"Your Labor is Not in Vain!"

I Corinthians 15:58
3-3-2024

INTRODUCTION:

* YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT **YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD!**

THE LORD'S WORK IS WORTH EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY YOU PUT INTO IT!

If you believe that your labor is not vain in the Lord you will make 3 resolutions regarding your service for Jesus Christ:

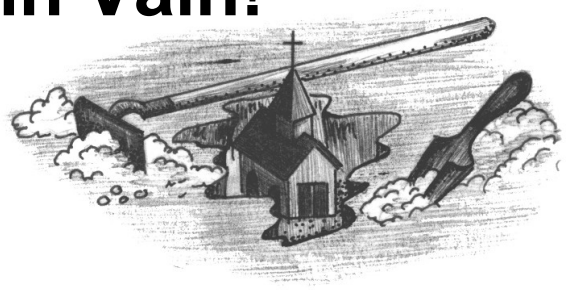
I. I WILL NOT QUIT in my service for Christ!
("Steadfast")

II. I WILL NOT MOVE from my service for Christ!
("Unmovable")

III. I WILL NOT BECOME COMPLACENT in my service for Christ
("Always abounding")

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In adversity, trials etc. are you ever tempted to just give up? Quit? Has this thought ever entered your mind: "Living the Christian life - its just not worth it" Or you may ask yourself "does my labor for Christ really matter?" "Is it worth the effort I put into it?"

Context of I Cor.15:58: The Church at Corinth was listening to false teaching. Teaching that denied the resurrection. Not just the resurrection of Christ, but the concept of the resurrection itself. (The Greeks viewed the body as evil and therefore a resurrection of such a literal body was viewed as the most ungodly thing imaginable)

The result of such a Satanically inspired false doctrine would be to quit (give up). Verse 33

- Wrong friends lead to wrong beliefs, & wrong beliefs end in wrong actions.

After all, if Christ did not rise from the dead our preaching would be vain, and our faith would be vain (v.14). We would still be in our sins (v.17).

If Christ did not rise again - what right would you have to think you would? (we would have no living savior, no deliverer from sin & Hell).

What proof would we ever have that Jesus Christ was who He said he was (God incarnate)?

Read - I Cor.15:51-57: We have victory over death!
(v.57 - "giving" = present tense, emphasizing certainty)

Verse 58: "therefore" giving the conclusion; "because we have the victory over death and corruption....."

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"labor" = That which leads to exertion and results in fatigue & exhaustion.
cp. I Cor.15:15,16 "fellow laborers with Paul"
cp. I Tim. 5:17 "to labor in preaching & teaching"
cp. I Th. 1:3 "labor of love"

Paul said that he did not run in vain or toil in vain. Phil.2:16

"The Lord's chosen ones shall not toil in vain" (Is.65:23)

"vain" = Empty, without content, without result or profit, fruitless, ineffective.

ex. Giving a cup of cold water in Christ's name will bring with it a reward.

- Serving Christ's children is serving Christ Himself (Read Mt.25:31-46; *v.40,45.)
- Mary's anointing of Jesus with a years wages worth of perfume was not in vain. (Mt. 26:6-13).
  (Note: the disciples' response: "Why this waste?" and Jesus' answer)
- Israel who did not want to rebuild God's temple after the Babylonian captivity. They lived for self-interest (which proved to be vain; ex. "putting wages in bags with holes) The prophet Haggai calls on them to "consider your ways" (See Hag.1:2-8).

If you believe that your labor is not vain in the Lord you will make 3 resolutions regarding your service for Jesus Christ:

I. I WILL NOT <u>QUIT</u> in my service for Christ!
("Steadfast")

Steadfast = settled, solid, permanent stable, persistent.
An ability to withstand assault.
This word is translated "settled" (Col.1:23) and "steadfast" (I Cor.7:37) in describing a strong determination in the heart. And the noun form is translated "ground" in I Tim.3:15 describing the Local Church as the pillar and ground (secure protector) of the truth.

We often use the expression to our children when they are fidgety: "Stay right where your are and don't move"; This is the idea Paul has in mind when commanding us to be steadfast, and unmovable.

BECAUSE WE SERVE A LIVING, RESURRECTED SAVIOR OUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN! THEREFORE <u>HANG IN THERE!</u> <u>STICK TO IT!</u> <u>DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!</u> <u>DON'T QUIT!</u> "Be not weary in well doing...we shall reap..."

How does one receive the ability to remain steadfast (to have such determination?) Does it come by ones own strength? No!

When King David trusted in his own self-sufficiency he wrongly said in his prosperity "I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6)
He later admitted "He (God) only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved" (Ps.62:2) Again in verse 6 he states "**I shall not be moved**". He said in Ps.13:4 that his enemies would rejoice if he was moved. (Ps.13:4)

II. I WILL NOT MOVE from my service for Christ!

("unmovable")

"unmovable" = to not change direction, or go from one place to another, to flee (Is.22:3), or to remove - ex. removing the ancient landmarks (Dt.19:14).

Today we a living in a society that thrives on change (everything needs to be new or different) The media is pumping into our minds one word - dissatisfaction (ex. with yourself "you need to buy this product to really be glamorous, masculine etc.) The grass is described as being greener on the other side of the fence, and dissatisfaction is the result - either with ones wife, job, parents, standards, etc.)

Some things do need changing. And some things must never change. You must never be distracted (even with good things) from your service to Christ.

You must lay your all on the altar and leave it there!

"The only problem with "living Sacrifices" (Rom.12:1,2) is that they keep crawling off the alter." - Dr. Joseph Aldrich

Don't detour off of the straight and narrow road to serving Christ! "Someone is reported to have asked a concert violinist in New York's Carnegie Hall how she became so skilled. She said that it was by `planned neglect'. She planned to neglect everything that was not related to her goal." - John MacArthur

One test of a man's character is determined by what it will take to move him from what he believes and practices.

When faithfulness is most difficult, it is most necessary.

III. I WILL NOT BECOME <u>COMPLACENT</u> in my service for Christ
("Always abounding")

"**Always abounding** in the work of the Lord"

To "abound" = To do more than enough. To excel, to exceed profusely, beyond measure, surplus, overflowing, to overflow the boundaries.

ex. Just as Paul was <u>exceedingly</u> zealous in the persecution of the church (Acts 26:11) and the traditions of the Law (Gal.1:14), he pursued with the same zeal the saving work of Christ in the building up and sanctification of the churches (Phil.1:9,26; I Th.3:12; 4:1,10).

The churches of Macedonia and how they overflowed in giving (II Cor.8:2,8; 9:8).

The widow in giving her last mite, gave all she possessed, while others gave out of their abundance (Lk.12:15).

We ought to give <u>more than enough</u> to Christ since He has given more than enough to us! He not only gave us eternal life - He gave us <u>abundant</u> life! (Jn.10:10).
He taught the Disciples this lesson by multiplying the loaves & fish & having much (12 Baskets life <u>over</u> (same word).

If we have ever done more for Christ than we are presently doing, then we are backslidden. We should be doing more for God this year than last year.

Another reason we ought to "abound" in our service for Christ is because it is not our work, it is the "<u>work of the Lord</u>". He is our master, our boss. Ill. of workers who while on the job look for opportunities to goof off - waste time - look for ways to just get by.

Conclusion:

If we could ask Noah: "was it in vain to build the Ark?"
If we could ask Moses: "was it in vain to lead Israel?"
If we could ask Daniel: "was it in vain to stand up for God?"
If we could ask Paul: "was it in vain to plant over 100 churches?"
They would all respond **no!** It was worth every ounce of energy I invested in it!

No one will ever waste His time, energy, money etc. while involved in the work of the Lord!
(Note: it is His work, not ours; for ex. this is not my church it is His-I Pet.5)

Vain pursuits in life: living for self, pleasure, fame, money, career. They will all come to a screeching halt one day! You need to invest in that which will last for eternity!

* There are no regrets from those who are faithful to the Lord!

Because Jesus lives, my labor is not in vain!
He is coming back! And His "reward is with Him"

Ex. the song: "I wonder if I've done my best for Jesus..."

Personal testimony