

Fellow-Workers With God

(I Cor. 3:9)

1. An analysis of this text reveals the following three things:
 - “We are laborers”
 - “We are laborers together”
 - “We are laborers together with God”
2. If we fail in our God-appointed mission it is because we fail to work, or we fail to work together, or we fail to work together with God.
3. On the other hand, if we succeed, it is because we labor; we labor together; we labor together with God.

I. “We Are Laborers.”

- A. The subject of work is discussed in some phase or another over 600 times in the New Testament
 1. Such terms as “work, labor, serve, service, plant, edify, strengthen,” are used. God is ever working. How this thought should shame the hearts of those who are otherwise minded. It is utterly impossible for the child to be like his Father, if he does not work.
- B. The sobering fact that many do not work is one of the saddest commentaries of our time. Wasted manpower in God's church is one of the saddest spectacles of our time. Some church members are like the lilies—“they toll not neither do they spin.” We do a lot of preaching against instrumental music in the worship, but we do a lot of *fiddling* around about the Lord's work.
- C. The Idlers are set forth as:
 - Foolish builders (Mt. 7:24-27),
 - Barren trees (Lk. 13:6-9),
 - Fruitless branches (Jn. 15:1-8),
 - Foolish sleepers (Mt. 25:1-3) and
 - Wicked and slothful servants (Mt. 25:26).
- D. Why do some fail to labor?
 1. We confuse the worship and the work of the church.
 - a. Concerning the worship, it is said, "they continued steadfastly"(Acts 2:42).
 - b. Concerning the work it is said: "they went everywhere preaching the word," and “daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ”(Acts 8:4; 5:42).
 2. We often fail to really worship because faithful service always follows true worship (Mt. 4: 10).
 - a. When Isaiah worshiped, he presented himself as a willing volunteer in God’s service (Isa. 6:8).
 - b. George Bailey said, “sitting in a church house will no more

make you a Christian than sitting in a chicken house will make you a chicken.”

3. We have substituted words for action.
 - a. A thing is better “well done” than “well said.” Remember the Lord cannot say to me “well done” unless I have done well.
 - b. Someone has said “when all the affairs of life are said and done, there will be more said than done.” Jesus said, “I must work,” not just talk about it (Jn. 9:4).
4. We lack faith.
 - a. Faith is a dynamic principle that leads men to obey (Rom. 1:5).
 - b. The sects preach salvation by faith only, and then work like beavers. We preach faith must work in order to save, then practice faith only.
 - c. The primary application of James 2 is for Christians. Lack of faith is a great problem which accounts for Paul's warning (Heb. 3:12). Paul said, “We labor, because we trust in the living God” (I Tim. 4: 10).
5. We lack love for our Lord. Love as a word is greatly misused.
 - a. We speak of loving dogs, cats and candy. Love is a dynamic compelling force that causes men to act. It caused God to act (Jn. 3:16). It will compel us to act (Jn. 14:15).
 - b. Love for the family compels mothers and fathers to labor for their children. If we love God, it will not be necessary to beg us to teach, visit, to do deeds of benevolence. “A labor of love is not irksome.”
6. Fear of failure, being overly cautious, indifference, a defeatist attitude, and depending on others are causes of much idleness in the church today.

E. Idleness:

- (1) Will cause one to violate every command of God concerning work.
- (2) It will cause us to waste God-given talents.
- (3) It will retard the spiritual growth. Idleness feeds the flame of factionalism.
- (4) It robs God of His glory, and it will cause immortal souls to be lost.

II. “We Are Workers Together.”

- A. We must learn to work in double harness.
 1. Paul spoke of Philemon and many others as “fellow-workers.”
 2. The paralytic was borne of four. This is a good example of co-operation among workers. Each man carried his corner. (Mk. 2).
 3. Self-depreciation causes some to fail (I Cor. 12:15). Depreciation of others causes many ruptures of oneness in service (I Cor. 12:21). The cripple and the blind man reached their destination because of unity.
 4. The walls of Jerusalem rebuilt because of united effort (Neh. 6:6-16).

“The people had a mind to work.” They had a mind to work together.

- B. The passages we use to combat denominationalism were of primary import to the church. “Stand fast in one spirit striving together” (Phil. 1:27), was written to members of the church of the Lord. One essential factor of cooperation is operation.

III. “We Are Workers Together With God.”

- A. The Bible plainly teaches our God is great, mighty, able and willing.
1. We must never circumscribe Him by our limited and finite reasoning. Rather let us prove Him (Mal. 3:10).
 2. Like Nehemiah, let us believe that our God will prosper us. God not only calls, “come work for Me,” He also calls, “Come work with Me.”
- B. “Leave something for God to do.”
1. “I have planted, Apollos watered; *but God gave the increase*” (1 Cor. 3:6)
 2. “Our weapons are mighty through God” (II Cor. 10:4).
 3. Paul said, “God worketh in you” (Phil. 2:12-13).
 4. When Nehemiah and his co-laborers finished their tasks, the enemies knew the wall had been wrought by God (Neh. 6:16).
 5. When God's work has been done God's way God will receive the glory.

Conclusion:

1. Let us work together with God.
2. The field is large (Mt. 13:38). The need is great (Jn. 4:35). The time is now (Jn. 9:4). The call is urgent (Mt. 20:4-6). The reward is sure (I Cor. 15:58).