

Sermon Title: The Preoccupation of a Harvest Laborer, Part 1

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 5:1-21

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to the eternal preoccupation of every true believer.

Sermon Proposition: There are 5 preoccupations that should motivate the Harvest Laborer.

Introduction:

- I. The preoccupation with an eternal viewpoint. Chapter 4:16-18**
- II. The preoccupation with the future presence of Christ. Chapter 5:1-8**
- III. The preoccupation with a future reward. Vv.9-10**
- IV. The preoccupation with the love of Christ. Vv.11-16**
- V. The preoccupation with the message of reconciliation. Vv.17-21**

I. The preoccupation with an eternal viewpoint. Chapter 4:16-18

- A. The Harvest Laborer will not lose heart with an eternal view. V.16

The New Covenant ministry may lead to a life of suffering, sacrifice, and surrender without a proper view. The proclaiming of the Gospel is too important to end in cowardly surrender, God has called each of us to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples, therefore, we must not give in to temptation to abandon or be distracted from that calling. We must trust God to strengthen us with endurance, courage, and faith.

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Corinthians 9:16-17 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! **17** For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

Colossians 1:23, 25 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. ... **25** of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

Paul and other believers wore themselves out physically in the ministry and the pace of their ministry. On top of this were the beatings, threats, persecution, etc.

(2 Corinthians 11:23-27)

2 Corinthians 6:4-10 But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, **5** in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; **6** by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, **7** by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, **8** by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; **9** as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; **10** as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

“While the outward is perishing, the inward man is growing, maturing, conformed to the image of Christ. The growth and maturing process of the new man inwardly is constantly growing, while the outside man (body) is decaying.” [[John MacArthur Study Bible, p.1769](#)]

Ephesians 3:16-20 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, **17** that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18** may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height-- **19** to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. **20** Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

B. The Harvest Laborer light affliction eternal view. V.17

The Greek Word for “light” means “a weightless trifle” and “affliction” refers to intense pressure.

The current affliction must be viewed in light of the eternal weight of the glory that is to come in heaven. Here weight refers “to a heavy mass.” The future eternal glory outweighs the temporary life of affliction.

1 Peter 4:13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

Romans 8:17-18 and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. **18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

C. The Harvest Laborer looks to the invisible not the visible view. V.18

1. Look beyond the physical to the spiritual.
2. Look beyond the present to the future.
3. Look beyond the visible to the invisible.

Pursuing and preoccupied with God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, maturity, the Word, and the lost souls of men should consume the true believer.

II. The preoccupation with the future presence of Christ. Chapter 5:1-8

- A. The assurance of a glorified resurrected body. Vv.1-3
- B. The assurance of eventual freedom from a temporary body. Vv.4-5
- C. The assurance of achieving the fullness of eternal life. Vv.6-8

Psalms 73:25 Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.

Revelation 21:23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light.

III. The preoccupation with a future reward. Vv.9-10

- A. Strive with ambition for the future reward. V.9a
“Aim” is from the Greek word that means “to love what is honorable.”
- B. Strive with ambition in spite of location. V.9b
- C. Strive with ambition because of future accountability. V.10
This describes the true believer’s deepest motivation and highest preoccupation in pleasing God, the realization that all believers are and will be ultimately accountable to Jesus Christ for earthly stewardship.
1. Judges
Matthew 27:19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."
John 19:13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.
 2. Olympic Athlete

That which is valuable and that which is useless.

Acts 18:12-16 When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, **13** saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law." **14** And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. **15** "But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*." **16** And he drove them from the judgment seat.