

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“The habit of preachers today is to address their people as though they were all Christians and just need instruction...men and women are being treated as saved who never knew they were lost.” [Lloyd-Jones]

*“In my lifetime I did not care to hear that word that cut me most, and showed me my lost estate aright. I was vexed to hear my sins mentioned, and laid to my charge. I loved him best, who deceived me most; who said, Peace, peace, when there was no such thing.” (Jer. 5:30,31).
[Bunyan, John. A FEW SIGHS FROM HELL]*

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

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Christ Reformation Church – YouTube Channel (Light for Dark Times)

We Must Work While it is Day – Night is Coming

June 2, 2024

Sermon Text: John 9:4

Scripture Reading: John 9

Joh 9:4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.

When I was a police officer, most of my time spent at work was at night. In the city at least, you might almost say another world comes out. People who sleep in the day and wake up to darkness. Generally, these are not desirable people. Evil loves the darkness.

But most people do their work in the daytime. In the light when the sun shines. Most offices and many businesses close as the night time

draws near. People generally work while it is daytime.

And it is this imagery – day and night – which the Lord Jesus uses to illustrate a vital truth which we dare not fail to get a firm hold on. It this:

We must work the works God has given us to do while we still have opportunity – while it is daytime. The day will not last. Night is coming when our opportunity to do this work comes to an end.

Listen to our friend J.C. Ryle introduce this unbending principle:

“Christ gives us here a solemn lesson about the use of opportunities. We must work while it is called today, the night is coming when no man can work. That saying was eminently true when applied to our Lor Himself. He knew very well that his own earthly ministry would only last 3 years altogether, and know this he diligently redeemed the time. He let slip no opportunity of doing works of mercy and attending to

his Father’s business. ‘I must work. The night is coming when no man can work.’

The saying is one which should be remembered by all professing Christians. The life that we now live in the flesh is our day. Let us take care that we use it well, for the glory of God and the good of our souls. Let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling while it is called today. There is no work nor labor in the grave, toward which we are all fast hastening. Let us pray, and read, and keep the Lord’s day holy, and hear God’s Word, and do good in our generation. Let us live as people who never forget that the night is at hand. Our time is very short. Our daylight will soon be gone. Opportunities once lost can never be retrieved. A second lease of life is granted to no man. Then let us resist procrastination as we would resist the devil Whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might. The night comes when no man can work.” [Expository Thoughts on John, J.C. Ryle]

I would like to call your attention to the following points which are derived from our Lord's words:

1. We have work to do. We must do it.
2. What this work primarily is.
3. The time which we are given to do this work is going to come to an end.
4. Night comes when the light is withdrawn.
5. At the end of our earthly day, we will either enter into eternal day or eternal blackness.

I. We have Work to do and We Must do it.

Most of mankind and even many who profess to be Christians are spiritual sluggards. When it comes to the work given to them by the Lord, they are best described this way:

Pro 6:9-11 How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? (10) A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, (11)

and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Each one of us must confess, if we are honest, that there is some degree of sluggard in us still. As long as we are in this sinful flesh we must do battle with it by the Spirit to overcome spiritual laziness and slumber.

The Lord has given us work to do, and we must be about doing it.

Eph 5:13-14 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, (14) for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

1Th 5:5-6 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. (6) So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.

We see this diligence in the Lord Jesus when He was still a boy:

Luk 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?

We have work to do. You have work to do which has been given to you by the Lord Himself. We are not put here upon this earth to be sluggards.

II. What is this Work which we have to do?

This of course is a fundamental question which is vital to answer correctly. How many people around us are very diligent in their work? Many of them put us to shame if we evaluate them only by their efforts and the time spent. And yet, they miss it all because the work they are doing is not the work the Lord requires of them. This was the error which Paul pursued when he was a Pharisee and which his fellow Jews still worked at:

Rom 10:1-3 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2)

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

It is not enough to be zealous. We must be zealous *in the work which the Lord has given us to do*. What then is that work?

Joh 6:27-29 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” (28) Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” (29) Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

The foundational, fundamental and necessary beginning of the work God has given us to do is – *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*. All other work, unless founded upon this cornerstone, will only be wasted

labor spent. But when we believe in Christ and are born again through that faith, we can set about doing the works He has created for us to do.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Understand? The work which the Christian does, the work given to us by the Lord to do, *is prepared for us in advance and it is our job to labor in the field He has assigned us to.* We do NOT write out our own job description!

Pro 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. (6) In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

There it is then. The work which we are to do is – *believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and follow His lead into the field of labor and the work which He has decreed for us to do.*

III. The Time to Work has an End – the Night Comes

Work, for the night is coming,
Under the sunset skies;
While their bright tints are glowing,
Work, for daylight flies.
Work till the last beam fadeth,
Fadeth to shine no more;
Work, while the night is darkening,
When man's work is o'er.

That old Christian hymn says it very well. The night is coming when our opportunity to do the Lord's work is over. Time will have run out.

I want us consider a particular aspect of *the night*. Listen to it from the Gospel of John:

Joh 12:35-40 So Jesus said to them, "**The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light,** lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. (36) While you have the light, believe in the light,

that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. (37) Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, (38) so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (39) Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, (40) “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”

While you have the light. How was it that the light was among them? Jesus meant this:

Joh 9:4-5 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. (5) **As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**”

As long as.... This necessarily tells us that there is a time-limit to the

light of Christ. Jesus told those people that it was daytime for them *as long as He was among them*. But when He departed, the night would come and their opportunity would be past. *Work, for the daylight flies.*

Here is the point:

Each one of us is given a day, a time of Christ’s light shining upon us so that we might have opportunity to believe in Him and become children of the light. But that day is not forever. It comes to an end and is withdrawn. Jesus withdrew and hid himself from those who would not believe in Him. He sent the night. He blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts.

A preacher of days gone by named John Brown said:

“An unregenerate man, after joining a visible church, is less likely to be converted than he was previously.”

Why? Because while he still had light, while the day of Christ was still upon him, he chose to play the

hypocrite and become a church member, wearing a Christian disguise, and thus hardening his heart. The night most often comes upon such a person as that.

That is why, you might recall, Jonathan Edwards preached at great length on the subject of *The Barren Fig Tree*.

Luk 13:6-9 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. (7) And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' (8) And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. (9) Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Work while it is day. Work while you have the light of Christ shining. Because the day does not last forever. Night comes and opportunity flies away.

IV. When Our Earthly Life is Over, we will each one enter either into Eternal Day, or Eternal Darkness

Listen again to these solemn words from J.C. Ryle:

"We may learn from these verses the duty of using present opportunities. The Lord Jesus says to us all, 'Yet a little while is the light with you...Walk while you have the light lest darkness come upon you. While you have light, believe in the light.' Let us not think that these things were only spoken for the sake of the Jews. They were written for us also.

The lesson of these words is generally applicable to the whole professing church of Christ. Its time for doing good in the world is short and limited. The throne of grace will not always be standing; it will be removed one day and the throne of judgment will be set up in its place. The door of salvation by faith in Christ will not always be open; it will be shut one day forever, and the number of God's

elect will be completed. The fountain for all sin and uncleanness will not always be accessible; the way to it will one day be barred, and there will remain nothing but the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

These are solemn thoughts; but they are true. They cry aloud to sleeping churchmen and drowsy congregations, and ought to arouse great searchings of heart. Let us walk while we have the light. Let us not linger halting between two opinions but believe to the saving of our souls. Do we have more Lord's Days? Let us not waste them in idleness, carelessness, and indifference, but throw our whole hearts into their sacred observances. Light is about us and around us and near us on every side. Let us each resolve to walk in the light while we still have it, lest we find ourselves at length cast out into outer darkness forever. It is a true saying of an old divine, that the recollection of lost and misspent opportunities will be the very essence of hell." [Ibid]

Darkness. Utter, palpable, darkness. Jesus described it as such:

Mat 22:11-13 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. (12) And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. (13) Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

He had no wedding garment, which is to say, here was a counterfeit Christian who was not clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Over and over again the Bible describes hell as eternal, outer darkness. Why? Because it is devoid of the light of Christ. Hell is eternity spent in the absence of God who is Light. Outside of Christ. *Outer darkness.* For all those who end their, day will never come to them again. *Do not be such a fool. Work while it is still day.*