

Hebrews 6.10

Labor of Love

We tend to think that the mark of greatness is in our outward prestige, the size of our "ministry" or the way that the world notices our work... but God sees the heart. He alone looks on the inward parts and honors that which is unseen by man.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV)

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

This is the fact of our world that we must understand if we are to please the Father. We cannot understand the heart of another, but we can understand our own, and seek to serve the Lord in faithfulness within the bounds of our own hearts. Our motives are important, and the writer of Hebrews points out that the actions of the church in Jerusalem demonstrate that they have honored the Lord with their actions. He points out the

specific thing that they have done which has honored the Lord and which God Himself will honor in return.

I. LABOR OF LOVE

a. Motivation matters

i. The church in Jerusalem and the surrounding areas had long been known for its sacrificial manner of life in regards to how it cared for one another.

ii. It spoke to the world and became something worthy of emulation

1. Unity in doctrine and fellowship continually one with another

Acts 2.42-47

2. Caring for one another in the needs of this life

Acts 4.32-37

3. It became the pattern of church life that other churches copied when they were given the gospel.

1 Thessalonians 2.13-16

- b. The driving force in all we do is the love we bear for God

Colossians 3.12-17

- i. This can be faked for a while, but not indefinitely; for, if we do what we do to be noticed by men, to receive accolades, power, prestige or worldly wealth; when that dries up or doesn't come as we desire then we will cease our labor
- ii. God knows and honors the heart of the one who serves because of the love He has given us

1 John 4:19 (NKJV)

We love Him because He first loved us.

- c. It causes us to seek ways in which we can serve the body and by doing serve the Lord

1John 3.16-23

- d. It gives us love for other believers and drives us together

1John 4.7-11

II. SHOWN TOWARD HIS NAME

- a. This all means that the manner of love we bear for one another is the measure of our love for God... Jesus told us this on the night He was betrayed...

John 15:12–13 (NKJV)

12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- b. He was very clear about the need for us to love in deed. To **actively** and **outwardly** love one another.

John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- c. It is imperative that our words and our actions be of the same material, they are inextricably linked.

1 John 3:18 (NKJV)

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

- d. It is easy to speak of love, but we must do that which is known as love. In the same manner our actions must not be tainted with speech that is unloving and unbecoming.

Ephesians 4.11-16

1. The doctrine binds us together
2. The saints then engage in the work of the ministry, edifying the body
3. We grow in grace together as the truth of God has its outworking in the love we share and show one to another.
4. This matures us and protects us from false doctrine, which cements the whole in circular perfection...
5. Notice how the truth of God and the love of God are central in this cycle of growth and glory.

III. MINISTERED TO THE SAINTS, PAST AND PRESENT

- a. This is not about big, giant, earth-shattering things. But it is about small things, done faithfully where you have ability and opportunity.

Acts 9.36-43

- b. It has a focus on the household of faith

Galatians 6.7-10

- c. The notice of God is upon all those who care for the body. God will not overlook those who care for the ones He loves!

Philemon 4–7 (NKJV)

4 I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, 6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 7 For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

Philippians 4.10-20

1. Paul receives the gift, is jealous for it because of this fact in the lives of those who give it
2. It also implies then that we must learn to graciously receive!

- d. It is the reason that God has granted you the material goods you enjoy, as well as the talents that you possess.

1 Timothy 6:17–19 (NKJV)

17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Ephesians 4.25-32

- e. Visitation of the sick, and of those imprisoned for the truth

2 Timothy 1:15–18 (NKJV)

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he

often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. 18 The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

- f. There are literally a million things that we can do which demonstrate love for the people of God, and they should all be done as God gives you opportunity and as God gives you an honest and earnest love one for another. How we live this out is crucially important.
- g. Remember that past works alone are not the whole picture, the writer points out that the church in Jerusalem has a long, well known history of ministry among the body... but they ALSO have a continuing well practiced pattern of present ministry as well, and that gives confidence and hope for the **future** of the church and those who make up the body.... That is where we will end today and pick it up next week.