aging parents. The extended family has to step in and take up the slack. Nice people. You love them to death. But they're not doing what's right!

You might be able to guess, it's not limited to workplaces or families or even sports teams. It happens in churches, too.

In the early church there were itinerant teachers, preachers, and evangelists who would go from place to place, city to city, and live with the local church. Some of them did good ministry. But some of them were idle lay-a-bouts who had to be pushed out the door.

Monasticism had the same problem. Before monasticism developed clear rules, there were free-range monks. They would go from monastery to monastery, enjoy the local hospitality, and then move on.

In the 1700s, most Church of England pastors were in smaller, rural parishes. They were paid by local taxes, so their income was guaranteed. All they had to do was marry, bury, baptize, and preach on Sunday. That was it. They didn't even have to write their own sermons! You could buy books of sermons for every Sunday of the year.

Imagine. An entire class of well-paid, well-educated men with too much time on their hands. Some of them cared for their parishioners and did good ministry. Some of them did science experiments, wrote math textbooks, developed dictionaries for

obscure languages. And some just sat back and watched the world go by. They never pulled their weight. They never did what was right.

In about 20% of the churches I've pastored, one of the complaints about the previous pastor was you could never find them. They were never in their study. They did their job on Sunday, moderated session meetings, all that. But the rest of the time, "You have my number. Call me if you need me." It looked bad. They weren't doing what was right.

Church leaders cannot shirk their responsibilities. We cannot grow weary in doing what is right.

But, it's not just the leadership. It's all of us. Our Scripture lesson this morning is addressed to everyone. Every member of the church. Pull our weight. Do what is right.

Several of you are working with our young people in their confirmation classes. They are taking steps to confirm they are emotionally and spiritually mature enough to be responsible for living their baptismal vows and being full-fledged, active members of our faith community. To do that, they have goals. How many times they are going to attend worship. How many times they are going to attend PYA. How many ministry activities they are going to be involved in. They have clear, measurable goals.

What if we all did that? What if we all made a pledge and set ourselves measurable goals for our ministry? Not because we must, but as a way to spur ourselves to greater ministry.

What if we all said, unless I'm desperately sick or out of town, I will be in worship or watch live on zoom at least three times a month. I will attend a Growing Connections, Adult Faith Formation class, at least twice a month. I will take part in one of our ministry activities at least once a quarter. I'll go to Loaves & Fishes, or I'll make cookies for Loaves & Fishes, or I'll buy cookies for Loaves & Fishes. Whatever. The point is, I'll do it.

What if we all said, I will support our ministries with my finances on a disciplined, regular basis. Regardless of my bills.

As Christians, we all have an obligation to be active in ministry. To pull our weight. To do the right thing.

And yes, I know, it's easy to become weary. We get tired. Of course we do. It's only natural. Nevertheless, we are called to carry

on. Even in the midst of wars and earthquakes, famines and plagues, let us carry on doing what is right!

After all, this is how God loves us. No matter how far we wander, no matter how badly we stray, no matter how many wars we start or how much pollution we add to the atmosphere, no matter how many times we say we are too tired or stretched too thin or the time just isn't right, God continues loving us. God is always loving us.

God never grows weary of loving us. May we never grow weary of doing what is right. Amen.