

Laboring For Christ is Not in Vain

by James Jennings

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being steadfast and immovable in the work of the Lord, drawing from 1 Corinthians 15:58. The speaker highlights the significance of the resurrection, the need to avoid false teachings that misrepresent God, and the urgency to always abound in good works for the Lord. The message encourages believers to find motivation in the assurance that their labor in the Lord is not in vain, leading to a life lived with purpose and eternal impact.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:58, 1 Corinthians 15:12, 2 Timothy 2:15, Philippians 3:20, Revelation 14:13, Galatians 6:9

Topics: "Steadfastness in Faith", "Purposeful Living"

Description

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Transcript

I want to look at a verse that has been an encouragement to many. It's been an encouragement to me to press on. If I heard correctly, when someone asked what verse had been administered to him, he quoted this verse.

When my father-in-law was dying, he was looking at all of us, he quoted this verse. We're talking about 1 Corinthians 15-58. Therefore, which we'll look at, that's obviously referring to what was in this chapter.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain. It's not without a purpose. It's not useless.

It's not in vain. So let's pray and then we'll hopefully get some encouragement from this text. Father, Lord, we need You this morning.

We have our own situations as a church where we need Your grace. And yet, Lord, I think of this other church in Houston today and what they're going through. Father, they're in a harder spot than we are by far, and I pray You would help them to remain immovable, to not lose heart.

And Lord, I pray You'd help us to keep pressing on. Lord, I pray You would quicken this text. Lord, if this verse is not an intimate friend to some of the believers here this morning, I pray You'd help me to preach this text in a way where it becomes... Lord, where it just grips the mind.

Where it becomes that intimate friend that we go to in times where we could be growing weary or losing heart or not being steadfast in the truth or not abounding in good works. Lord, that we would find the encouragement here that is here. And so, Lord, I just pray for Your help.

Lord, would You be with us not just now, but in the discipline to come and Tim's sermon and the fellowship and what Craig shares at the Lord's Supper. Lord, we long for You to meet with us in every aspect of our meeting today. Lord, we long for Your presence.

And so we're asking for You to come and to be with us. In the name of Your precious Son and the name of the Lord Jesus, Amen. So Paul is calling us to be steadfast, to be immovable, to always be abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labor is not in vain.

And he starts this out with therefore. And that therefore is there to point us to this whole chapter. If you don't know 1 Corinthians 15, verse 12, Paul is dealing with this issue.

We proclaim Christ is raised from the dead, and yet, look what some are saying. Some are saying there's no resurrection of the dead. Verse 12.

And then Paul says, look, if you're going to teach that, there's no resurrection of the dead, then that would mean Christ hasn't even been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain. There's no purpose.

And your faith is in vain. It's useless. There's no purpose.

Verse 15, we're even found to be misrepresenting God. And that's what false teaching and false teachers do. They misrepresent God.

Verse 16, he says, if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith, it's futile. And you are still in your sins.

And then all this means that those who've fallen asleep in Christ, they've actually perished. Verse 19, if in Christ we have hope in this life only. So if there's no resurrection, we only have hope in this life, then we are of all people most to be pitied.

And then he goes on in verse 20. And throughout the passage to show us that there is a resurrection and Christ was the first fruits of that. And we're going to come.

When Christ comes, our bodies are going to be resurrected. And it's debatable here whether when it says that they would say the dead are not raised at all, verse 29, some would say they had a belief that the dead wouldn't be bodily raised. That it was just going to be some spiritual resurrection.

I would tend to think that this error, that they were putting forward that there's no resurrection was such an error that there was extinction. There was annihilation. There was nothing more to come.

Because Paul even says in verse 29, he says if the dead are not raised at all, he goes on in verse 32 to show what type of mindset and principle of life we should have. If the dead are not raised, verse 32, let us

eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Right? We're going to die.

We're going to be extinguished. There's going to be annihilation. It's just all going to end and we're going to die.

It's all going to be over. So whether their error was specifically saying there's no bodily resurrection or whether their error was specifically that there's going to be nothing after death, you're just going to have annihilation. Either way, it's heresy.

And either way, it affects how the Christian lives. And so Paul says, therefore, in view of the fact there is a resurrection, in view of the fact, verse 55, O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your stain? In the fact that the Christian has victory at death, Paul says, my beloved brothers, be steadfast and immovable. So let's think of that.

This first thing he calls us to in view of this glorious reality of the bliss of heaven to come and of the fact that we will be resurrected, he says be steadfast, be immovable. And that word be, it means to cause to become, to come or to acquire or experience a state. So Paul is saying experience a state of being steadfast and immovable.

Experience a state where no heresy coming in will move you away from the truth of the Gospel, of the resurrection. To be moved into that heresy, as we looked at, moves you into believing Christ did not raise, and then ultimately that means your faith is in vain and your labor is in vain. Think about that word, immovable.

It means to not be moved from its place. To be firmly persistent. I mean, you can shove and shove.

You can shoot heresy. You can shoot lies. You can shoot plausible arguments.

You can have all manner of signs and wonders come about. And that person is not moving. They're not moving from the truth.

Thomas Edwards, he said, the word unmoved denotes a resistance to the special attempt to overthrow their faith in the doctrine of the resurrection. Be steadfast. Be steadfast.

Paul uses that same word in Colossians 1. He says, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, what's it mean? Not shifting from the hope of the Gospel that you heard. So to be immovable means to not shift from the hope of the Gospel that you heard. And Paul gives this Gospel at the start of 1 Corinthians 15.

And he says of first importance, verse 4, that he was buried and that he was raised. Christ was raised. The resurrection is vital to the Gospel message.

The believer's death and what happens is vital to our motivation to live as Christians. So the steadfast person, they don't shift. They don't change their mind on these things, but they're firmly planted.

But you know what happens? You look through church history. You look through your Bible. You find people who seem to be immovable.

And what do you find eventually happens to them? They move. They're preaching eternal punishment. And 50 years later, they're denying eternal punishment.

They're teaching Catholicism. Teaching a work salvation. And 50 years later, they're a Catholic.

And they've renounced the faith. We see in 2 Timothy, we see these two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus. It says, this is not being immovable.

They had swerved. Swerved. Is that being steadfast? Is that being immovable? No, they had swerved from the truth.

And in their case, they were saying the resurrection has already happened. And they were upsetting the faith of some. These men were not immovable.

These men were not steadfast. Think about what Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 3. When I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith. Why, Paul? For fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.

Paul realized he could labor and labor over people and they could receive the truth and seem to be immovable, and at a later date, they might not endure and they could forsake the truth. And they would be those who have believed in vain. Their belief had no purpose.

It went nowhere. It was worthless. And so the Christian life is one of endurance.

We observe the warnings. We stay awake. We don't want to swerve and wreck.

We want to be steadfast, immovable in what we believe. So that's the first thing. Paul says in this verse, beloved brothers, get in a state of being steadfast and immovable in regards to what you believe, in regards specifically to this doctrine of the resurrection.

Therefore, because this resurrection is true, Christ really did raise, we really will be raised, and if you deny that Christ was raised, or deny that we're going to be raised, you deny that Christ is raised and your faith is futile. And you've believed in vain. So if you're not immovable on this, you're ultimately going to believe a lie.

You're going to perish. And then he says this, the next thing he says is to be so be steadfast, immovable, and then be always abounding in the work of the Lord. So let's think of this.

Be always abounding in the work of the Lord. What is the work of the Lord? Well, in a broad way, it's whatever one does as a believer as they obey Christ. If you're living out these commands in Titus 2, wives loving your husband and children, that's you seeking to do works for the Lord.

That's in the broader idea. Specifically though, I think what Paul is hitting at here is getting the Gospel message out. Always abounding in the work of the Lord as in evangelizing, ministering, putting forward this Gospel message that he gave right here at the start of the chapter.

The greatest thing we deliver to people, it's not the truths in Titus 2, though those are important, it's this truth of the Gospel and one of these essential things is the resurrection. Now, does Paul call us here to be casually doing the work of the Lord? No, he doesn't. What does he say? Be, get in a state of always abounding in the work of the Lord.

What's it mean to abound? Abound. To abound means to exceed a fixed number. To be over and above a certain amount.

This is not a person who has an attitude of doing the status quo, but a person longing to be absolutely and abundantly abound in the work of the Lord. It's this idea of to abound in the work of the Lord means to excel still more. It means to do more for Christ.

It means to be overflowing, to be rich in doing the work of the Lord. It means to go above and beyond what you think might be expected of you. So Paul is saying this to the whole church.

He's not just saying this to some specific believers. He's saying we all should seek to be overflowing in the work of the Lord. Whether generally in obeying all the commands and truths we find in Scriptures or specifically in getting out the Gospel, we've got to be, he says, always abounding to excel still more.

Some of you got the letter from our sister whose husband was just removed from China, and if you read on the back cover, she wrote a brief article. And on there, she says, and this is after apparently her time in China is limited. And maybe she'll be able to make it back.

She doesn't know for certain. Listen to what she says. While here in China and in the future, if God lets me live, I am determined to follow the words of John Wesley.

Do all the good you can to all the people you can in every way you can for as long as you can. And then she adds, for the glory of God and their good for now and for eternity. That's someone always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Even into their 70s, even when it looks like a door is shut because there are many adversaries, the mindset is not this is it. The mindset is let's keep doing more. David Brainerd, he said, I long to fill the remaining moments all for God.

Though my body was so feeble, he died at around 28, missionary to the Indians, and weary with preaching and much private counseling, yet I want to sit up all night and do something for God. To God, the Giver of these refreshments, be glory forever and ever. Amen.

So you see Brainerd's attitude? I want to sit up all night doing something for God. George Whitefield basically did do that. He says multitudes after his sermon followed him home weeping.

And so, you know what Whitefield did the next day? The next day, I was employed from 7 in the morning till midnight in giving spiritual advice to awakened souls. Seven in the morning until midnight. I mean, look, I can get tired after one five-hour conversation.

But to be going from 7 to midnight. That's this attitude. He knows.

His labor's not in vain. This is what matters. There's a purpose in life to live for the Lord Jesus, and he's pouring his energy into this.

But the only way you'll abound in the work of the Lord is if you're first immovable in regards to the true doctrine of who Christ is and what He has done. So, a third thing. First, we've looked at how he said be steadfast and movable.

And then secondly, he says to be always abounding in the work of the Lord. And then the third thing is this, in some ways, it's the reason Paul gives as to why they should not be moved from the truth. Be moved from abounding in the work of the Lord.

Verse 58, why should we always be abounding in the work of the Lord? Knowing. So there's this knowledge here that in the Lord, the Lord who rose from the dead, who will raise us from the dead, we know in Him our labor. It's not in vain, because we will raise from the dead.

We're not going to be annihilated. We're not going to have no resurrection. We will be resurrected.

And there is victory in Christ. And so we know that, and in view of that, knowing our labor is not in vain, we should all the more abound in good works for the Lord. Think about it.

People are searching for a purpose in life. And so many people, they find something in this life that it's purposeful, but its purpose does not extend beyond the realm of this world. It has nothing that goes into eternity and has an eternal impact on people's souls.

It just ends here. They help people here in a certain way, and that's it. So in the end, if you're that person, you should feel like my life, this is vain.

This is ultimately no purpose because it ends at death. It does not go further. But engaging in the work of the Lord, preaching the Gospel, honoring Christ, living for Him, it goes further on.

It goes past this life. It matters. It's not without a purpose.

And that's why we press on. We know the sting of death is removed. You look at what he says right before he says therefore.

It's not just these truths of the resurrection, but look at the truths right before. Verse 53, "...for this perishable body must put on the imperishable." This mortal body must put on immortality. We're going to put on immortality.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up. So we're going to die, but when we die, it's going to be swallowed up in what? There's nothing more? No. It's swallowed up in victory.

Oh, death, where is your victory? Death doesn't have a victory. Oh, death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law. But for the Christian, we can thank God that He's given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ who did rise from the dead, who will raise us from the dead, and therefore, in view of that, my beloved brothers, we should do everything we could to put ourselves in a place of being immovable in regards to the truth and in regards to our action.

We should always be abounding in the work of the Lord because we have the knowledge that being in Christ, having this eternal bliss to come, having victory in Jesus Christ, our labor is not in vain. So our future hope should presently energize us to go all out for Christ. He says you're knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Labor. Labor. Labor.

Labor is to intensely labor with trouble and toil. This word describes a job difficulty. It's difficult.

I mean, look at v. 30 in this chapter. You want to think what Paul is thinking about when he's thinking about labor? He says here, this is what he means. V. 30, why are we in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you which I have in Jesus Christ our Lord.

I'm dying every day. What do I gain? If humanly speaking, I fought with beasts, whether that's beasts like Titus 1 and his people or its actual physical animals, if I fight with beasts, if the dead are not raised, what do I gain? But here Paul says, in danger every hour. So Paul's saying here, be steadfast and movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, being in danger every hour, facing shipwreck, facing getting stoned, facing all sorts of trials.

That's what Paul's thinking about when he says labor here. It's this intense toil and struggle. And he's saying that, it's not in vain.

Me being in danger every hour, me facing beasts at Ephesus, it's not a vain thing. Because I'm not just going to die and perish. I'm going to die and one day, I'll put on immortality.

I'm going to have eternal bliss with Christ. And this is the Paul who in 2 Corinthians 11, 23, it's amazing, he says, with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, greater labors, this is his labors, countless beatings, often near death, five times I received the hands of Jews, the forty lashes, last one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned.

Three times I was shipwrecked. At night and at day, I was adrift at sea on frequent journeys in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city. Remember he said danger every hour? They were seeing where it's coming from.

Danger in the wilderness. Danger at sea. Danger from false brothers like those who are trying to corrupt Christians by teaching that there's no resurrection.

Hunger, thirst, without food, cold exposure. That's Paul's labor. So the moment we start to think, man, I'm really laboring for Christ, right? You look at that and you say, I have not arrived.

I have not arrived in many ways. And then you go to the very next chapter, 16, verse 9, look at what Paul says here. A wide door for effective work is open.

Probably going to be an easy wide door, right? You think it's just going to be easy? Nope. And there are many adversaries. Look at Paul.

Is he letting adversaries prevent him from always abounding in the work of the Lord? No, he's not. Because he knows it's not in vain. This is not without a purpose.

This is not useless. There is a glory to come, a heaven to come. There is victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul says here in verse 32, what do I gain? What do I gain? We should think of that. As Christians, you are in this thinking about what will you gain? What did Paul say in Philippians 1? For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. I mean, it'd be crazy to fall to the Lord if there was not such a glorious gain to come.

And there is. And that's a motivating factor for our always abounding in the work of the Lord. And look, if you don't believe in the resurrection, believing this error leads to what principle of life? And I already mentioned it, but verse 32.

What do I gain if humanly speaking I fought with beasts of deficit? If the dead are not raised, how should we live? Should we be in danger every hour? No. Let us drink and eat. For tomorrow, we die.

That's what you should do every hour. Find all the pleasure you can in this life because there's nothing to come. So it really won't matter.

Or if there is anything to come, it's just we're all going to be perishing because Christ didn't rise from the dead. Let's just eat and drink for tomorrow we die. An old historian in the first couple of centuries, he says how when a mortal plague came to Athens, look at people's attitudes.

They committed every shameful crime and eagerly snatched at every lustful pleasure because they believed that life was short and they would never have to pay the penalty. See, what you believe really does affect how you live. Doctrine does affect practice.

Believing that sin has been overcome, that with death there's going to be us putting on immortality. There's going to be eternal bliss with Christ. That should motivate how you live.

People teach error in different forms. Back then, the Sadducees in Acts 23, the Sadducees said there's no resurrection. No angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledged them all.

Was 1 Corinthians 15 where these converted Sadducees professing converting Sadducees? Some would assume that was who was putting forward this false idea. We find in Matthew 22 that the Sadducees who were teaching there's no resurrection, listen to what Jesus said to them. Listen to why they fell into this false teaching.

Christ says you're wrong because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. So what was one of the main reasons they fell into this error? They did not know the Scriptures. They didn't know the Bible.

How important it is that we know our Scriptures. If you're going to be unmovable, if you're going to be immovable and not be moved, you've got to know your Bible. We've got to know our Scriptures.

Or we're going to have plausible arguments come. And they will dupe us out. You will have signs.

Things that appear to be supernatural. And if you don't know the Scriptures, you're not going to be immovable. And ultimately, your belief is going to be in vain.

It's going to be useless. It was a false belief. So we see here, Paul is arguing on the resurrection.

It shows us, number one, that false teaching will disarm you of purposeful living. As I looked at when I taught on this a year or so ago, I focused on verse 33. Do not be deceived.

Bad company ruins good morals. And obviously, in context, the bad company is none other than false teachers and their false views, as he said earlier, who are misrepresenting God. You hang around people who misrepresent God and it will corrupt you and it will affect the way you live.

And ultimately, it will affect where you're going eternally. But at the same time, if you're around true teaching and the truth, does that affect you too? It absolutely does. It should cause you to be steadfast and movable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

There's ways you could illustrate this. It's very obvious in the world. I was thinking about a job.

You have someone who's very zealous at work because there are some incredible benefits coming. Right? Their boss has told them when you finish, there's going to be a \$50 billion retirement bonus. And

we've got this mansion and we have all these things.

That rightly motivates. And then you've got another employee, they're coming along and they're saying, you know what, so-and-so just retired and guess what, it was all a sham. He didn't get any of it.

What does that do to your motivation? You know what, that's the Christian. We're going along. We're looking eternal bliss.

And you've got people who come along and they're saying, you know what, when you die, there's no resurrection. It's kind of like, wait, what? Not just, wait, what? No resurrection. That means, wait, what? The Bible? That means Christ didn't actually raise.

If we're not going to raise, and if He didn't raise, what we believe is in vain, then we actually of all people should be most to be pitied. So the truth, it should affect us. There's great gain.

There's nothing greater than eternal life and knowing Jesus Christ. To have Christ. So here's some questions for all of us.

Ask yourself this, what does it take to move you? Paul says here, be immovable. What does it take to move you to get you to shift from the hope of the Gospel? And look, a little while we're dealing with the church discipline situation, but then we have some people who've left the church. And you know what you're going to hear? They left the church.

You know what caused them to shift from the hope of the Gospel? Signs and wonders. The subjective. Is that going to get you? Are you going to let something you think you've seen overtake what you know you've read in the Scriptures? It happens all the time.

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light in order to deceive. What does it take to move you? As I already mentioned, if you don't know the Bible, that's what was said of the Sadducees. You don't know the Scriptures.

You don't know the Scriptures. Are there any lofty arguments that shift you from your hope in Christ? Another question. How long am I to be abounding in good works? What does Paul say? How long is this abounding supposed to happen? Like five years? Always.

Abounding in the work of the Lord. To the end. Always.

You know what Paul's hitting at here? He's trying to put some urgency in us to live for eternity. He's trying to say, guys, keep your minds on eternity. Come on, let's keep thinking about heaven.

Let's keep thinking about eternity. Let's keep thinking about putting on immortality. Let's keep thinking about being raised.

Let's think about that victory that is in Jesus. This text calls us to urgency. Can you say of yourself that you're always abounding in the work of the Lord? Or another way to put it, are you going beyond what you think God expects of you? Are you going beyond? Or is there a status quo mindset? You know, you've been really zealous for a season, for ten years, and you think, look, I've really been zealous.

Now because of the past zeal and all these works in those ten years, the next ten years, I can just kind of take it easy. Not that the Lord doesn't change in seasons of life, and you might not have as much

availability and time for certain outward activities of evangelism. But ask yourself, I'm asking myself, am I right now overflowing in works for the Lord Jesus Christ? Or ask yourself this, are you abounding in something else? Right? If you look at your life, what is it you abound in? If we all looked at your life, we put it up there and we saw it, are we going to see throughout the life there's a string of everything that's pointing back to somehow living for Christ? As the wife loves her husband and children, she's abounding in the work of the Lord.

She doesn't want the Word of God to be reviled. As the worker is at work, he's not being a people pleaser or an I pleaser. He's abounding in the work of the Lord.

He's seeking to have open doors with his co-worker. He's seeking to just obey his boss and not dishonor him. What if you're lacking motivation? Are you lacking motivation? What's Paul give as the motivation? Look, you want more motivation to abound in the work of the Lord.

What's Paul say? Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing in the Lord your labor is not in vain. You want motivation to abound in the work of the Lord, to abound in doing what honors and pleases God and living for Him in any facet of your life? Guess what? That's the only life that's not a vain life. That's the only things that will ultimately have a purpose and matter in the end is seeking in whatever you do, whether you eat or you drink, you do all to the glory of God.

He gives that as the motive, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. Why is it not in vain? Therefore, my beloved, we will be raised. There is victory in Christ.

We will put on immortality. It's thinking about other places. The text, I love the quote, about always taking pain to have a clear conscience.

You know what Paul's motivation is there? He says, in view of this, I always take pain to have a clear conscience both before God and men. You know what he says in view of if you read the verse right before it? It's in view of the resurrection of the just and the unjust. The fact there's a resurrection doesn't just cause Paul to always abound in the work of the Lord, but one way was he always abounded in having a clear conscience before God and man.

Resurrection motivated Paul. We see that in Philippians 3. I taught on this a while back. Paul says that I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

By any means possible. Not that I've already obtained this. He doesn't have it yet.

He's pressing on. He's not yet perfect. He hasn't yet put on immortality.

But I press on to make it this final resurrection to make it my own. And why? Because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Revelation 14, we will rest from our labors.

Rest from our labors for our deeds follow us. You're doing the work of the Lord and one day you get rest from those labors. Jeremiah 48.10, Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord with slackness.

You could take that verse and think about it in modern times. The work of the Lord that we have is not killing Philistines. It's not routing out the enemies.

He says cursed is the one who does it with slackness. And you know what? Heresy will slow you down. There are many things that can lead you to not abound in the work of the Lord, and one is a misrepresentation of God and of false teachers.

And in some ways, this is kind of similar to the thought I was trying to pull out of Titus 3 a few weeks ago. He says there, if you don't avoid foolish controversies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, what happens to the person who doesn't avoid those? They're not going to be devoted to good works. Devoted to be careful to good works.

And here an example from church history. You had a group of people in the Moravians who were very big on always abounding in the work of the Lord. In Norris Groves on his way to Baghdad, Iraq in the 1800's, he recorded this shocking sight.

He said as he was passing through Russia, he visited a community of Moravians, 1,200 of them. He was disappointed. The settlement was no longer a missionary station, but simply a colony of craftsmen.

Experience of such Moravian communities led Groves to wonder if they had laid too much emphasis on external order and regularity. Their religious disciplines took the place of a personal relationship with God. They weren't so much focused on putting on immortality and that eternal bliss to come as they were on, we've got to do all this.

We've got to be really strict. Not all about Christ. Not all about Him.

We don't want to become like those Moravians. Where does the strength come to labor? You could obviously ask that. This feels overwhelming in some ways.

Look at v. 10. Chapter 15. Paul says, "...but by the grace of God I am what I am.

And His grace towards me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them." And yet, look what he says, "...though it was not I." But it was the grace of God that is with me. "...Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believe." So where Paul attributes, did he work hard in his labors? Yes.

Should we work hard and strive? Yes, but you strive with the strength that God is mightily working through you. In the midst of all your weakness, we're asking the Lord for help. That's where the strength comes from the labor.

Another question is this, is your labor in the Lord? He says here, knowing that in the Lord, your labor is not in vain. What did Paul say a few chapters earlier? Some people can labor to the point of doing what? Giving their body to be burned. Were they true Christians? No.

So, we can labor. We can pour hours into things. We can have a thousand sermons on sermonatio, and yet it'll all be in vain.

Had no purpose. We weren't really in the Lord. We were not believing in Him.

But brethren, the truth of our victory over sin and death, our eternal bliss to come, it should cause us to always abound in the work of the Lord. In some way, and I'm not doing a good job of this, but I feel like we just need a greater glimpse of heaven. And a greater glimpse of even just the fact that there is rest.

The fact that this passage, it calls death sleep. But if you get rid of the truth of the resurrection, you know what death is? Perishing. That's what Paul says there.

There's one day there's going to be rest. There's going to be sleep. And here you are in danger every hour.

You're toiling. You're laboring. False teachers.

Danger from brothers every hour. That whole list of what Paul said. And there's a sense that I'm going to have rest.

As it says in Thessalonians, eternal comfort is to come. Months ago, I spoke out of Galatians 6. Paul said there not to grow weary in well-doing. Why? For in due time you will reap.

And the ultimate thing you reap is eternal life. You reap seeing Jesus Christ face to face. And that's why you shouldn't grow weary.

Why should you be steadfast and movable knowing in the Lord your labor is not in vain? You will be resurrected. When Christ comes, there is a resurrection. You're not believing in vain.

Our present existence is not in vain. Your present labor in the Lord is not in vain. It's not without a purpose.

Your life, if you're a Christian, has a purpose. And the immortality to come should make you immovable to get done the Lord's work while you have time. Well, in some way, Paul is saying if you have all that glory to look forward to, be steadfast.

If you have all that rest to look forward to, be steadfast. You could be tired on the job. And it's like, oh, it's two hours until I get off of work.

But guess what? It's two hours. It's not long, right? Until we get off of work, it's just a hand breath. That's how short our life is.

You're going to get off. Work's going to end. The clock's going to come to an end and you can rest from your labors.

And you won't have to go to work the next day. You're going to have rest. So why not abound always in the work of the Lord knowing that your labor is not in vain? Our citizenship is in heaven.

Philippians 3. And from it, we await a Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. We're awaiting a Savior who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.

So I hope that was clear and encourages you. Brethren, in view of the resurrection, in view that death is swallowed up in the victory in the Lord Jesus Christ, my beloved brothers, we should get to a place and a state of being steadfast and movable in the doctrine and the truths that we believe where we do not shift from the hope of the Gospel. And we should always, in view of the truth, be abounding in the work of the Lord.

Whether at home, whether abroad, whether here on the field, we should be abounding, overflowing in the work of the Lord with the knowledge that being in Christ who rose from the dead means we're going to rise from the dead, meaning our belief is not in vain, our faith is not futile, and therefore, our labor is not in vain in the Lord. And where do you get the strength for the labor? Your strength comes from God who will mightily work in you. If you ask Him for the help, He will help you.

His grace is sufficient. His power is made perfect in weakness. And so, verse 15, we're even found to be misrepresenting God.

There are people who will misrepresent God to you. They will distort God's character and the truth. Don't be deceived.

You keep company with those people, they will corrupt you. Well, I'm going to pray in a second, but just so you all know what we're going to do right now, we're basically going to take a break, but the break's going to be shorter than usual. We're going to call everyone back and we're going to deal with the church discipline situation and mention certain things to the brethren.

So that's just about to happen. So just be sensitive when we call everyone back to your seats. Let's pray.

Father, Lord, in some ways, we don't see in all the seed that has been sown and all the faithfulness at home or abroad, Lord, so often we don't even see the initial effects of it in people's lives. The open air preacher who preached in A.W. Tozer heard him and Tozer got converted. I don't think that open air preacher ever knew.

Lord, so often we labor and we do not know where You give growth. Lord, so often we seek to be blameless and walk in holiness and we don't know the good effect and testimony it has on others. And so, Lord, help us by faith to press on to always be abounding in the work of the Lord.

And I pray, Lord, You would help us to be immovable. Lord, help us to not be moved away. Lord, specifically from those things of first importance, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised, that He appeared, and You ascended.

And Lord Jesus, we wait for You to come back. And Lord, we labor in light of eternity. And I just pray You would help us, Lord.

Lord, give us a greater glimpse of the glory to come that we would be free of this world down here to live for You all the more. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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