



CrossRoads Notes:

Turn your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 3:6-8,11

Title: What God Won't Bless

Theme: Beware of Slothfulness (The trade-mark of an undisciplined laborer)

Series: Laboring Together With God

Introduction: *The church of Jesus Christ has a great privilege in working with God on the "Great Commission" as long as she is a God-loving, Word-filled, and ministry-minded disciple maker.*

By God's grace we have been called to Christ, it is by the blood of Christ He purchased His church and it is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of Christ that the children of God have gifts for the purpose of building and edifying the Body of Christ. All Illuminated Christians have a heart cry, that desire to give reasonable service unto the Lord.

The apostle Paul lays down a foundation for all Christians as they enter into the year 2006 that helps maintain a proper focus in fulfilling their part of the "Great Commission."

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:6-11)

Interrogative Sentence: *What is our responsibility in planting the seeds of God's Word that when watered by the Holy Spirit will give all in our area the opportunity to choose this day what God they will serve? What keeps us from becoming a hindrance to the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ that has plagued the church through the years?*

There are tow dangerous types of laborers in the church and there is one type of worker who is very much a blessing to God and beneficial to the Body of Christ. The two laborers that hinder the work of God are 1.) The "Undisciplined Laborer." 2.) The "Controlling Laborer." And the laborer who is a blessing is 3.) The "Trusting Laborer."

Jesus Christ has given gifts to the church and the purpose of those gifts is to prepare the body of Christ for works of service. (Ephesians 4:11-13) In January: Men of God fasting, praying and studying the word of God. These surrendered servants of God are able to pray through what God has called them to do, thus, enjoying the fruits of faithfulness. It would be wise for us to do the same, to spend a few weeks Biblically reflecting.

It must be noted that today's truth from God's Word says, "...but God made it grow." Reward in heaven will not be based on the numbers or the results that we think we have accomplished. It will be based on faithfulness to God's call.

Proposition: *I would propose to you that God's Word gives clear instructions to those who have the heart of the Psalmist who wrote, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws."* (Psalm 119:105-106)

Transitional Sentence: *Therefore, let us consider how the Lord views laborers in the Word of God.*

Our key text today helps us understand our activities and responsibilities as well as teach us God's role in using Christians as disciple makers.

Transitional Sentence: *Often when anyone tries to point people to good Biblical discipline in the Lord's work they are often called a legalist. Dr Jim Berg so correctly points out that "A person who is pleasing self by imposing discipline upon himself and others is just as destructive as the person who is pleasing self by ignoring the discipline of himself and others. The first leads to the fleshly self-discipline of a legalist and the other produces the fleshly self-indulgence of a sluggard, and neither of these pleases the Lord." However, there is one type of laborer that is pleasing to God.*

Let us now begin to take a closer look at each of these kinds of laborers over the next three Sundays
(Proverbs 24:30-34)

Through the writings of Solomon, the Holy Spirit tells the end of a lazy laborer in life and ministry, the results is total ruin. It is not that a sluggard doesn't have good intentions, he desires to have a harvest for his labors for the Bible says, "The sluggard craves [or desireth] and gets nothing," (Proverbs 13:4)

The Bible refers to sluggards a lot and they are never put in a good light. Proverbs 12:27 says, "The lazy man does not roast his game, but the diligent man prizes his possessions." (Proverbs 12:27)

Over the years in ministry you come across many who have sought Biblical education, the Lord makes a way for them to get into school yet they just can't seem to get through the required courses. There are many out there who have spent as long as five years in Bible College and not have a degree in anything. They would start a vision, yet not complete the home work for the year and the next year they would try to take a different direction and not see that year through to a healthy completion either and after five years of schooling they end up \$30,000.00 plus in debt not achieving anything. Sadly, many sluggards have used the good hearts of many to get where they are, and in five years find themselves accomplishing nothing.

This is not so with the diligent: The substance of a diligent man is precious in God's sight for the diligent children of God see all their opportunities as coming from God. They find comfort in the place He puts them and they work toward accomplishing the task and they do not rob from others their time, strength and money. They fulfill their part so God will fulfill His part bringing forth growth.

David Wilkerson:

The Bible says even more about the fruit of the sluggard. Proverbs 15:19a says, "The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns..." (Proverbs 15:19a) The whole of Scripture teaches that nothing is meant to work unless the Lord is in the center of what you are doing. This is especially true if you are proclaiming to be a Christian. The truth of this portion of Scripture teaches that the way of the sluggard finds obstacles along in life. These obstacles are different from trials that are meant to grow Christians in Christ.

God's mercy contains two elements. The first is an inward concern for those who are bound by sin or some miserable plight of someone, and the second is an outward action aimed at relieving the sinful condition of the person caught in the bondage of being a sluggard. It is God's mercy to bring Christians to repentance through allowing difficult circumstances to come in their lives because of not living a surrendered life to the Lord.

"And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons... No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.'" (Hebrews 12:5-8,11)

Every God-loving, Word-filled, ministry-minded disciple maker will be more concerned about the condition of his heart before the Lord than over the unpleasantness of being chastised for laziness.

The question the Holy Spirit has for the spiritual hearts of Christians today is when the Lord cries out for their attention, will they continue to go their own way or will they submit to the Lord right now?

Terry Laughlin's Testimony:

The Bible says more about the sluggard in proverbs 18:9, "One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys." (Proverbs 18:9) Laziness in the ministry, the church, the home and the work place is just as destructive as the man who purposely destroys things. There is no room for continued laziness in God's work and all one needs to do to get rid of it is expect true accountability and the sluggard will be gone or he comes to know the joy of diligence in all he does.

I want to share one last passage of Scripture on what the Bible cautions about sluggards in the work place and the church. Proverbs 10:26 says, "As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is a sluggard to those who send him." (Proverbs 10:26)

Pure vinegar to the teeth is a very unpleasant experience and smoke to the eyes is a hindrance to all progress. This little proverb portrays the aggravation in sending a lazy servant on a mission of the Lord's work or in work place. It always ends up a confusing and unpleasant ordeal for everyone involved.

In closing: There are three types of laborers found mentioned in the Word of God and two of them are displeasing to the Lord. One type of laborer is a blessing to God and the Body of Christ. We have just talked about one, the sluggard, next week we will talk about the controlling laborer and on week three will talk about the trusting laborer.

At any one moment of in service to the Lord Christians find themselves in one of these three categories. And they need to be like those faithful men and women of God who have the courage to spend a good portion of the first of the year allowing the Holy Spirit to examine their hearts and move them to becoming the laborer that truly trust in God, so the local church can see the Lord bring forth spiritual and numerical growth. It was once said, "Healthy things grow."

Let us pray!