

WORK OF THE LORD
1Cor.15:58
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Our text speaks of work – “the work of the Lord”.
 - a. Whose work? Ours or his?
 - b. Even though the Lord had a work to do and did it; for he said, “I must work the works of him that sent me...,” Jno.9:4; then on the cross of crucifixion said, “It is finished...,” Jno.19:30.
 - c. This is not a work the Lord was to do, is doing, or is to do, but one we, as his disciples, must do; it is our work; our work to be done “in the Lord.”
2. Work is the law of the universe.
 - a. God works in nature, in providence, and in grace.
 - b. We have a work to be done “in the Lord.”
 - c. That work must begin with us; be performed by us; it is a work that can’t be shifted to others or delegated to others to be done for us or in our stead.
 - d. Our mothers or brothers can plead for us, but they can’t decide for us, nor do our work for us!
3. Before discussing our text – V.58 – and its exhortation to do the work of the Lord, we shall first note:--

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OUT OF WHICH THIS EXHORTATION COMES OR UPON WHICH IT IS BASED.

1. Throughout chapter fifteen the apostle has been speaking of and establishing the fact of the resurrection of the dead, and of the believer’s joyful triumph in the final contest with death, gaining the God-given victory through the risen Lord Jesus Christ, V.57.
2. In this case, as always in his epistles, Paul would not fail to make practical use of the doctrine that he has established concerning the resurrection of the dead.
3. His practice throughout his epistles is to present the doctrinal aspects of the faith of Christ on whatever subject is under consideration, then

the practical aspects of the doctrine, or to exhort the believer to the practice of it in their daily lives.

4. Thus should the practice ever follow or flow from the doctrinal like wine from the clusters of the grape.
5. Therefore V.58, our text, follows from his discussion of the resurrection, and he says: “Therefore (for this or that cause or reason), my beloved brethren, be ye...”
6. Though the believer’s victory is assured, for it is God-given “through our Lord Jesus Christ” (V.57), it needs to be continually prepared for, which is what the exhortation of V.58 is all about.
7. Though our salvation is in Christ, both here and hereafter, we must “work out your (our) own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil.2:12b), and “...he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved,” (Mt.24:13). Cf. Heb.3:14.
8. We, therefore, must make constant preparation and “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life...” (1Tim.6:12), and “keep yourselves in the love of God...” (Jude21), so that when the end comes we will be ready and may be found clad in “the whole armor of God” (Eph.6:11).
9. V.58, following the discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, exhorts believers concerning the work of the Lord while laboring “in the Lord.”

B. NEXT WE EXAMNE THE NATURE OF THE EXHORTATION

1. We are exhorted to “be ye steadfast...in the work of the Lord.”
 - a. Be settled; be decided; be steadfast in the practice of it; it no doubt includes or embraces both doctrine and practice.
 - b. Know what you should know, and knowing it, cling to it tenaciously.
 - c. See that your faith and the exercise of it does not stand in human theories, opinions of men, or the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
 - d. Be steadfast in holy character and spiritual attainments.
 - e. Be steadfast in times of peace; it times of trial; in times of persecution; in times of spiritual controversy.
2. We are exhorted to be “unmovable...in the work of the Lord.”
 - a. Having learned what is right and what is required, keep on doing it.

- b. Be incapable of being moved from it. Maintain an unshakable firmness in our efforts, in opposition to every temptation and danger.
 - c. Be not tossed about by every wind and doctrine, or halting between two opinions.
 - d. Not changing from day to day; not changing with the times and the dictates and moral culture of the times, as variable as the ladies fashions.
 - e. This exhortation is very must in order because men often embrace without due examination of the Bible record, or solely on the bases of human tradition or human authority.
 - f. Be ye unmoved:
 - (1) When you are assailed by false teachers and false doctrine.
 - (2) When you are met by bad example, whether by friend or foe or brethren in Christ.
 - (3) When your faith and patience are challenged and tried.
 - (4) When you are sinned against, either in word or deed.
 - g. The one who is not decided as thus exhorted in V.58 is decided not to be a Christian doing the work of the Lord!
 - h. The exhortation of V.58 is always timely because sin is still deceptive; licentious pleasures still allure; there are still worldly honors to tempt the ambitious; and because the pull of the world is ever present and powerful.
3. We are exhorted to be “*always abounding in the work of the Lord.*”
- a. It is an unceasing labor; not just a Sunday morning operation.
 - b. Each one of us must be engaged in the work every day, every year; there is no retirement plan, or retirement age, or retirement date.
 - c. It is to be performed perseveringly and abundantly.
 - d. “Abounding” – from an original work meaning “to be pre-eminent, to excel” (Thayer, 505) – It implies we are to seek and embrace every opportunity in which to do the work with fervor. Cf. Rom.12:11; Col.3:23,24.
 - e. It is in the work of the Lord that we are to abound which, of course, is a life and/or a work authorized and regulated by the precepts of the faith of Christ. Cf. 2Tim.3:16,17; Col.3:17.

C. INCLUDED IN THE EXHORTATION OF OUR TEXT IS A POWERFUL INCITEMENT OR ENCOURAGING MOTIVE WHICH

URGES US TO COMPLY WITH IT: “forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

1. It shall not be un-rewarded. Cf. Heb.6:10.
2. It shall not be un-successful.
3. It is not “in vain” (it is not empty, useless, or without result or success) even in this present world; for even in this world the faithful servant of the Lord reaps the fruit of his labor in the Lord.
4. Though not attended with full and complete reward in this earthly life, and even though in some cases we may be exposed to temporal loss and suffering for righteousness sake, yet the advantages resulting from our labor in the Lord are more than sufficient to counterbalance any sufferings to which our work in the Lord may expose us.
5. It is in the future life that the rewards of the righteous will be full and complete.
6. The resurrection day is appointed as the period when the complete triumph of the Christian shall commence.

III. CONCLUSION

1. All of us know that in Jesus Christ we have a loving Savior.
2. But we may not so constantly bear in mind that he is also our Lord and Master of which our text reminds us.
3. And we may not always fully realize what that means for us – that if he is our Lord and Master, then we are his servants – duty bound to do his bidding. Cf. Lk.6:46; Col.3:17; Heb.5:8,9; Jno.12:48-50.
4. The duties of the Christian’s life here on earth in the service of the Lord are emphatically styled a word and a labor.
5. That work or labor is, of course, to be a work or labor of faith and love.