All Your Best, All for Jesus, All the Time - Pt. 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 June 2025

Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Let me invite you to open your Bible with me once again to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3.

For at least one more week at verses 6 to 15 before we finish this letter here in a few weeks from verses 16 to 18. But returning to chapter 3 verses 6 to 15.
That what the Bible teaches us about how we are to work. What kind of workers should we be? This speaks to our diligence, to our faithfulness, to our work ethic.
And our title is, again, All Your Best. All for Jesus. All the time. All your best.
We want to give the Lord all of our best. Not because we're trying to be better than somebody else or we're trying to be better than some other church. It's not about competition.
[1:22] It's about offering all of who we are, all of our best, unto the Lord. Whatever we're doing, as the Bible tells us, whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might.

Whatever we're doing, do it heartily. Ask the Lord, not as unto men. All of our best. All of our best.
Secondly, all for Jesus. The goal is not for recognition from the world for us.
The goal is not for our own self-promotion. The goal is all for Jesus. That as we serve, as we work, as we labor, all that we do, our desire would be that it's done all for the name of Jesus and all for the glory of Jesus.
This is very important for us because individually and as a church, it's always possible to be doing the right things for the wrong motive.
And if we do the right things with the wrong motive, that's not worship. So it's all of our best. All for Jesus. All the time.
[2:30] All the time. That we don't pick and choose seasons or days where we'll be thoughtless or selfish or apathetic.

That we're giving all of our best, all for Jesus, all the time. And when you do your best, all for Jesus, all the time, you may or may not be noticed by others.
That's not the motivation. You may or may not be promoted. That's not the motivation. You may or may not have business success.
That's not the motivation. The motivation is that we would bring glory to Christ and be an example to all who are around us. That we do what we do, the way that we do it, the motive with which we do it, all for the glory of Christ.
Amen. We're doing all of our best, all of the time, all for Christ, for His name's sake. And as we do this, we have to remind ourselves that everything about our life, everything about our worship, everything about all of who we are, is to be done in a way that reflects that grace has saved us and transformed us.
[3:54] That maybe as a student, before you gave your life to Christ, maybe you were lazy, maybe you didn't try hard, maybe you cheated on exams, maybe you didn't care about learning and you gave your life to Christ.

The question is, does God's grace transform even your life as a student? As a worker, maybe you just saw yourself as working to make some money to pay some bills, and it's not a job you cared that much about anyway, and you never even thought once about how does my role as a worker show what I believe about Christ?
But then He saved you. His grace transformed you. The question is, is His grace strong enough to impact your life even in the routine, mundane things as you go to work?
As you strive to labor in your home, and you're caring for those in your family, maybe you used to see it as just routine chores.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

But the question is, is there a connection between the way you would even serve your family in your home and the glory of Christ?
[5:19] So the Bible says, whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of Christ. There is nothing in your day that you do more normal, more mundane, more routine than having a meal.

Can you make a connection between the most normal parts of your week and Jesus? And in context, what Paul is doing is he's writing to this young church who has been faithful, but they're struggling.
And one of the things they're struggling with is that they're facing opposition and persecution all around them. But more than that, he has taught them about the return of Christ, and they believe that and they anticipate that.
Part of their struggle, though, is some in this local church that he writes to have wrongly concluded that if Christ is coming again, then we don't have to worry about our responsibilities on this earth, in this life, because it's all just about the life to come.
It's true, we want to live for eternity in mind, yes, but we've got to be faithful and responsible with what we've been given to do here on this earth, too.
[6:44] And so one of the correctives that Paul gives them through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is to not neglect your responsibility on this earth while you're waiting for the return of Christ.

So the life you live as a student, the life you live as a worker, the life you live as an employer, the life you live as a homemaker, the life you live in retirement, no matter the season of life, the way that we live and conduct ourselves should show that God's grace has thoroughly changed us from the inside out.
Let's look again at our text here. 2 Thessalonians 3, verse 6. Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you receive from us.
For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it. But with toil and labor we worked night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you.
It was not because we do not have the right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command, if anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.
[8:22] For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busy bodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and earn their own living.

As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. It says a lot about how we live. It says a lot about how we are to work.
We looked last week at just one major point, and that was that we are to avoid the one who is lazy. Come straight from verse 6. Keep away from any brother who is willing to walk in idleness.
It seems like at first maybe even a bit of a strange command to keep away from the one who is lazy, but here's why. Because laziness is contagious.
Ungratitude, a lack of being thankful is contagious. Selfishness, worldliness, materialism.
[9:37] These things are very contagious. So much so that it can harm our witness as Christians if we are known to be lazy, excuse-making people.

And so the text could not be more clear. We looked at this last week. Keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness. Idleness is not restfulness.
We looked at that last week too. There's a place to rest. Rest is fitting and rest is good. But not idleness, not laziness, not slothfulness.
Number two, we'll pick up this morning in verses 7 and 8. The second thing to make notice of, do not look for handouts. Look at verse 7.
He says that their example was worthy of imitation.
[10:48] It's a good question for us to consider. Is our life worthy of imitation? If every member in this church shared your exact level of commitment to Christ, would our church be stronger than ever?

Or would we be struggling? I'm not talking about giftedness. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to people as He determines.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That's His sovereign work. I'm not saying, does everybody need to have your giftedness. But if everyone's commitment to the Lord matched yours, if everyone's willingness to obey the Lord matched yours, would our church be strong than we've ever been?
Or would we be in real trouble? Paul says that part of how a Christian should live and to act is that people can imitate us.
1 Corinthians says it this way. Paul says simply this, imitate me as I imitate Christ. Imitate me as I imitate Christ.
[12:08] This is a helpful day for us to think of that because we've got so many, and in both of our services, so many of these children who are now joining us here in worship service, and I promise you, they will imitate what they see.

The question is, are they going to be imitating that which is obedient or disobedient? That's why I said a moment ago, we want to have high expectations for our children and high expectations for adults and our teenagers, but with high expectations, grace and patience because learning takes time and learning takes patience.
It's true. But Scripture makes it clear that part of the work that the church is to do is to set a faithful example to be imitated.
If people loved the way that you loved and served the level of commitment that you serve, if people were obeying with the same extent that you are, is our church stronger because of that imitation? Or would the church be weaker? So he says, you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us because we were not idle when we were with you.
[13:31] We weren't lazy. We weren't spiritually apathetic. We were focused on the work he gave us to do. Verse 8, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it.

He says we weren't looking for handouts. We weren't coming to do ministry and making demands on people. Now, let's hold this in its proper tension in the New Testament.
It is good for God's people to be generous. It is fitting to give honor to whom honor is due. Churches and Christians should be generous people.
We should be looking for ways to serve each other. We should be looking for ways to express our love and our appreciation to one another.
That is a good, biblical, New Testament way to live as the body of Christ. Look for ways to encourage. Look for ways to bless.
[14:40] The Bible gives us examples of parables of giving to other people not so that they will give back to you but just to be a blessing to them.

That should take place all throughout our congregation. We should be a generous, loving, giving people looking for ways to bless one another.
But, no leader should go through life looking for handouts. No church member should go through life expecting handouts.
What Paul speaks of here is not that there's a problem of being generous. It's good to be generous. The problem is going through life expecting handouts to be given because when you expect it, you're not thankful.
And when there's no joy or gratitude, worship does not follow. We want to go through life trying to bless each other, help each other, encourage each other, serve each other, honor each other, but not looking to see how can I get this back in return.
[16:09] One way is manipulation. The other way is worship. If we love each other and serve each other and bless each other in such a way that we can show that grace has changed us and transformed us, but we're not looking for handouts to come back our way, then we make much of Jesus.

But if we go through life giving to someone else hoping they'll give us something back, blessing someone else expecting to bless us in return, then all we have found is a strategy to try to indulge our selfishness.
So Paul makes clear that it's good to bless each other, but we don't go through life looking for handouts.
Don't approach people or the church thinking in terms of what are you going to do for me? Instead, let's approach it as Christ followers, saved by grace, amazed at the glory that Christ would give us the privilege to make much of Him by serving each other, not looking for handouts back in return.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

That's what the world does. But everything about the church is supposed to be different. We've been called out from the world. We're different from the world.
[17:53] We're still in the world, yes, but no longer of the world. So we serve with a different motivation. We bless each other with a desire to make much of Christ, not ourselves.

Number one, avoid the one who is lazy. Number two, do not look for handouts. Here's a third principle we learn from this text. Verse eight, strive to not be a burden to others.
Strive to not be a burden to others. Now, we've got to, we've got to make sure, again, we're very careful here biblically. Let's look at verse eight. Nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day.
He says we were faithful. We were diligent. We didn't go through life making excuses. We worked hard day and night doing the work of the gospel, doing the work of serving each other, doing the work of evangelism, doing the work of making disciples, doing the work of fellowship.
We labored day and night. We were diligent with all that we did. And I just want to say, again, as we looked at last Sunday, those who are believers should be the most faithful, diligent workers in the community.
[19:33] If you have a job outside of the home, your boss should see something different in you, should see a work ethic and a drive and a desire to do your best not based on how much you make, not based on titles or position, but based on the fact that you wear the name of Christ.

And everything you do and everything you say is a reflection of what you believe about Jesus. He says, we labor day and night.
Look at the next phrase, that we might not be a burden to any of you. Now, we've got to be careful here, church, because we can miss it on both sides of the coin here.
It's true that there are some people who go through life always expecting somebody else to take care of their problems, always expecting somebody else to clean up after themselves.
We don't want to do that. We don't want to be a burden to others. There is another side of that coin though. There are times when people in the body of Christ need the service and the ministry that the church provides.
[21:11] And this is why we're here. And sometimes our pride gets in the way and we don't let the church serve us the way the church is designed to do.

When he says we did not want to be a burden to you, that is not in any way saying that those who have needs cannot and should not receive blessing from the church.
That's why we're here. The point he's making is we don't want to be lazy and slothful and apathetic and just assume someone else will do this.
But that is not to say that when real needs come your way that you should not joyfully receive the gift of your church loving you and serving you and helping you.
That's exactly what you should do. When we take the Lord's Supper people give to our love account. There's never any pressure to give, never any expectation to give, it's just for those who can and choose to.
[22:23] The money given in the love account we have helped countless families through the years. If you expect the church to always bail out your bad decisions that is sin on your part.

But that's not what we do in the love account. We're helping families who have lost their jobs. We're helping families with all kinds of needs that come up.
And for nearly all of us in this room we would say we would much rather give to the love account than receive from the love account. Most in this room you would much rather give a gift to a friend that's hurting than you would receive that gift back from somebody else.
I just want to remind us to be balanced in this. We don't go through life looking for handouts. However, the church is supposed to be the church.
And there are seasons in life where the most Christ honoring thing you can do is let the church be the church to you and pray for you and serve you and help you and minister to you.
[23:44] One of the things that can injure our ministry is pride and pride can leak out in so many different fronts. Pride can be I think I'm above this I'm too good for this I'm not going to serve this person because they're beneath me that's pride.

Pride can also look like I'm not going to let the church bless me and serve me even though that's what the New Testament calls them to do.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

when you go through your season of struggle when you lose your job when you have your sickness when you're the one in the hospital when you're the one who lost a loved one let the church serve you and bless you.
Let your Sunday school class provide meals for you. Let your class provide gift cards as a help to you and your family whatever it may be. One of the things that sometimes happens in the church is people want so much to not be a burden to others which is good that they stifle people using their spiritual gifts which is bad.
We want to be a place we're not expecting handouts we're not looking for favors but we understand that we need the body of Christ.
[25:20] The pastors need the body of Christ our Sunday school teachers do our deacons do all of our leaders do every member does no member in our church is outside of or beyond the body of Christ we are all within and a part of the body of Christ and that means looking to serve those who are in need and when it's your season of need to let the body of Christ bless you.

So yes we strive to not be a burden to others that's true but there are times where we have to let the church be the church.
Let's make sure our motive is right make sure our heart is right but when the church is serving you and blessing you and encouraging you and strengthening you that's what the church is supposed to do.
Fourth let your work ethic be worthy of imitation let your work ethic be worthy of imitation look at verse 9 he says it was not because we do not have the right but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate Paul says he's an apostle he could go in and he could command his own way and he could speak and work and talk in such a way that people would cater to him he said that's not what I came to do we came that we ourselves Paul and his fellow missionaries would be an example worthy of imitation now this is the second time in this short passage that he's brought up this idea of imitation verse 7 you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us verse 9 we want to give you and ourselves an example to imitate doesn't take much thinking here to see this is an important point he's making that Christians should live in a way that's worthy of imitation the question is again is your diligence is your work ethic is your level of faithfulness worthy of imitation here's the danger every member in this church gets imitated not just the good examples every member gets imitated where there are families who are faithful to the Lord and committed to the Lord that gets imitated and where there are families who are indifferent to the things of God that gets passed down too in our church service in our bible studies in every ministry of our church everybody plays a part in what gets imitated you see this so clearly when you look at the life of a little child children imitate their parents they don't they don't first stop and think is this good or is this helpful or does this make sense you just imitate it you just do it because you see it little kids little boys just dress like their dad because they've seen it little boys practice shaving not thinking is this good or bad or helpful or necessary just it's what
I saw my dad do little girls are going to imitate what they see their mom do and not just in the home that's true in the church they're going to imitate what they see and they're going to imitate examples given to them some good some not so good the question for us is this is my life worthy of imitation now let's be clear nobody can check out from this you can't get exempt from this because your life will be a model to somebody and somebody will follow your example no matter what let's make sure we're giving them a Christ honoring example to follow in first
[30:39] Peter five where it says of the pastor elders leaders in church that they are to be a faithful example to the flock we don't always get to pick what season of life you're an example to same thing is true for members in the church some of you have been incredibly blessed in very tangible ways be a faithful example of how to handle that some of you have had unspeakable tragedy be a faithful example then too some of you have a life that other people look at and they aspire to that be faithful with the respect that you've been given and the influence that you have others of you people come up to you and say

I don't know why you're going through so much suffering I don't know why you're having to stay in this season of hurting and grief be a faithful example of how to suffer well we don't we don't pick the situations we're placed in but we can say I want to have a life worthy of imitation I want to handle blessings well I want to handle suffering well I want to handle affirmation well I want to handle criticism well these are the things that we've got to say to ourselves over and over day after day that we want to give our very best all for Jesus all the time no matter the season people are going to

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

imitate and emulate how you live and what you say and how you do let's make sure that it's worthy! that and notice the way phrase is that we want to be an example to imitate we don't want to be pointers we want to be leaders pointers stand back and just tell other people you want to do this you want to go here you want to do this with your life that's just pointing the way that's just lectures that's just bossing people around that's just telling your kids live like this that's not leadership leadership says you put your feet in the steps I leave behind and you imitate me and you follow me and if you follow me you're going to get closer to Christ because as Paul said imitate me as I imitate Christ leadership leads the way we don't want to just point the way big difference we don't want to just tell our children work hard let's show our children and expect our children to work hard we don't want to just tell our teenagers to be responsible we want to show them how to be responsible we don't want to just sit back and tell children who come to our worship services sing listen take notes we can tell them that but that's pointing the way let's lead them that means we model the way children whose parents sing the children sing when the parents have a
Bible open so do the children when the parents serve so do the children and so when you've got little eyes looking at you make sure the the work you leave behind the example you leave behind is worthy of imitation now there's some we don't have children at home some of us we're older than that now we've aged out of that here's the temptation thank goodness I don't have to worry about being an example to kids anymore these young eyes are looking all around the sanctuary and they're seeing every example all around them to the parents of course I would say to you that you're the primary influence on your kids of course you are but church parents aren't the only influence on their children when those young eyes who are coming into worship service for the first time if they glance on your row show them an example of what
Christ centered worship is when young children see the way that you greet each other and help each other and the way you talk to your spouse let them see faithful examples of that diligent workers yes lives that are worthy of imitation yes but it must be done for the glory of Christ I tell our staff we talk about this I tell other pastors of the churches too when it comes up I want this to be a church where faithful workers never want to leave and where lazy people get run over I don't want lazy staff members here lazy staff members are a contradiction to the gospel
[36:49] I want our church to be such that people who are called to our leadership staff that they would work hard and want to stay for the long term and if somebody wants to be lazy and an excuse maker I want them to feel run over and think I got to get out of here because laziness is not worthy of the gospel I want people to feel loved supported cared for I want them to be allowed to make mistakes I want them to be allowed to learn allowed to grow I want this to be a good place for young people new in ministry to learn and get their footing underneath them but I want this to be a haven for lazy people if this is a haven for lazy people we are living contrary to the!

By the way I said this before it bears saying again if you want to know not only the character of your leaders but if you want to know how loving and kind of a church you are look at the longevity of those who serve here people don't tend to stay if the church is not supportive and caring and we got a lot of us on our staff been here a long time you have been watching us grow old many of us that shows not just their character it also shows your kindness this is the way the church should be when pastors take a church and it's just a career move it's just building a resume doesn't take long to see that but when you have leaders who say
I want to be a faithful example to the flock you got to stay long enough to be an example through lots of different stages that's not just true for pastors and leaders that's true for all of our church one of the beauties of church members who have been here for decades is you're getting to be an example to the flock through all kinds of phases not all of them easy ones some of you in this congregation members of our church you've been a faithful example of how to be married and how to raise kids and how to build a business you've been an example of how to stay faithful even through heartbreak you've been an example of how to serve
Jesus even as your health declines or even as family has not worked out the way you dreamed it would be many of you have been an example of how to keep loving Jesus even as you've buried a spouse the Bible says we're to have an example worthy of imitation and that's through all the seasons and even as I just scan people I love so dearly this morning through this congregation there are so many of you that have been such faithful examples to me examples of what it means to never stop loving Jesus to never stop serving some of you serve today with such joy and life so good and others of you serve with such broken hearts because life has been really hard but you still

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

set an example worthy to imitate and that's exactly how the church should be all your best all for Jesus all the time not looking for handouts not looking for praise or recognition but just simply saying how can I make much of Jesus in this season of life some seasons are kind of fun some seasons are really hard make much of Christ no matter what some people may look at your life and your family and think man you live a charmed life now the truth is everybody's got pain nobody else knows about but even if your life seems to others to be charmed in that sense be a faithful example to them they're going to trust you they're going to respect you and one of these days they're going to watch you suffer and your life worthy of imitation will continue on live a life worthy of imitation the human author here of course is the apostle
[42:53] Paul how would he describe his life quite blessed right he was used by the Lord to write a huge part of the New Testament you want to live a life that counts you want to live a life that matters I mean how do you get more important humanly speaking than writing scripture under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit what a great life Paul lived well sort of except for the shipwrecks and the beatings losing his life for the gospel just depends how you look at it but see God is sovereign over all those things Paul's responsibility was to be a faithful example not to pick and choose in which seasons and that's what he's passing down to this young church here verse seven you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us in the good and in loss in days of victory and in days of a broken heart

Paul establishes the church and then Paul and the missionaries get right out of town some things went well some things did not Paul has some faithful companions who ministered with him and labored side by side what deep friendships were formed you know 2nd Timothy where Paul says Demas has forsaken me why because Demas loved this world Paul had his heart broken too be a faithful example what I want to encourage this congregation to do is live a life worthy of imitation! how would a Christian handle this victory? How would a Christian handle this defeat?
How would a God fearing person handle this wonderful season? How would a Christ follower handle this disappointment? a faithful Christian handle being single?
Being married? How would a Christian handle raising young children in the home? How would a Christian handle being empty nesters?
[45:51] How should a Christian handle when you have more money than you need? How should a Christian handle it when you have lost your job and you stand in need? How would a Christian handle losing a loved one?

How would a faithful person handle their final moments on this life? Be worthy of imitation giving all your best all for Jesus all for the time?
And remind yourself this was written to the church because this is something not only are we to do individually but this is something we do collectively as the body of Christ.
Not so that we'll be recognized not so that our church gets some reputation but that Christ name would be magnified among us.
let's labor to that end for the sake of his glory and our good. Lord we thank you for your word this morning as we consider how we live our life right in the midst of routine things may we be found faithful.
[47:17] May we live a life worthy of imitation not for the sake simply of our reputation but the sake of the glory of your son. May your grace transform every part of our life working deeply within us changing everything about us that people truly would see Jesus within us.

We pray for the sake of his name. Amen. God bless you church. You're dismissed. Thank you so much for joining us via live stream this morning.
If you have any questions whatsoever about our church or the ministries that our church provides please visit us at fbcmustang.org We would love to follow up with you and get to know you better. As always we try to emphasize if at all possible if you could be here physically present with us we would love that and that would be a joy to serve you in that way but thank you again for joining us via live stream today.
Have a great day.!

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host