

ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD

TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 15:58

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want us to give particular attention to verse 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
2. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord" means always engaged in proclaiming the Word of God, always advancing the kingdom of God, always furthering the Gospel of God, and always doing the will of God. And doing all for the glory of God!
3. The phrase means more than just being engaged in the work of the Lord, but to be engaged diligently; and to be engaged laboriously.
4. It means we are to be excelling in this great work for the Lord.

I. THE MOTIVATION FOR THIS WORK

1. We must keep our motives pure. The context of I Corinthians 15 is the resurrection, and verses 51 and following describe the rapture.
2. After the rapture, we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, "that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).
3. Our motives will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. "Every man's work shall be made manifest" (I Cor. 3:13).
4. We must never forget that this is God's work. It is "the work of the Lord" (15:58).
5. Our Lord said in John 9:4, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

*Work, for the night is coming,
Work through the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparkling,
Work 'mid springing flowers;
Work when the day grows brighter,*

*Work in the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.* -- Anna L. Coghill (18-years-old when she wrote this hymn)

6. Ephesians 2:8-10 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
7. Our Lord said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
8. Titus 2:14 says we are to be "zealous of good works."
9. Titus 3:8 says, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."
10. Hebrews 10:24 says, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."
11. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3, there are seven letters written to seven churches. To each one of these seven churches, our Lord says the same thing: "I know thy works" (Rev. 2:2, etc.).
12. This is an important work. It is God's work. Therefore, it is a great work. Nehemiah sent messengers to Sanballat and Geshem, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down" (Nehemiah 6:3).
13. It is the work which our Lord has commanded us to do. Our Lord said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16). It is a great work – "the Great Commission."
14. Our Lord has equipped us to do this work. Right before He ascended into heaven, He said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
15. In Zechariah 4:6 we read that the Word of the LORD came unto Zerubbabel, saying, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."
16. This is God's work. We are God's workmen. And this is God's church. Our Lord said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

II. THE MANNER IN WHICH WE ARE TO DO THIS WORK

1. God's work must be done God's way. It grieves me that much church work is done in a worldly manner.
2. Second Timothy 2:5 says, "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."
3. Missionary to China Hudson Taylor said, "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply."
4. Let us consider the manner in which this work is to be done – "be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."
5. "Stedfast" means, "firmly persistent." Being steadfast means we must not waver. Some Christians are always wavering. They are unsettled; they are always changing. Some people (even many preachers) change like the weather.
6. Let us be stedfast! Missionary to India William Carey said, "I can plod. I can persevere to any definite pursuit."
7. Several of the students who started out with me in Bible college did not make it to graduation day. Some didn't even make it to their second year. Sadly, that is the way it is in most Bible colleges and seminaries.
8. Many men who have entered the ministry have dropped out, and are now engaged in secular employment. Some are very discouraged. Some are backslidden. Some are adulterers and drunkards.
9. Many men spend two or three years gathering financial support for the mission field and they never make it to the mission field. Or some leave after a few short years.

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out.*

*Don't give up though the pace seems slow --
You may succeed with another blow.*

*Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man;
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup;
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.*

*Success is failure turned inside out --
The silver tint in the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It might be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit --
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.*

10. The words “stedfast” and “unmoveable” (15:58) denote resistance to any attempt to be moved off the straight and narrow path. Satan tries to move us.
11. And Satan uses friends, relatives, co-workers, classmates, etc. that will try and “move” us, but we must be “stedfast” and “unmoveable.”
12. “Abounding” means, “to overflow... to exceed beyond measure.” We see this word used often in Scripture. Our Lord said, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). In John 10:10, our Lord used the adjective form of the word.

III. THE REWARD WE WILL RECEIVE FOR DOING THIS WORK

1. “Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). Our labor will surely be rewarded.
2. Some day soon we shall all stand before the Lord. Some will hear Him say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21).
3. But perhaps there are some here tonight who will not hear those words. It is not too late to make amends!

4. The Bible says, “Ye know that your labour is not in vain.” Faithful Christians will be suitably recompensed at the judgment seat of Christ. Different crowns will be given.
5. Paul said in II Timothy 4:8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”
6. We will be with the Lord forever. David said, “I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalm 23:6).
7. Our Lord said, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

CONCLUSION:

1. At the end of I Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul moves from belief to behavior. “Therefore, my beloved brethren (in the light of this important truth), be ye steadfast, unmoveable, etc.”
2. To be “steadfast” and “unmoveable,” means to be settled in one’s belief in Bible doctrine, particularly the doctrine of the resurrection. Paul had said back in verse 12 that some of them had doubts about the resurrection.
3. Paul means we are to stick to the things that the Bible teaches.
4. I am praying that by God’s grace, this church will remain steadfast, and immovable, and abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.