

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 306
Series: St. John's Passion - Gospel of John chapters 12-21
Today's verses: John 17:4-8
Today's Topic: Finishing The Work
Date: 15th April 2004
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John 17:4-8 MKJV I have glorified You upon the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. (5) And now Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was. (6) I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave to Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. (7) Now they have known that all things, whatever You have given Me, are from You. (8) For I have given to them the Words which You gave Me, and they have received *them* and have known surely that I came out from You. And they have believed that You sent Me.

God gives His servants a certain allotted task so that they can say "I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." or as Paul says 2 Timothy 4:7 MKJV I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

John the Baptist seems to have thought the same way: Acts 13:25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Who do you think that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, One comes after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.

Thus Jesus, John the Baptist and Paul had sense of living out a calling until the end, and also had a distinct sense of when that end would be. Paul even sees all believers as having good works that God wants each of us to do:

Ephesians 2:10 ISV For we are his masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared long ago to be our way of life.

The result of such completed work is glory to God "I have glorified You upon the earth". And at the completion of the task the servant of God can expect a reward:

"And now Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was."

Or in Paul's case: 2 Timothy 4:8 MKJV Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing.

However the quality of the ministry is all important and we cannot take short-cuts and still receive a reward:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 MKJV (10) According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds *on it*. But let every man be careful how he builds *on it*. (11) For any other foundation can no one lay than the *one* being laid, who is Jesus Christ. (12) And if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, (13) each one's work shall be revealed. For the Day shall declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try each one's work as to what kind it is. (14) If anyone's work which he built remains, he shall receive a reward. (15) If anyone's work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss. But he shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

The apostle Peter tells us that we should live reverently being conscious that God will be the impartial judge of the quality of our good works, though we are not saved by them:

1 Peter 1:17-19 MKJV And if you call on *the* Father, who without respect of persons judges according to the work of each one, pass the time of your *earthly* residence in fear, (18) knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from *your* fathers, (19) but with *the* precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;

While Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 MKJV (9) Therefore we are also laboring to be well-pleasing to Him, whether at home or away from home. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things *done* through the body, according to that which he has done, whether good or bad.

This is not judgment for salvation but for eternal status and reward. We are most clearly not saved by works, rather we are saved for works:

Ephesians 2:8-10 MKJV For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast. (10) For we are *His* workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them.

In Jesus' case His task was to create a new community of believers that believed the teachings of Christ and understood that Jesus was sent from the Father. A community which was then sanctified by His work on the cross and empowered by the arrival of the Holy Spirit. The eleven apostles were the main fruit of the ministry of Jesus Christ. They would provide the proper leadership for the early church. Thus a key component of doing the job may be raising up leaders to replace you and carry on the work.

You may be thinking "I have no idea of the task that God has given me." Then ask the following questions:

- a) How does Scripture define good works? What biblical examples speak most to you? What would a perfectly righteous person (such as Jesus) do in your situation?
- b) What good works are you skilled at?
- c) What good works make you "come alive" spiritually?
- d) What good works give you a profound sense of accomplishment and an internal "well done" from the Holy Spirit?
- e) How can you do more of these things that are good and profitable?
- f) How can you stop doing things that are vain and unprofitable?
- g) Do you have a sense of vision or calling or a compelling sense that something "needs to be done"?
- h) Has God ever spoken to you through Scripture, prophecy or through a wise person in a way that rang true with you?
- i) What are your life circumstances and what ministry / good works do they indicate?

When you have done this bring the results to God in prayer and ask Him to guide you so that at the end of your life you may be able to say "I have finished the work that You gave me to do."

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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