

In this lesson Paul deals with the problem of those who are so expectant that the Lord will come soon and are so meddlesome in the affairs of others that they have given up their daily work. These individuals may have believed that they were already exalted to such a spiritual plane that mundane matters were no longer a concern for them. This may seem like piety on their part, but it means they have become a problem for others. Paul reminds them of his own example and bluntly rules that such people should either work or else not eat.

Now hear these words from second Thessalonians.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Luke 21:5-19

In the gospel passage the disciples are forewarned of the destruction of the Jewish temple and of great upheavals in the natural and supernatural order that must take place before the end of history. There will be persecutions and divisions in families. Individuals will appear claiming to be Jesus. While in some passages the New Testament suggests that the end and fulfillment of human time will come quite unexpectedly, here the disciples are advised of a period of great tribulation when the powers of evil will make their final onslaught. In one sense this is poetic language used to describe the indescribable, but it insists that the ultimate meaning of life will finally be known.

Hear now these words from the gospel of Luke.

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

"But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life.

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.