

Second Hand Preacher

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 13, 2016

2 Thessalonians 3:7-12

“But Dad, I don’t feel like working outside today.”

“Well Dave, I notice that you have been both feet firmly under the kitchen table. If you want that to continue you must come out and work.”

My Dad’s answer to the statement of a lazy teenager was scripturally based. Paul makes it pretty clear. If you don’t work you don’t eat. This message he gave to the Thessalonians back 2,000 years ago is still true today. Living in rural Minnesota, most of us have a pretty good work ethic. This is not true all over, but it seems like St. Paul wants it to be. My grandmother used to say that, “Hard work never hurt anyone.” As a youth I may have questioned it, but as an adult I’m glad I lived through it. Even though I’m not baling hay or picking rocks anymore, I still have a pace to keep up with in my life as a priest.

Why was St. Paul concerned about the work ethic of the Thessalonians? Too many of them were simply waiting around for Jesus to come again. They heard preaching about the resurrection of the dead and they want to be ready for that. Paul wants them to keep on living. He believes Jesus will come again and many believe he thought it might be in his lifetime, but Paul continued his ministry with great passion. There was a division in the church community of Thessalonica and Paul was looking to bridge that division.

We are nearing the end of the Church year. Many of our readings become eschatological. This means they focus on “end times.” This might mean the end of the world as we know it. We believe that Jesus will come again. We will not know the hour, but we wait in joyful hope. If we are truly Christian, the thought of Jesus coming again will mean we are one step closer to paradise. So let us be busy about the work of justice and not be busy bodies who have no hope.