

Do not be idle

- "Do not be idle"
 - sermon over?

Why not be idle?

- Its more than just the self-evident truth that it is better not to be lazy!
- **First and foremost its connected to teaching about second coming**
 - if you reckon the second coming will be before next Christmas... will you save up for a mortgage deposit? Or work hard at your education?
 - worse, will you perhaps persuade a better-off Christian to support you, since you are all going to be in heaven soon anyway?
- that appears to be the kind of situation that was arising
- So Paul's primary reason for not being idle, and his primary pastoral response to those who were caught up in this situation, was the earlier stuff about waiting expectantly but planning for the future (eg 2:15)
 - but in these last verses he unpacks what that should mean specifically...
- For us, about theology shaping practise:
 - do I believe that I am loved - act like it?
 - do I believe that people need to hear the gospel - act like it?
 - do I believe that sin is toxic, evil rebellion against God - act like it?
- **Second strand is connected to the life of the community:**
 - its related to the health of the relationships between them
 - so there's stuff about not sponging off one another, about respecting and valuing one another, about providing for those for whom we have primary responsibility
 - so the stuff about following Paul's example points to a practical example of a healthy lifestyle...
- And the disciplinary measures are communal ones, imposed on those who are not pulling their weight
 - not associating with them
 - letting them not eat!

How not to be idle?

- **Opening eyes and seeing need**
 - thinking, becoming aware of others
 - Summer Focus or whatever - do you look around to see that others are doing a task, to see that tables need cleared, to see that chairs moved, stuff needs set up...
 - that's what Paul is doing in this section - helping open some eyes!
- **Responding to the need we see**
 - every family has the story of someone who "disappears" when its time to clear up after a meal...
 - having seen, choosing to not be selfish and pretend we didn't see!
- *Me, I can try and pretend to be doing something else...*
- **Clearing out the unhelpful time-fillers**
 - seems some in Thessalonica were, in their idleness, finding unhelpful, unhealthy things with which to fill their time...
 - busybodies - quite exactly what Paul had in mind we don't know - but the drift is sticking their nose in where its not needed... nosey, gossip, interfering...?
 - are there things we do that are distractions from the productive things we could and should be doing, and that end up being unhealthy?
 - I have plenty of those... for me, many of them computer related...
- What Paul spots is that those secondary things will take their rightful place if we

2 Thessalonians 3:6-Warning against against idleness Study, 6/2/2011, pm

are helpfully, gainfully employed with what is truly important....
- *not tiring of doing what is right* (v.13)

- *Hard challenge of unemployment...*

Closing blessing

- Personal greeting - in relationships that Christian life and living is learned (17)
- Peace from God's presence (16)
- Grace is the closing note, the echo that continues into the silence... (18)