

forehead and the face that sweats from its labors.”

Those “lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer” are over. The holiday from labor is over. Our children are back in school. The daily grind starts again! Thank God for the privilege and the ability to work! Begin each day with the prayer that your strong and loving Savior will bless your work to His glory throughout the day.

Think about your daily routine on the job and your work in the home or in school in the light of the truth expressed by Paul in 1Corinthians 15: **“The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** Following this light, you will see all your labors in the right light – the light of Christ! Your most humble duties will assume new value and importance in life.

We Christians need never feel useless. The futility and the anxiety which depresses the idle and the lazy, need not trouble you and me. We know that we work for our daily bread and in order to serve others. By God’s grace let us look forward to the time when we will hear those blessed words from our Lord and Savior: **“Well done, you good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. You, enter into the joy of the Lord.”** (Mt. 25:21) Amen.

S9/09/12 T14

INI

2Thess. 3:6-12

In the Name of Jesus, dear fellow redeemed by His blood,

On Monday of this past week I went out to the mailbox to get the mail. Every day of the week there is mail in that box, lots of it, mostly junk! But when I opened the box on Monday it was empty. I had forgotten that Americans were celebrating a national holiday called “Labor Day.” There was no mail that day because those whose job it is to deliver the mail did not come to work! They had the day off.

Most Americans celebrated “Labor Day” by not working at their jobs. However, they were back at work the next day, because it is good and necessary to work. There are more than 20 million Americans who need a job and would love to have one! They would rather work than play! So would the apostle Paul, who wrote to the Thessalonian Christians about

## **THE BLESSINGS OF LABOR.**

### **I.**

God chose labor as the way for us to get what we need for our bodies. What Paul says in our text about work was nothing new. The first man and woman – Adam and Eve – were placed in the Garden of Eden to work or tend Garden (Gen. 2:15-17). At that time “work” was like child’s play! But after man fell into sin, this work became heavy and hard – the grass needed mowing, the garden needed weeding. Shelters needed to be built and tools always needed fixing. Hard labor became the way of life in the fallen world!

Our earthly life remains so much about labor, that Paul can say: **“If a man will not work, neither shall he eat.”**

You and I need food and other physical things as long as we live on this earth. As soon as a newborn child cries for breath he seems to scream for food. It will never be any different in this life.

Sure, God provides “daily bread,” freely and abundantly,

even to the wicked. In fact, nothing at all would grow in the world, and no one could accomplish anything if God did not bless our efforts. As Martin Luther said: "God does not want to have success come without work, and yet I am not to achieve it by my work. He does not want me to sit at home, to loaf, to commit matters to God, and to wait till a fried chicken flies into my mouth. That would be tempting God." (Plass, 4833)

The normal, able-bodied person works somewhere – at home, in the office, factory, on the farm, in the classroom – somewhere. He or she uses the talents and strengths God has given to work at home or at a computer; to fix a car or a washing machine; to work the ground, build bridges, houses, and hospitals, and to make decisions that will influence the lives of others. Are you thankful to God for what you are able to do?

Are you also doing what you can so that others are fairly treated and rewarded for their labors? Since God has chosen labor for earning our daily bread, He also directs the boss as well as the worker as to how each should treat the other. To the employers and the bosses God says through Paul in v. 8: **"Pay your workers fair wages, for the laborer is worthy of his wages."** It is a sin against God and my neighbor if I seek to pay him the lowest wage possible, rather than what is fair and right for his labor. It is, likewise, a sin to underpay a person for the work he does, just because there are lots of people I could hire in his place.

On the other hand, what about the responsibility of the Christian worker toward the person who hired him. A few verses after our text in this same letter to Timothy, Paul writes: **"For the sake of the Christian name and reputation, let the servant show honor to his master."** You know what this means. Wherever we work, for whomever we work – good boss or bad boss – we are to show **"honor"** to our master or boss by doing the very best work we are able to do. The last thing we want is for people to say of us, "Look at that lazy

person. He is always looking for someone else to carry the load. All he cares for is himself. He might be a church-goer, but he certainly doesn't work like a Christian!"

Since our God chooses for us whatever it is we work at, as the means for earning our daily bread, let's not complain about our work and responsibilities – whatever it may be. Rather, let's be giving thanks daily for the privilege of being able to labor in the Lord – as those who carry His name!

## II.

Secondly, Paul says that labor is not only a good thing for us as individuals; it is also good for the Church of Christ. Do we always control our thoughts and guard our tongue when it comes to the work of others? Paul directs us to think of our own work whenever we are tempted to criticize others. Do we always do our full duty?

Peace and harmony in the Christian congregation are precious gifts from God. There is certainly plenty to do in every calling of the Christian life, and in each congregation of believers. Paul worked **"night and day"** for the good of the Thessalonians. Are we doing all that we can for the glory our great Savior Who did all that He could for us?

Jesus regarded His labors for us as a blessing to Himself. For instance, we read in Isaiah 53:11 that Jesus would **"see the labor of His soul and be satisfied."** Read Isaiah 53 and be reminded of the labor of His soul for you. Read again how He bore our iniquities and carried our sorrows; how He **"poured out His soul unto death,"** by suffering the agonies of hell's death for the sins of all people!

The blessing of labor, especially hard labor, is passed over by the world. The world says, "happy are those who lead a life of leisure." "Happy are those who have the means to live without working." But our God delights in our labor and wants to bless us through our labor. Luther wrote that this praise of work "should be inscribed on all tools, on the