

ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK

By Bill Irby June 24, 2008

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At the close of his great resurrection chapter Paul thanked God for “the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57). He then said “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” Notice the word “therefore.” It indicates that there is a relationship between the victory that God has provided in Christ through faith and certain responsibilities or duties.

These responsibilities and duties include being steadfast and unmovable. This must refer to the need for doctrinal care with regard to the resurrection of Christ, as this is the subject of the previous fifty-six verses. It also refers to doctrinal and behavioral matters dealt with in the whole of the letter to this point.

Doctrinal and ethical steadfastness is a wonderful thing. Doctrinal fidelity is essential. So is living the Christian life. But there is an additional responsibility and that is of “abounding in the work.”

Every Christian must take this admonition to heart. We are not all equipped equally. We do not have the same talents and abilities. But we all have some. Cases exist wherein Christians move to the sidelines and allow others to do their work for them. This is never good, not for the church and certainly not for the Christian.

Life itself forces us all to make changes in the things that we do. We go through periods of great vitality and energy. Surely we accomplish more than of a certain type of work than perhaps we do later in life. But as we age, we become equipped to do other things. This is the cycle of life with which we are all very familiar.

Nowhere, however is the Christian encouraged to stop working for the cause. We can pray even when we are sick. But we must never see ourselves as justified in not working for the cause of Christ. Note that the apostle said, “always abounding.”

But we each must find our niche. I know the things I am equipped to do and those are the things I do. Other folks can do other things much better than I can. For instance, there are preachers that are excellent Hebrew scholars. That is not my thing. My work is in another direction. I am thankful that they have that desire and ability, not just because I don't, but because it is good that somebody does that work. I can't be critical of the man for spending his time doing that kind of work; instead I am thankful for him.

The work God has given us to do is a blessing. Whatever you find to do for the cause of Christ, recognize that there is associated with that effort the very blessing of God. Whether your work is for a Bible class, a sermon, in your giving, in taking food to folks, in offering encouragement to those doing difficult tasks, or any of hundreds of other things, it is all good work and it will be a blessing to you.

Paul also said, “*Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*” We can be sure of this. Even if we think that what we are doing is just a little thing, if it is right and good, it is “not in vain in the Lord.” Thanks be to God that He blessed us with work to do.