

A Mind to Work

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).

From beginning to the end in the Bible, there are three times when God says, “It is finished,” regarding His work. In Genesis 2:1-3, we read about the first work of God. He created the heavens and the earth, He finished it, and on the seventh day He rested.

In John 4:34, Christ spoke about the work that He must finish that was not finished. When Adam and Eve sinned, He killed an animal and clothed them (Genesis 3:21). That was the beginning of the work of redemption. This work was not finished until Jesus Christ shed His blood on the Cross as the Lamb of God to take away our sin. In John 19:30, He said, “It is finished.”

We will see the end of His work when He finishes His operations with men in this age, in Revelation 21:4-6b:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end....”

This is the third “it is finished” that we have in the Scripture regarding God’s work. He finished the affairs of men as we know it—with the devil, with unbelievers and with believers, in all the diversities of gifts, administrations, and operations of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). First, it is finished. Finally, it is done.

We will enter into a new age, an eternal age, where there is no sin, no death, no devil, no false prophets, no beast, no demons, no lies, and no darkness. God fills the universe, and in the city of God, the New Jerusalem, there is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will be the temple and the light thereof (Revelation 21:22-23). That day is coming. Until then, we are working.

Chapter One

DEFINING THE WORK OF GOD

“Jesus said unto [His disciples], My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (John 4:34).

“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). In other words, “The Father is working up until now, and I am also working with My Father.”

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

What does it mean, “I must work the works of him that sent me”? Jesus was healing the blind man in this chapter. That is the work of God. In Matthew 8, Jesus met the leper, and He healed him. In John 6, Jesus spoke to His disciples and then multiplied the bread. He was doing the work of public ministry through the Holy Spirit until it was time to go to the Cross. At that time, He stopped His public ministry, and

He was revealed as the Lamb, slain from the beginning (Revelation 13:8), that takes away the sin of the world.

The crucifixion was seen in public. The Lamb was on the Cross, He was both the expiation and the propitiation for our sin—an offering made unto God on our behalf, satisfying both the judgment and the justice of God for the penalty of our sin. That work was done out in the open so that everyone could see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:10), though we cannot really “see” until the Holy Spirit reveals it to us.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32).

This is the work of God. Creation, and He did it. Redemption, and He did it. Now what is He doing? In 2 Corinthians 5:20, it says that we are here in His place, in His stead—ambassadors representing the kingdom of God. He sent the Holy Spirit into our lives, and He is ministering to us, in us, and through us.

Seeing the Grace of God

“And when James, Cephas, and John, who

seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision” (Galatians 2:9).

When the others saw Paul, they saw that he had personally received the grace of God. They saw him as a Spirit-filled believer. They knew about his background as one who persecuted believers, but now he was different. Perhaps he had a beautiful smile. We don’t know. But when they saw his countenance, his spirit, his heart, his words, and his attitude, they saw the grace that was given unto Paul for his personal life.

Secondly, they extended the grace of God in fellowship. We not only have grace for our personal life. We also have grace for our fellowship.

We give the right hand of fellowship to our brothers and our sisters. We are not policemen. We are ministers of grace, and we say, “Grace, grace” unto that mountain (Zechariah 4:7), for this is the work of God in this period. Someday we will be finished, and He will say, “It is done, for I am Alpha and Omega.” We will enter into an eternal age where there is no question or doubt, no shame or guilt, no fear or insecurity. But now there is a work of God and the work of

grace.

Extending Grace to Others

We love each other in the Holy Spirit, and out of our bellies flow rivers of water (John 7:38). God has commanded a blessing where we are. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). It is the work of God, the work of grace, among us.

We do not shun people. We do not judge people’s motives. Instead, we give the right hand of fellowship that was extended to Paul and to Barnabas because they saw the grace of God. This right hand of fellowship is the characteristic of our heart, our spirit, our mind, and our life. It is the life that we now live.

The third work of God, as we see in Galatians 2:9, is reaching out to the lost: “...that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.” Grace was seen in Paul and he was given the right hand of fellowship. And then they had the faith and the grace to believe that they were to go on and to reach out and to touch. It says, “that we should go unto the heathen.”

We could change that word and say, “Go

unto various people groups.” Beginning with the apostles, we go unto the various ethnic groups throughout the earth. In India alone, there are 17,500 different people groups with hundreds of languages. It would seem impossible, but the apostles had the right hand of fellowship. They had the grace of God that they knew was with them, and they had the desire and the vision to go into the world with the Gospel message. They believed that Paul and Barnabas were to go unto the heathen and they were to go to the circumcision, to the Jewish people.

Health to Thy Bones

Grace makes us healthy on the inside. Grace builds us up with words, Kingdom words in our heart and spirit. Grace gives us a vision for the regions beyond. When you are healthy on the inside, this is God’s work, and He is still working. Jesus finished His work on the Cross, and then on that third day, the Father did a great work for us when He raised up His Son, our Savior.

Then God sent the Holy Spirit into us. This is the work that God is doing until the day when all the tears will be wiped away, when the world that we live in will be perfect, when we will be

absolutely glorified, and we will live in a universe that is perfected. Until that day, this is the work that we are doing right here. First, we perceive that we are objects of grace. Next, with love in our hearts we give the right hand of fellowship to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Then, we are here for the various people in the world who have not heard the Gospel. We are here on the earth to have a ministry and to do the work that God has sent us to do.

Chapter Two

REMEMBERING ALWAYS YOUR WORK OF FAITH

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father” (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

The New Testament is filled with people like us who are laboring in a labor of faith and love. This is the work that God does in this world. He uses us in the Holy Spirit, and we do the work of God now in this time.

We also find men in the Old Testament who performed a work of faith and a labor of love. Because of rebellion, God allowed Israel to be taken captive by her enemies and the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed. Nehemiah was overcome with grief when he heard of it, but God put it in his heart to rebuild the wall. Whole families responded to the call, and side-by-side they set about to do this great work.

What happens any time that God's people go forward with a vision in the call of God? Read Nehemiah 4:1-6:

“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

“And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?”

“Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.”

“Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:

“And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”

The passage does not say, “The people had

emotions to work.” No, it says that “the people had a mind to work. They had a mind that was from God and they were busy in building a wall as a small group of people with a lot of opposition. But you couldn’t discourage them because they had a leader, Nehemiah, and Nehemiah knew that this work was God’s will.

When God does His work, there will always be a Sanballat resisting because he is angry with what God is doing. He also gathered others to his side, mocking and saying, “What are these feeble Jews doing? These are poor little people. The people of God are feeble.”

Proverbs 30:4 says, “The conies are a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.” Conies are little animals like gophers or prairie dogs, and they are a feeble folk, but they hide in the rocks. We are like this. We might be a feeble folk, but we live in the fortification of God. We may be weak, but we are in the work of God. We are walking in the way, living in the mind of God and living in faith. God is our strength, and He will strengthen us and lead us in the way that we should go.

Don’t Underestimate the Work of God

In the face of his detractors, Nehemiah said,

“The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 2:20). This is how he answered his enemies. “He will prosper us. We will arise and build.” He was saying, “Don’t underestimate God’s work. The Lord God Almighty is manifesting His name in the world through His feeble people.”

The people had a mind to work because God gave them a mind to work. That is like us in the New Testament. We walk around in our homes, and we worship the Lord. We may see destruction in our homes, and we seek God for an answer. The Holy Spirit has come into our hearts, and when we call on His name, He will speak to us. The enemy always projects against the people of God: “The stones are no good. The wall is weak. What you are doing is meaningless and worthless.” But we have an answer because we have the mind of Christ.

We pray, “Hear, O our God, for we are despised.” We haven’t been paying too much attention to the opposition, yet we also know there is another mind out there, and we are despised. Still, the Lord is the lifter of our heads; He is our glory and our shield (Psalm 3:3). The Lord is the

one who puts the integrity of His nature in us. This is what the enemy resists, mocks, and ridicules.

No Striving in God's Work

Do you know if you ask the Lord something, He can answer you? Do you know that as you worship Him and you put Him before your face, He will take care of things? That is His work. He has a work for us, His people, and we are in the work. We have a mind for it.

It does not have to be labor. Rather, it is a mind that knows His will, like Jesus as He was doing His Father's will. Have you noticed that Jesus never ran anywhere?

We can run in a spiritual way, but not in our flesh. There is no striving in the work of God. There is an amazing walk of patience and hope and peace. There is the right hand of fellowship and a persuasion in your mind that we are in God's place. We are with God's people. And we are doing God's work, loving one another (John 17:26).

When Nehemiah went about to do this work, he didn't tell anyone in the beginning. In Nehemiah 2, he kept it to himself. And then he went to the leaders and told them what "the

good hand of my God” had put upon his heart.

Look at 2:16: “And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.”

He didn’t tell them right away what God had showed him. But as they started, God gave the people a mind, and this mind was a spiritual mind for they were doing the work of God.

Today, what is the work that God is doing? He has given us a mind where we would now do the will of God and the work of God in this earth on this generation. There will be a time when it will be finished, and we will enter into the eternal age. But until then, we are privileged people to be like the group of people who were building the wall of Jerusalem with Nehemiah.

We Have Seen the Enemy

When Sanballat heard that they were building the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. Whom does he represent? He represents the carnal, natural-minded, envious, jealous mind that opposes the work of God. In the New Testament you see this at various times very clearly—even among the

disciples themselves on more than one occasion (Matthew 16). When this rises up, either on the outside or on the inside, I have an enemy that is against the work of God. This is my own sin nature.

Since the Fall, when sin entered the world, three things characterize the sin nature: shame, fear, and guilt. We may be conscious of our guilt and say, "I can't do the will of God or the work of God because I have this amazing sense of shame, fear, guilt." We do not say these words, but we live in these emotions.

Now, because Christ has come into our life, instead of shame we have confidence. Instead of guilt we have a freedom and forgiveness. Instead of fear, we have boldness, confidence, and love. Love casts out fear, and love is in our hearts now (Romans 5:5, 1 John 4:18). We are not guilty anymore. We don't attribute it to some mechanism of the flesh or some mechanism of the works of man, psychologically speaking, but we attribute it to the power of the blood of the Son of God who died and shed it for us. The Blood has washed our consciences (Hebrews 9:14). Now we are free.

Chapter Three

DO NOT DESPISE THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS

“And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

“Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by [Samballat], and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall” (Nehemiah 4:2-3).

I remember years ago when we wanted to have a mission ship, and Pastor Ed Canino and a crew went over to Norway, where we bought a 300-ton ship. They sailed it over here to Baltimore. “What a small thing! What a little thing. How little. How feeble. How small,” the enemy can say. But if it is the work of God, there is no small work of God (Zechariah 4:10).

Some pastor said, “I just have a little church.”

There is no small church with God. Jesus said that “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst” (Matthew 18:20). You can move mountains by prayer. There is no small work of God. It is the work of God that He is doing.

The great work that Nehemiah was to do was also resisted by a group of people from Canaan. But Nehemiah said, “Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity.” He said, “Lord, we are despised. We are little. Look at the little thing we are doing! But, Lord...,” said Nehemiah.

You see, when we know the Lord, we see the Lord in everything. When God is in our life every day, there is no small thing. When we see the work of God, we are amazed at the work of God, and the work of God is all around us. We are in the midst of the work of God, the work of grace, the right hand of fellowship, and the desire to reach the peoples of the world with the Gospel.

Hundreds and hundreds of people have gone out into the highways and byways and

they have made an impact. Entire nations have been and are being affected by people that once sat in the chairs of church and Bible school. What an amazing work of God!

For what we do in our walk of faith, we have a mind. It is a mind to work, to believe, to love, to worship, to forgive, to rest, to go, to pray, to believe. We have a mind for this work. It is in our hearts.

Other things come behind this work because we have found something that is so beautiful. Christ is at the center. Jesus promised us that He would take care of the second and third and fourth things, if we would just make His tabernacle our delight and our chief joy. Let us take His purpose, His Spirit, and His mind and lift that up in our hearts and believe that this is primary. This is the work that God is doing now. Let's just jump in the river, and let the river take us where God is leading. In this river, there is healing, a future, and an opportunity.

While visiting my family in upstate New York, I would go through these little towns, and I'd think of young men and young women there. I used to live there, and I used to think, "What is here? What is my purpose? Where shall I go? How can I order my footsteps?"

The answer is this: Step into the work of God, have a mind that is for God's work, and God will take care of you, bless you and multiply you a hundredfold.

So Built We the Wall

“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

“But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very [angry]” (Nehemiah 4:6-8).

The more progress we make in His work, the angrier the devil will get. The activity of evil will not stop. Of Solomon, it is said that he was greatly beloved of God, and God made him king of Israel; “but even him did outlandish women cause to sin” (Nehemiah 13:26).

You may greatly be favored of God but do not underestimate your sin nature. You might be blessed mightily and greatly, but do not underestimate the day of foolishness. I could do something extremely foolish. Solomon was a great wise man who wrote Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 by the

way. Read those chapters and you will see that he knew all very well about the dangers of women in a lustful way. Yes, he was greatly beloved of God, but oh how terribly Solomon suffered because of his foolishness though he was the wisest of all. What a story that is.

There is a great work happening here among us. It's a work of kindness, gentleness, love, grace, and mercy. It is a work in the Spirit and in faith. God has given us a mind for it.

Knowing Who We Are

It is so sad to see what sin does to the human psyche. It causes a person to have a very low esteem of who he is. There is a sense of hiding, insecurity, fear, and shame. How much work is hindered because we live in the guilt complex of our own failure? "God could not use me." All of that is wrong and sadly effectual when the projections in the air connect with the subjective nature of a man. People say, "We cannot build. We have personal problems. There's no way we could get anything done here."

Yet, God says, "This is My work that I am doing on the earth, and I want you to co-labor with Me. I am for you. I am with you. I equip you, fill you, satisfy you, and anoint you. Follow

Me, trust Me, believe Me, and I will give you My mind.”

This is the mind that blows the devil away.

We actually know how to live in this walk of faith. We are all learning together. But around the corner is Sanballat. Out there is an “outlandish” woman (Hebrew word means “foreigner”). There will be someone out there waiting at the corner to interfere with the work of God because the work of God is always resisted by the work of evil.

If you are where God has put you, then continue and abide. God will give you His mind, and you will have a mind for His work. You will pick up the discernment, and you will understand that something is going on that is beyond flesh and blood. You will see the grace of God, you will extend the right hand of fellowship, and you will talk about the people who need the Gospel. You will be a part of the team of workers, co-laboring to train them, to love them, to build them up, and to send them out. That is the grace that has been given to us. That is God’s heart and God’s mind for His great work.

There will always be those little guys out there. They are going to say, “Aha! That’s nothing.” We will say, “Fine. That’s your world. This

is ours. We are busy. God gave us a mind to the work. We are excited about it. We are focused on it. We are quietly praying and living as families joined to families in this great work.”

Soon there will be a day and all will be done regarding these phenomena. Let’s jump in and walk in the Spirit, in the Word and in the Body ...until it is changed.

CONCLUSION

“That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

“And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” (Nehemiah 6:2-3).

Picture it. They were building, and there were stones in the field—rubbish everywhere. It’s like seeing piles of building materials, broken beams and stones and piles of rubbish in ruins all around. The workers are weakened by the sight of the task. They are not doing their jobs and they are not motivated in their work. One problem becomes fuel to feed another problem. So Nehemiah used families. Not an army, but whoever was there. Family was joined to family because they were fighting for their lives and for their sons and their daughters (Ne-

hemiah 4:14-15).

Wherever God is doing a great work, the enemy will always be trying to distract us. The enemies of Nehemiah wrote five letters, but each time the answer was, "I cannot come down. I cannot come down. I am busy. I am busy. I am busy." The attacks may come from without or within. We may be a feeble folk, but we are the family of God, and God has put His heart in us. Neither shame, nor guilt, nor fear can stop us because we know how to hide in the Rock. We have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and filled with the Spirit of God, and we love one another heart-to-heart and side-by-side.

Soon it will be finished. There will be no time, as we know it. So let's have a mind to work for God while we have these opportunities.