



Getting Our Work Done

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23).

Hard work seems to suffer from a bad reputation. People still regard it as a virtue in theory. But more and more it seems that it is a virtue for everyone else to practice. At least once a week I receive junk e-mails inviting me to participate in the latest get-rich-quick business (read “scheme”), and promising me, “You will never have to work again.” The promoters simply assume that I would never want to work again, and I have to confess that there is a sinful side of me to which such promises appeal.

Paul’s words mentioned above in Colossians 3 were originally directed to Christian slaves, but they have application to all of us. Paul doesn’t try to console them for their misfortune of being forced to work. (While we may complain about “slaving” for our employers or families, these people literally were). He doesn’t hold out the promises of some work-free future. (While heaven holds the promise of reward, it will not be free from service to God).

Rather, Paul encourages them to work as hard as they can, not so that they can earn a future reward, but because God is so good he has made that reward a certainty even before they have done anything at all. “You know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord...” Paul’s words suggest an entirely different reason for our work—not for what we can get, but in response to what we have received. Even life lived as a slave can be a response to the love God has shown to us.

Paul also reminds us whom we are really serving, “the Lord Christ.” To serve us, this same Christ didn’t shy away from work of the lowest and most difficult kind. He took “the very nature of a servant,” and he “humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:7-8).

Even in the paradise and perfection of Eden, Adam and Eve had work to do. Like ours, their work was not a way of earning a reward from God. They were already living in paradise! Rather, it was a loving way of responding to the gifts that God had already given.

This encouragement to “work hard” goes beyond our places of employment. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.” These encouragements also apply to our service at home or at church, and I would like us to consider the latter as we look ahead to the year before us.



Recent months have seen a renewed emphasis on the service of Calvary's members in Calvary's ministry. Last summer the cancellation of our VBS do to a lack of volunteers reminded us that "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." A shortage of help is nothing new in the church. It was simply the first time for us it had hit this particular program so hard.

More recently we have been developing long and short range plans for our ministry. This, too, reminds us of our need for help in order to reach the goals we have for building our members in their faith and sharing that faith with our community.

Now Calvary's boards are in the process of planning a "Draft Day" by which our boards and committees can more directly approach individual members of our congregation and ask them to use their talents to serve God's Kingdom. Not all of the work is easy nor highly visible, but all of it is valuable. If you are contacted to serve, please consider it an opportunity to respond to the love the Lord Christ has shown by serving you.

Whether you are serving as an elected officer, a called worker, or an occasional volunteer, our Lord desires and values your service. As you "work at it with all your heart," you might consider this prayer, which was shared with me by a veteran of service to our congregation. I have altered the wording slightly so that each of us might pray it personally:

Lord Jesus, Bishop and Head of the Christian Church here on earth and King of kings on the throne of eternity, Calvary congregation has honored me by choosing me to serve You in a special capacity of congregational life. The ability to perform my duties well and acceptably comes from You and depends upon Your blessing. Give me a ready heart and willing hands and a truly Christian vision to grasp each and every opportunity to serve You, confess You as my Savior, and serve all people within and without the church.

At no time let me forget that I am rendering this service to You, and not merely to please people. Let me experience daily the satisfying joy of doing things for You. If it is Your will, grant that I may also see the fruits of my labor. Allow nothing to discourage me or rob me of the zest and zeal which is put into my heart by Your Holy Spirit. Preserve in our congregation the unity of peace, that with one accord we pursue the tasks that lie before us. Then Yours shall be the praise and the honor and the adoration from our grateful hearts, now and always. Amen.

In Christ, Pastor Vieths