

God's Fellow-Workers

No. 84

Introduction.

I. The text of our lesson today is found in 1 Corinthians 3:1-9. I invite your attention to the reading of this passage.

1CO 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? 5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

II. From this reading I call your attention to the expression "God's Fellow Workers." Three great truths are revealed in this expression.

I. **Christians Are To Be Workers** - The first truth is the fact that Christians are to be workers.

A. This is a fact taught over and over again in the New Testament. (Matt. 7:21; Jn. 9:4; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9; Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:1; Jas. 1:22, 4:17; Rev. 20:13).

1. It is utterly impossible to read these verses without being impressed with the fact that Christians are to be diligent, active, zealous, excited workers for the Lord. We are to be on fire for Christ.
2. In spite of these passages, however, a large percentage of the members of the Lord's church do little in God's service.

B. There are many reasons for this failure to work. I would like to mention a few of them.

1. Some do not work because they have **mistaken participation in worship services for the work of the Lord.**
 - a. Sometimes I have heard men state they were active in the service of God. When asked what

they did, they would mention the fact that they help conduct the worship services.

- b. This is wonderful and is to be commended, but it is not the work of the Lord. No place in the New Testament is it ever set forth as such. The work of the Lord is to teach God's word the lost, encourage the fainthearted, help the needy, build up the church.
2. Others do not work because they **pass the responsibility on to someone else**.
 - a. The late **Will Rogers** said, "There were three stages in American history: The passing of the Indian, the passing of the buffalo, and the passing of the buck."
 - b. Many in the Lord's church are certainly going through this last stage. When work is to be done they are quick to pass the buck to someone else. They do not seem to realize they have a personal responsibility, a personal obligation, to work for the Lord. Someone else cannot do their work for them.
 - c. The church needs more workers today. Too many are riding free and not doing any worthwhile work. It is the worker who pleases God. It is the worker who builds the church and is a blessing to society.
 3. Others do not work because they are **not excited about the cause of Christ**.
 - a. Many are like the college **football player** who was content to sit on the sidelines. **One day the coach** was in a tight spot in a crucial game. He called this lad who had great ability and said, "What would you do if the team were behind and on the one yard line, and we had one more down and one minute to play in the game?" The boy immediately answered, "I would move down to the end of the bench so that I could see the play better."
 - b. **Too many Christians, like this boy, are content to sit on the bench. They need to get off the bench and get stirred up about the cause of Christ - the greatest cause in the world.**
 4. Others do not work because they are **satisfied to find fault with what others are doing**.
 - a. Most churches are divided into 2 classes – those who do something, and those who sit still and find fault with what is being done. No matter how it was done this second group could have done it better. Most of the time these people are inactive in God's service.
 - b. There is a story told of a **dog hitched to a lawn mower**. He stopped pulling to bark at a passerby. The boy, who was guiding the mower, said, "Don't bind the dog—he is just barking for an excuse to rest." Many in the church complain and find fault as an excuse to rest. They are like blisters - they don't show up until the work is done.
 5. Others do not work because they **do not love the Lord enough**.
 - a. Love is not the weak word it is often depicted to be. It is a dynamic, compelling force. It leads mothers and fathers to labor for their children. It led God to give His only begotten Son.
 - b. It compels us to labor for the Lord. (Jn. 14:15; 15:14).
 6. Others do not work because they **do not realize the seriousness of doing nothing**. They think doing nothing is a safe and sure course. The Lord taught, however, in the parable of the talents that the man who does nothing will be cast into the outer darkness. (Matt. 25:30).

II. **Christians Are Fellow-Workers** - The second great truth found in the expression “God’s fellow workers” is the fact that Christians are “fellow workers.”

A. As Christians we are to work together for the cause of Christ.

B. We should work together for at least **4 reasons**.

1. In the first place, we should work together because **cooperation shows the world that Christians have love for one another** as Jesus commanded. (Jn. 13:34, 35).

2. In the second place, we should work together because **by cooperation they can do great things for the Lord**. Unity of efforts gives us great strength and the power to win the world to Christ. A lack of cooperation makes us very weak and ineffective. We will never make a great impact on the world until we work together as a congregation and as a brotherhood for the cause of Christ.

3. In the third place, we should work together because this is the **only way we will save the lost world**.

a. **The story is told of a little girl who wandered from her home a wheat farm**. The wheat was nearly as tall as she was. When the mother missed the girl she searched and could not find her. she sounded the alarm and more than 100 neighbors came to the rescue. They rushed through the field, this way and that, but they were unable to find her. Finally, a man of wisdom said, “Let’s join hands and march through the field and we will cover all the area.” They found the body of the little girl but life was gone. The mother fell on the body and sobbed in grief. Then she arose and cried, “Oh, why didn’t we join hands sooner.

b. This tragic story has a vital lesson contained in it. The world is lost in sin. If we are going to reach it in time with the gospel, we must join hands and work together. Delay will mean the loss of many precious souls.

4. In the fourth place, Christians should work together because **each member has a vital role to play in the body of Christ**.

¹²For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? ¹⁸But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him. ¹⁹And if they were all one member, where were the body? ²⁰But now they are many members, but one body. ²¹And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. ²²Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: ²³and those *parts* of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these

we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness; ²⁴whereas our comely *parts* have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that *part* which lacked; ²⁵that there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or *one* member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ASV

- a. Here Paul compares the body of Christ to the human body. He states that each member of the human body is vital to the welfare of the whole body.
- b. So it is with the spiritual body of Christ, the church. Each member is vital. If each member does not do his part the whole body is limited and cannot work to its fullest capacity.

III. Christians Are God's Fellow-Workers - A third great truth revealed in the expression "God's Fellow-Workers" is the fact that Christian are fellow-workers in the employment of God.

- A. We must not work for our own glory.
- B. As God's servants we must always work for His glory. (Matt. 5:16).

Conclusion.

- I.. May each of us always remember that we are God's fellow-workers. May each of us become zealous in the Lord's behalf and work together for God's glory.
- II. **During World War II a young man and nine other parachuters were to make their first jump from a plane.** The young man was third in line. When the moment arrived for the jump, the first man stepped out bravely, his parachute opened, and he floated to safety. But the second man lost his courage and stepped to one side. So this boy summoned up all his courage, stepped out and floated down to the earth. As he descended, he heard a loud explosion above him. He looked up and saw that the plane had exploded and was falling apart. Every man on board died, including the boy who had his chance to jump and missed it.
- III. If you are without Christ, your hesitation can be even more fatal than the boy's indecision. He lost his life because of his delay. Many others have lost their souls because they put off too long becoming a Christian. The door of mercy is open! Christ wants to save you! Don't wait until it's too late! Come to Christ now and let Him save you. Come as we stand and sing.

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