

EFFECTIVE



***I glorified you on earth,
having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.***

John 17:4

If the servant is truly as his Lord, then it follows that when he arrives at the end of his journey on earth he should be able to say as the Master did,

"I have glorified your name"

"I have accomplished the work which you gave me to do."

The apostle Paul was not embarrassed to say,

***"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
And now there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the
Righteous Judge, shall give to me in that day.***

2 Timothy 4

Paul had been given a job to do. He did it, and now he was ready to go on.

There are people who if given 6 months to live would have a clear mind about being effective, knowing that they have indeed accomplished the work that God gave them to do with no sweat, no panic. And usually they aren't the hotshots, just people who faithfully, quietly kept giving of themselves down over the years. And now when their work is done, they are ready to go. But for many of us if we were to be told quite clearly by the Lord that we have only a few months left in this world of flesh and blood there would be utter panic.

"Please, Lord, not yet! I haven't done anything.

I haven't accomplished anything, Lord.

I haven't been effective ... Give me more time!"

Please understand that I am not talking about earning salvation. No one earns salvation. Salvation is a gift and can be received in a split second. Salvation is bought and paid for by the blood of the Lamb. Any person who desires salvation needs only to turn away from the old ways of self and throw his/her life on the mercy of the Lamb, trusting his death and resurrection, relying on his ever-present Spirit ... and the new life of a child of God has begun.

But now that you are God's child, there is work to be done. There is no such thing as being saved and useless. Now that you're saved you aren't wrapped up like a gift with a bow waiting for the trumpet.

The redemptive power of God becomes evident and real in this world...only through us.

We *are* the light of the world.
We *are* the salt of the earth.
We *are* the City on the Hill.
We *are* the aroma of Christ to God among men.

"You did not choose me, I chose you, and appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

John 15:16



You are appointed, You are ordained!

It's not about being pious and praying 5 minutes before bed. We are not to be saved and useless. How long are we allowed to be ineffective servants, useless and still remain servants? What happens when the master returns and asks us what we did with that talent he gave us and all we can do is dig it up? To be saved and ineffective is meaningless. Does not our Lord himself say that every branch in him that bears no fruit is cut off and thrown into the fire?

Every single believer, each of us ought to know that we're given work to do and that we are getting it done effectively. That is not something that we work for...but is basic...right now. We need to have that knowledge clear in our minds. It doesn't matter if you are 100 years old, half-blind, in a wheelchair...you wouldn't be here if there weren't work for you to do. That ought to be clear cut! No uncertainty about that at all.

The apostle Paul went through all kinds of anguish, heartache, suffering, persecution... but one thing Paul never had doubts about and never had any anguish over and that was whether or not he was effective. Paul knew that he was getting the job done, that he was accomplishing something. Failure, upon failure, much misunderstanding, many disappointments, all kinds of things falling apart that he tried to build, and yet in the very midst of these problems, disappointments and failures, Paul knew that he was doing something, he was bearing fruit.

Our Lord wept. He wept over Jerusalem, he wept over Israel, doubtless he wept over his hard-headed, hard-hearted disciples. And he weeps over us. But he never shed one tear over whether or not he was effective! Other people doubted his effectiveness...John the Baptist wasn't sure. "***Are you the one who is to come or should we look for another?***"? The disciples sometimes weren't sure that Jesus knew what he was doing. But Jesus knew.

"My meat and drink is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work ..."

John 4:34

"I accomplished the work you gave me to do. I finished it".

"Go and tell John again the things which you see and hear. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them."

Luke 7:22-23

There is no reason why we can't be as absolutely sure about this as we are about God's love.

That God has raised us up to do something and that we're doing it!

And that we are doing it effectively!

That day-after-day, that we are doing the work... things are getting done ... fruit is being borne. There is no reason for us to forever be up in the air and in doubt about these things. There should be no confusion in our minds. This ought to be clear.

The laborers in the vineyard weren't having nervous breakdowns worrying about their calling, wondering if they were in the right vineyard. They didn't have an identity crisis over every bunch of grapes they picked. The servant who came in from the field, girded himself and made supper for his master didn't have time to indulge in soul-searching as to whether he should really have been working in the field that day. He knew where he was supposed to be and what he was supposed to be doing. No question in his mind.

Now when we sit around wondering about what we should be doing, agonizing whether we're in the right place in the kingdom... it's a sure sign, it's evidence that we are interfering with the work that God has given us to accomplish, that we are not effectively doing the job we've already been given.

We are destroying our own effectiveness by doubting our call, doubting that we are sent, and doubting the faithfulness of the One who has sent us forth and promises to be our guide.

These words were not just spoken to the twelve, they were spoken to the Body, spoken to us.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

John 20:19-23

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."



Now if Jesus sends us as the Father sent him, if he has ordained us to bear fruit.... How can we lose?

How can we be anything but effective?

This ought to be our rock bottom assurance, our confidence that we have been called and ordained to bring people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God... every single one of us... in the name of Jesus and in the power of his Spirit we do this. We don't hire somebody to do this for us. We don't send another in our place. We do it!

And we do it where we are, exactly in the place where we find ourselves today.

We are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the city set upon a hill, beginning where we are. If God wants us in China or India or Latin America or Chicago... we'll get there and we'll know it, he'll make it very clear. Meanwhile each of us ought to *know* that we have been called to be a servant of the Living God and have been ordained to be an ambassador of the Messiah and that we have everything we need to get the job done, knowing that our labor will be effective.

If effectiveness is the normal state of the Believer, why do so many of us feel so useless so much of the time? What's wrong with us?

The problem is that many of us waste so much time wondering if we're in the right place, wondering what we should be doing, feeling useless.

And that's because we take our eyes off the One who called us and off the work he called us to do right where we are... and we fix them on other people. So instead of doing the job we have been given, we compare ourselves with them, measure ourselves against them, experiencing jealousy, regret or envy because God has given them such a nice thing to do, such a nice section of the vineyard compared to our crummy little section and we soon find ourselves caught up in their work instead of our own.

Sometimes it's the other way around, we get arrogant about our work... *"Lord, I thank thee that I'm not like other men, that I'm a real servant of the Lord"*.

In either case, instead of getting our jobs done, we're looking at other people.

There are three diseases we need to avoid like the plague because they bring instant poison to our ministry and make us totally ineffective servants of the Lord:

1. The Celebrity Syndrome.

The first set of symptoms can be described as the Celebrity Syndrome in which the Kingdom of God is distorted into a Christian Hollywood... Where the common folk fulfill their lives vicariously by following the activities of the stars. You turn on your Christian radio station and find out what Christian celebrities will be passing through town this week. Then you buy your ticket for the latest Christian rock concert, or make reservations at the Hilton where a brother so and so will speak about successful Christian living, or join a class of the Christian way to manage your finances at the Businessmen's Supper Club. Or you run to a meeting where Sister so and so will speak on Christian Womanhood and autograph copies of her latest book.



I am not trying to degrade these people. They may be conscientious, utterly sincere people. But people who allow themselves to be viewed as celebrities in the eyes of believers are permitting themselves to be used by Satan to this extent...they are allowing themselves to be portrayed as more important and their ministries and work as of more value than that of the ordinary, simple, unknown, faithful, humble servant working day by day in the place in the vineyard where he or she has been put. Our Lord relentlessly teaches that this is not to happen among us. The greatest among us must be the least ... the leader as one who is a lowly servant ... as a slave.

There is no such thing as a Christian celebrity. No such thing! Those who allow themselves to be cast in that role and have the audacity to play that role.. they are stealing glory from the Living God.

There is only one big name among us ... the name of Jesus ... the One who made himself the lowest of all. If we allow ourselves to get caught up in any other name, but his, we will not get the work done that he gave us to do. We won't even see the work half the time until we fix our hearts on that name, the name of the lowliest man who ever walked this earth. You will never take your work seriously, (the work Jesus himself gave you to do), nor will you do it effectively so long as your mind is dazzled by any name other than the name of Jesus.

2. The Success Syndrome.

Be on guard for a closely related disease.... the Success Syndrome. Where the impression is being widely given that if you truly get a hold of the right gospel, everything you touch will be turned into success.



But there is a difference between bearing fruit and being a success.

You will bear fruit. You were called and ordained to bear fruit for the Kingdom of God and you will. The fruit you will bear for the Kingdom of God will be borne not by the route of success as the world (and many Christians) know it, but the fruit you will bear for the Kingdom of God will be borne by the route of death.

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

John 12:24-25

If it dies...he who loses his life...he who hates his life in this world...

We must fall into the ground and die... every day. We will be rejected by the world. We are going to look like failures in the eyes of men time and again, even as our Lord looked on good Friday. And out of that anguish, and out those waves and billows of suffering that roll over us, will come fruit. And it will bring glory to God because it is the fruit that has come out of death. Where our deaths have been united to the death of Jesus, the resurrection power now flows. There is no other way.

3. The "Christian Heavy" Syndrome.

Watch out for the final disease which is the opposite of the first two, the "Christian Heavy" Syndrome. These are the folks on the other end of the spectrum who spurn big names and would spit rather than be a success. But they make a big production out of their "total commitment to the Lord." It's as if they are the only ones in the world who really love Jesus ... as if they are the sole preservers of New Testament Christianity in its purity... as if they are the only ones who truly love Jesus, the only true believers left. It's easy to get caught up into this disease very, very quickly.



We can be so busy being Heavy Christians, serious Christians...weeping over everyone else's apostasy that we can't get anything done, that we won't bear any lasting fruit.

He Has Sent You

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

If you have met Jesus alive from the dead ...

If he has given you his peace ...

If he has breathed on you with his Holy Spirit,

...You can also be absolutely sure that he has sent you.

He has sent you to go and do the same things that the Father sent Him to do.

Jesus personally has sent you...

to touch lives with forgiveness *in his name* ...

to warn others of judgment *in his name* ...

to lay down your life *in his name*.

You can do that where you are.

You can do that every day.

And you can be effective. You will bear fruit.

When we get to the end of the road of this life of flesh and blood...(and that comes very soon for us all), may we be able to say, truly to say to our Lord and through him to the Father...

***I glorified you on earth,
having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.***



Let's pray. We thank you and we praise you, Lord Jesus. for the assurance that you have, in ways that are just beyond our comprehension, seen fit to lift us into the redemptive work of your Kingdom. We praise you and thank you that you take these earthen vessels of our lives and bodies and fill them with heavenly treasure. And we're asking Lord that if in any of our vessels are desecrated, and if we have been desecrating them by unholy, and unbelieving, and untrue, and unfaithful thoughts or ways.... that you would help us to get this right and to rise up out of our own filthy selves and truly to be your servants this day and in the swift flying few days that remain for each of us. We ask it for your mercy's sake. (REB)

Message and prayer above: Richard E. Bieber 1975. Transcribed and edited for print 2008 & 2022 by Maranatha Mirror

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Prayer: Lord set our hearts on fire with a deep understanding that you have chosen us, ordained us, and sent us to the places we are now. Help us to keep our eyes on you, knowing that if you chose us, ordained us, and sent us ...we will be effective... we will bear fruit. Protect us from looking at other people and their work and measuring our effectiveness next to theirs. Protect us from needing to see our fruit. Protect us from feelings of ineffectiveness and worthlessness. Help us to find your peace in this. Draw our eyes and hearts to you, your name, and your magnificence for our confidence and breathe your Spirit upon us so we may have all we need to be effective. Amen.
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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN