**"CARRYING FORWARD THE GREAT WORK"**

 The mission of Jesus Christ is the mission of the church.

 The Lord's primary mission in the world is clearly stated in

***Luke 19:10. 10For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

 Soul-winning is therefore the real work of the church--for

 the church is Christ's spiritual body--carrying forward the

 Great work which He Himself began while here in the flesh.

 Beloved, when a congregation stops winning souls, it loses the

 primary purpose for existence.

 It is with this in mind, that I am persuaded that many Christians today have

 misplaced values in regard to personal work. Many see no need and have no sense

 of urgency about it. Even some who call themselves preachers are not very

 enthused about it. They seem to be more interested in much "book learning" or

 "book writing," than in winning souls.

***1 Cor. 8:1*** ***Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.***

***Eccl.12:12 12And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.***

The wise man said--***Prov. 11:30. 30The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.***

To this Daniel added--***Dan. 12:3. 3And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.***

Saving souls is the greatest work that can be done, and all Christians should give much time and attention to it. No greater or more enduring work can be undertaken.

**ESPECIALLY DURING THESE TRYING TIMES WHERE MANY DISREGARD LIFE OR THE LIVES OF OTHERS SUCH AS THE TERRIBLE SCHOOL KILLINGS AND TRAGEDIES THAT HAVE PLAGUED THE WORLD THROUGH MASS SHOOTINGS!!**

**THERE IS DEFINETLY THE NECESSITY AND URGENCY OF PERSONAL WORK.**

 It is necessary and urgent because the harvest is plenteous.

***Matt. 9:37-38; 37Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;38Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.***

***John 4:35 35Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.***

We have things in reverse today, thinking that we have plenty of teachers but no listeners, but Jesus said that the harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few.

Some have a bad attitude concerning personal work. They are too quick to say, "It won't do any good," or "No one is interested."

Here is a tremendous sales pitch I learned in the early 70’s and a great example…

 Two salesmen in the late 1800's were sent from their

 country on separate missions to Africa to view the

 possibilities of selling shoes. One salesman wrote back

 to the company and said that the prospects for selling

 shoes in that country were absolutely no good because

 everyone there was barefoot. The other salesman wrote back

 and thanked the co. for sending him there and said that the

 prospects for selling shoes there was fantastic because everyone

 needed shoes.

 Dr. Earl Nightingale.

Beloved, How is your attitude toward personal work? Because it is the greatest work ever.

 There is no other task that compares with it in importance.

 This is seen in the worth of a soul. If one owned all the

 rich oil fields, all the giant skyscrapers, all the large

 ships, all the factories, all the silver and gold, all the

 land, all the livestock, all the buildings, and all the

 houses, it would not equal the value of one soul.

***Matt.16:26 26For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?***

 It is made in the image of God.

***Gen. 1:26-28 26And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.27So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.28And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.***

 It's value is seen in what it cost to redeem it.

***1 Pet.1:18-1918Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:***

 Winning souls is more important than feeding the hungry,

 sheltering the homeless, or providing health care for the

 sick.

 Listen,If we knew a bridge was out, would we not try to stop

 cars from plunging over into the river? Why not then try

 to keep souls from plunging over into eternal torment?

 It is necessary and urgent because God's plan of salvation

 demands it.

 Disciples are the vessels through which the gospel is to be

 carried to the lost.

***Rom. 10:14; 14How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?***

***1 Cor. 1:2121For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.***

 Only the gospel will save men.

***Rom. 1:16 16For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***

 It is not "a"power, but "the" power--the only one.

 People must hear and learn in order to come to Jesus.

***John 6:45 45It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.***

 Christians are God's chosen instruments by which His word is taught, and we

 need to do our very best in this important task.

 God's work of the church requires it.

 It is the pillar and ground of the truth.

***1 Tim. 3:14-1514These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:15But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.***

 It upholds, defends and proclaims the truth.

 Churches are light-bearers.

***Rev. 1:20 20The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.***

 A woman of the liberal persuasion said, "I'm too busy in

 church work to do personal work." This is the sign of

 the times. Many are so wrapped up in social activities,

 committees, etc., that they have lost sight of the true

 mission of the church.

 Winning souls is the real work of the church and we

 need to continue to put much stress on it.

 God's commands to the individual Christian demands it.

***Phil. 2:15-16; 15But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:***

 ***1 Pet. 3:1515That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;16Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.***

 All Christians have the responsibility to warn all people from all walks of

 life.

***1 Thess.5:14; 14Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.***

***Ezek. 3:18-19 18When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.19Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.***

 Responsibility is placed on each of us in the great commission.

***Matt. 28:19 19Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:***

 "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded

 you." I have commanded you to go; teach them to do

 likewise.

***2 Tim. 2:22And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.***

 4. All should be teachers.

***Heb. 5:12 12For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.***

 Some members of the church say, "I don't have the

 ability" and thus excuse themselves from all

 responsibility in the matter.

 All do not have the ability, nor the knowledge, to be

 public teachers; however, all can do personal work in

 their own way in their own surroundings.

 We all can teach our children, friends, relatives,

 and neighbors.

***Luke 14:23 23And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.***

 "compel" implies to put constraint upon, to constrain, whether by threat,

 entreaty, force, or strong persuasion.

 The example of the Lord, and of the early Christians, demands it.

 To be like Christ.

 From the beginning of His ministry and onward he gave

 Himself completely to the preaching of the Word.

***John 9:4 4I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.***

 We need to follow in His steps and follow the example of the early Christians.

***Acts 5:42; 42And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.***

***1 Thess. 1:88For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.***

 Today We need their zeal more than ever!!!

 The reason we are not reaching many for Christ today is

 because we have too many who would not skip one

 meal or miss a little sleep in order to teach someone.

**OVERCOMING HINDRANCES TO PERSONAL WORK.**

 **We must overcome fear.**

 One of the foremost hindrances for the average member of

 the church in doing personal work is fear.

 The thought of telling someone about the necessary things

 for the soul frightens them. They reason, "What if I should

 make a mistake or say the wrong thing?"

 Learning how to ride a bicycle, or driving a car can be

 very fearful to the inexperienced.

 Likewise, we can learn to do personal work just as we

 learn to do other things. Learning takes the fear out of

 it.

 **We need to grow in knowledge**.

 In other words, We must study.

***2 Tim. 2:155Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.***

 No one can develop his faculties and abilities, and become

 efficient at any work, without diligent effort.

 We must spend many hours with the Bible and develop

 a good working knowledge of it.

 Some want to be teachers, but don't know the truth.

***1 Tim.1:77Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.***

 Some show great diligence, but convert people to their same falsehoods.

***Matt. 23:15 15Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.***

 What could be more pathetic or terrible than to spend

 endless hours and effort to convert someone and thereby

 only lead him to hell?

 **We must gain the experience.**

 If you want to know how to do personal work, go with

 someone who does know how.

 Experience takes the fear out of it. We learn best by doing; experience

 gives confidence.

 **Personal work builds teachers.**

 In trying to teach others, you will automatically grow.

 As you go out and work, you will need to study as

 Never before. People will ask questions and make

 arguments that will cause you to study.

 Try to teach others what you know now, and you will soon learn more.

 **We need to become skilled teachers.**

 We should seek to know what and how to answer everyone.

***Col. 4:6 6Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.***

 We should do things to increase our skills.

 Read books on personal work, i.e., Hailey's "Let's go fishing for men."

 Books on salesmanship will help. Some of the best

 personal workers are those who were former salesmen.

 Avoid unprofitable discussion.

***2 Tim. 2:2323But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.***

 Avoid being arrogant and argumentative. The manner in

 which we go about teaching someone is important.

***2 Tim. 2:24-254And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,25In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;***

 In short, we should be extremely wise, humble, and kind.

***Matt. 10:16 16Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.***

 We must put down laziness and indifference toward personal

 work.

 We have many skilled laborers who are not doing the work.

 Most of us are too busy with other things. We need to get

 our priorities straight. We need to carefully evaluate how

 we are using our time. We need to arrange time for personal

 work; it is more important than all else.

 We will not succeed if we don't try.

 In baseball, the batter will not hit unless he swings.

 In basketball, the player will not score unless he

 Shoots the ball.

 We need to be out doing the work and we will succeed.

 **Consistency is the key to success.**

 We often get fired up for a time and then cool down and

 quit.

 We need to be diligent always, even when we seem to

 be having no success.

***2 Tim 4:22Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.***

 We need to be always ready and alert to every

 opportunity.

***1 Pet. 3:1515But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:***

**A FINAL LOOK AT ALL OF THIS….**

 All of us need to be busy doing the most important work in

 life--winning souls.

 As someone said, "Everyone wants to tell you how to do

 personal work, but no one wants to do it.

 Let us all be workers in the vineyard of the Lord.

 The fields are white unto harvest; let us come rejoicing,

 bringing in the sheaves.