

18. More On Dead Works

We want to continue with our study on the difference between being religious and being spiritual, to see what the Bible says about dead works as opposed to good works and evil works. We saw in our last study that there is a difference between the works of the flesh - evil things that are so obvious that our unconscious tells us about them and dead works, which could be good works, but works that spring from a corrupt source. We have considered two of them in our last study; works, those are done reluctantly or grudgingly without joy and works those are done not out of love for God.

Now we want to continue looking at some other works which may look good on the outside but which are dead in God's eyes.

Third dead work that we shall look at is works done without zeal. We read in Revelation 3:15-19 about the Lord speaking to the elder of the church in Laodicea and saying, 'You are lukewarm, you are neither hot nor cold, you are not on fire, and you are half-hearted.' Further He says, 'I wish you were either cold or hot.' Now in the world, there is a saying: 'Something is better than nothing,' but the Lord, apparently, doesn't believe in that. He says, 'I wish you were cold - dead or on fire. But this half-hearted type of Christianity, I am not interested in', and, finally, in verse 19, the Lord says, 'therefore be zealous.' Half-hearted works are dead works.

In quoting an Old Testament commandment, Jesus said in Mark 12:30 that we are to love the Lord, our God. It doesn't just stop there. We must love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and all our strength. He said that that is the first commandment. In other words, our whole being

18. 再談無用之功

接下來,讓我們繼續學習屬宗教與屬靈的區別,看看《聖經》對於「善行」與「惡行」之外的「無用功/死行」是怎麼說的。上一章的學習我們看到了,服務于肉體那些非常明顯的,下意識都可以知道的邪惡,以及表面看起來可能是善行,但出發點來自腐壞的內在,這兩者之間的區別。我們在上一章思考過關於無用功的兩點,一個是出於勉強、不甘願的付出,另一個是沒有神的愛。

下面我們要繼續來看其它一些,表面看起來可能很好的行為,但在神眼中是死的。

無用功/死行的第三種,可以形容為,做起來沒有熱誠。在啟示錄 3 章 15 到 19 節我們看到,主對老底嘉教會的長老說,「你如溫水,既不冷也不熱,你心中沒有熱情,三心二意」,然後進而說,「我巴不得你或冷或熱。」現今社會的說法是,「有總比沒有強」,但我們的主顯然不這麼認為。祂說,「我希望你或者徹底冷掉,或者熱情如火。你們這種三心二意的基督徒生活,我根本沒興趣,」到 19 節,主說,「因此,你們要發熱心」。三心二意的付出是無用功/死行。

在馬可福音 12 章 30 節,耶穌引用了舊約的誡命,告訴我們要愛主,我們的神。爾後不止是這樣,我們必須用我們全部的心、全部的靈魂、全部的頭腦和全部的力量去愛我們的主。祂說那是誡命裡最大的。換句話說,我們整個的存在都要充滿對神的愛。比如在敬拜神的時候,全心全意的敬拜,與三心二意的敬拜,是有巨

must be taken up with the love for God. For example, when you worship God, there is a lot of difference between a whole-hearted worship and a half-hearted worship. When you praise the Lord, you can say hallelujah, and the other person says hallelujah, there can be a lot of difference between the two. In the other, it springs from the depth of his heart; he is really thankful to God and he praises the Lord with all the heart. But you have gone through the ritual. You have said the right words. It is not a sin to say hallelujah, but it is a dead work as far as you are concerned. It doesn't come from the depth of your heart; it is lifeless. Our worship and our praise must be whole-hearted.

Again, if you listen to some people praying, you can see the difference. I mean, they are not saying anything sinful in their prayer, but the whole thing is dead. You know what a dead prayer meeting is. What is a dead prayer meeting - that people prayed for sinful things there? No, they prayed for good things, but they were lifeless. Works, prayer, praise - any activity done without zeal is a dead work.

The Bible says (with one translation putting it like this) that we must be 'aglow with the Spirit' - on fire in the Spirit at all times (Rom. 12:11). Fervent in Spirit means on fire in the Spirit at all times. There was a law in the Old Testament which says that "the fire must burn on the altar perpetually" (Lev. 6:13). It must never die out. Paul told Timothy, "Fan to a flame that gift which is in you." There was a danger of it dying out. It is not a question of just exercising them in a half-hearted way. You have to fan to a flame even the gifts of the Spirit that God gives us. Just because some other people abuse them doesn't mean that we should ignore them and throw them in the wastepaper basket. No, let's exercise them in a proper way.

大區別的。當讚美神的時候,你說哈利路亞,別人也說哈利路亞,然而兩者的區別卻可能是巨大的。另外那個人從他心底最深處湧出的,對神的感激和全心的讚美。而你卻只是流於形式,嘴上說著正確的詞句而已。說哈利路亞並不是罪,然而用你那樣的方式去說,就只是無用功/死行而已。因為那不是從你心底發出的,因此是沒有生命的,是死的。我們的敬拜和讚美必須是全心全意的。

再說一次,如果你聽有些人禱告,就能看出區別。他們禱告的內容不是罪惡的,然而那一切卻是了無生機。你們都知道死氣沉沉的禱告會是什麼樣子。有人祈禱邪惡的事情嗎?沒有。他們祈禱的是好事,但是卻了無生機。事工、禱告、讚美,任何這些若沒有熱心,都是無用功/死行。

《聖經》說(有一個譯本是這樣說的),我們必須「與聖靈一起灼熱發光」,就是時時刻刻都與聖靈一起燃燒(羅馬書 12 章 11 節)。在聖靈裡發熱心的意思就是時刻與聖靈一同燃燒的意思。舊約律法裡說「壇上的火必須一直燃燒,不可熄滅」(利未記 6 章 13 節)。那火是不允許止息的。保羅告訴提摩太「將神給的恩賜,如火挑旺起來。」因為那時有熄滅的危險。那不是三心二意做些操練就可以的。你必須把火挑旺起來,甚至包括神給我們的屬靈的恩賜。不能因為有人濫用這些屬天的恩賜,我們就把自己的恩賜置之不理,扔進廢紙桶。不要這樣,請讓我們一起來正當的操練這些屬天的恩賜吧。

A lot of Christian churches, today, are not probably living in gross sin, but they are lifeless, lacking the burning fire of the Holy Spirit. They are not cold, but they are not hot either. And the Lord told that the whole church in Laodicea, "Because you are lukewarm, I'll just spit you out of my mouth." You see how dead works can lead to a lifeless type of Christianity which, finally, the Lord rejects? We need to repent works done without zeal.

And then fourthly, dead works are works done without faith. In the Old Testament there is no such phrase called 'The obedience of faith'. It was only 'obedience' - you obey what the Lord says you to obey. But, when you come to the New Testament, you see in the first paragraph of Romans 1 and in the last paragraph of Romans 16, this phrase repeated: 'The obedience of faith'. James says that faith without works is dead. I would also say, works without faith are also dead, because without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Supposing you do a good work, and it is not in faith, it is a dead work. For example, you pray for half an hour, and you pray for a lot of powerful things but you don't believe that God is going to do one of those things, what is the use of that type of prayer? What is the use of a one-hour prayer meeting where you don't believe one single thing that God is going to do for you? Isn't that a dead work? You can have an all-night prayer meeting which is a dead work because people don't believe. Praying without faith is a dead work. In fact, one minute of prayer, with faith, is far more acceptable to God than an all-night prayer meeting which is just a ritual, without faith.

Works done without faith are dead works. Now I am not against long prayers - Jesus prayed all night, and there may be times when we need to do that. But Jesus praying all night was not a dead work; He

現今的許多基督教會,可能並沒有活在顯而易見的罪裡,然而她們卻毫無生命,缺少聖靈燃燒的火焰。她們既不冷,也不熱。主對老底嘉的教會全眾說,「因為你如溫水,我必把你從我口中吐出去。」因此,你可以看到,基督信仰裡毫無生命的無用功/死行,最終會被主所拒絕。我們要對自己無熱心的事工來向主悔改。

接下來第四點,無用功/死行是出於沒有信心的事工。舊約裡沒有「信服」這樣的字眼,那時只有「順服」,你只要去順服神要你做的。然而到了新約時代,你可以看到羅馬書 1 章第一段,和 16 章最後一段,「信服」這個詞反復出現。雅各說過,沒有行為的信心是死的。我想說,沒有信心的行為也是死的,因為沒有信心,便無法討神喜悅。

假設你做了非常好的事工,然而若沒有信心,那也是無用功。比如你禱告半小時,說了很多非常有力量禱告詞,然而假如你對於神是否會實現它,沒有信心,那麼你的禱告有什麼用呢?不真心相信任何神能為你做的事,一整個小時的禱告會又有什麼用呢?那不就是無用功嗎?你可以參加一個徹夜的禱告會,但如果參加的人不真心相信,那麼就是無用功。沒有信心的禱告是無用的。實際上,若有信心,一分鐘的禱告,比起徹夜的形式上的禱告會,都會更被神所接受。

沒有信心的事工是無用功。要聲明的是,我不反對長的禱告——耶穌本人就曾徹夜禱告,在某些時間點上我們也需要。然而耶穌的徹夜禱告卻不是無用功,祂在用信心禱告。信心也代表著親身的確信。我們在羅

prayed in faith. Faith also means personal conviction. We read in Romans, "The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God" (Rom. 14:22). We must have a personal conviction about the truths of Scripture. The faith which you have, it says here, let it be your own conviction before God. When you do something merely to imitate what somebody else is doing, or merely because some man of God teaches it, without personal conviction, it is a dead work. Maybe it is a good work, and maybe that great man of God teaches that particular doctrine and tells you to do it, in some way you imitate him, it is not going to bring life in you; imitation always brings death.

Let me give you an example of it. We read in Hebrews 11:29 that the Israelites, by faith, crossed the Red Sea and then, it says, the Egyptians imitated them. What happened then? - They drowned. What did imitation bring to the Egyptians? - Death. Now the Israelites went through by faith. The Egyptians didn't have faith. They just imitated what the Israelites did. It was a dead work. That is written for our warning. You may see another brother doing something in faith - a ministry, for example, he does it in faith and you imitate that. What is it going to be? - A dead work. God never called you to do that.

So we are not to imitate another man's ministry, or the emphasis that another man has in his ministry. The Bible says, "Prophesy according to the proportion of your faith" (Rom. 12:6). God doesn't want us to be imitators; you know, like parrots, repeating what somebody else says. He wants us to have personal convictions, and what you do without personal convictions is a dead work, even if it is a good work. God has no value for it, because it doesn't come out of your personal relationship with God.

馬書讀到,「你有信心,就當在神面前守著」(羅馬書 14 章 22 節)。我們對《聖經》經文的真實必須有親身的確信。這裡說,你自己所擁有的信心,是你在神面前親自的確信。如果你做某些事僅僅是模仿別人,或者是近神的人所教導,卻不是你親身的確信,那也同樣是無用功。那也許是非常好的事情,然而若僅僅是由於某位近神的人所教導的,那是無法帶給你「生命」的——模仿帶來的總是「死亡」。

讓我給你舉個例子吧。我們在希伯來書 11 章 29 節看到,以色列人憑著信心,過紅海如行幹地,然後埃及人模仿他們。結果怎樣?全部被淹滅了。模仿給埃及人帶來了什麼?是死亡。以色列人過紅海憑的是信心。而埃及人是沒有這信心的。他們僅僅是模仿以色列人的行為而已。寫在這裡的經文對我們是個警告。也許你見到某位弟兄憑信心做事,也許是某種事工,他憑著信心做,而你去模仿。結果怎樣?一份無用功。因為神從沒呼召你去做。

因此,我們不要去模仿別人的事工,或者是模仿神要另外一個人所強調的領域。《聖經》說,「照著信心的程度說預言」(羅馬書 12 章 6 節)。神不要我們變成模仿者,像鸚鵡一樣重複別人說的話。祂要我們有個人親身的確信,任何缺乏親身確信的行為都是無用功,即便是很好的事工。那在神眼中那是沒有價值的,因為並非來自你親身與神的個人關係。

Let me say this for your encouragement. God does not want you to be like somebody else; He wants you to be yourself. He made you to be yourself with a particular personality and a particular background and upbringing. Just be thankful and do what you can. And that will be far more acceptable to God than if you try to imitate somebody else.

A fifth way in which we can do dead works is when we do works, which may be good works, Christian works, but which are done for personal gain or honour. The Lord told the leader of the church in Sardis, "You have a name that you are alive." Sometimes we can do Christian work to get a name that we are alive, and we can build up a reputation. And to continue that reputation we keep on doing certain things. They look very spiritual in the eyes of others, but God sees the underlying motive in everything: you want to get a name that you are alive. And what is the result? All your works are dead works. Anything that we do to impress another man is a dead work.

A living work, on the other hand, is one that is done to impress God. Living works are done in secret, before God's face alone where your left hand does not know what your right hand has done, where you keep it hidden. You pray, but you don't let anybody know that you pray. You fast and you don't let anybody know that you have fasted. Those are living works. But dead works are works done to impress people, and you don't conceal it from the eyes of men. We could say that those are works which we later on meditate on and glory over.

I wonder if you noticed this expression in Acts 7:41 where Stephen was speaking about the Israelites that they worshipped the work of their own hands.' You know what that means? To do something, and

我想要鼓勵你一下。神不希望你變得像別人,祂希望你有自己的特色。祂造你時給了你獨特的個性、人生背景和成長環境。你只要感恩,爾後去做你該做的。這樣的你是被神接受的,而不是那個模仿別人的你。

無用功的第五種,是我們帶著個人的目的去為神工作,即便是你幹得非常好,但如果目的是為了個人利益或名譽,那麼則是無用功。主對撒狄教會的領袖說,「按名你是活的,其實是死的。」有時候我們可能為了得到一個活潑的名聲而去做教會工作,為給自己建立名聲。為了保持那個名聲,我們會一直持續做某件工作。這種人在別人眼中看起來似乎非常屬靈,然而神看的是每件事情背後的動機,那就是你為了讓人覺得你是活潑有生機的。結果怎樣?所有那些工只是無用功。我們任何試圖給人留下深刻印象的行為,都是神眼中的無用功。

真正活潑有生命的行為,則是一個人做出來為了使神印象深刻。這些行為是暗暗做的,只要神知道,不要叫左手知道右手所作的。祈禱時不要故意給人看。禁食也不要讓別人知道。這樣的是在神眼中有生命的行為。無用功/死行,是那些為了讓人印象深刻而做的,做出來以後,還會反復在心裡品味和體會所得的榮耀而沾沾自喜。

不知道你是否留意,在使徒行傳 7 章 41 節,在司提反講到以色列人崇拜自己手裡做出來的東西。你知道那是什麼意思嗎?就是自己做了一件事,然後看著它,心裡想,「好傢伙,我可真有兩下子。」記不記得但以理書

then to look at your work and say, 'Boy, that is something good I've done.' Do you remember how Nebuchadnezzar walked on the roof of the palace in Babylon (Dan. 4:30) and he said, 'This is a kingdom which I have built, a huge palace with its hanging gardens and all that, and what must people be thinking about it?'

Do you know, my friend, that when you serve the Lord and you do some work - maybe God has used you in building a great ministry for the Lord - and then you look over it, like Nebuchadnezzar did, and say, 'It is tremendous what I have done' and you are thinking about the opinion that others have about your work. It is a dead work. You have got to take all those thoughts and throw it in the garbage bin. It is Babylon. What Nebuchadnezzar built was Babylon, and what you are doing is building Babylon too. Our righteous acts, in human eyes, are an abomination fit to be flushed out into the sewage system in the sight of God. "All that is great in man's eyes is an abomination to God" (Lk. 16:15).

If you are not going to be radical in eliminating dead works from your life, you will never be a spiritual man. If you do God's work, for example, for a salary, it is a dead work. God may give you money to care for your needs, but if you serve the Lord only because you are paid, what is that? You can call it Christian work, but it is not really serving God; it is serving God and money.

May God help us to have our eyes open, so that we are free from dead works.

4 章 30 節,尼布甲尼撒在巴比倫宮殿的城牆上行走時對自己說,「我建的這個王國真實太了不起了,巨大的宮殿、空中花園和這一切,別人得要怎麼想呢?一定會崇拜的沒話說。」

我的朋友,你知道吗,当你做某些事情来侍奉神的时候,也许神用你来成就非常了不起的事工,但假如你像尼布甲尼撒那样感慨,“看我做了多了不起的事情!”,然后想着别人因此对你的看法。那么这一切就成了无用功。你得把全部那样的想法丢进垃圾桶。因为那是巴比伦的方式。尼布甲尼撒修建的是巴比伦,你那样做的话,修建的也将是巴比伦。连在人眼中的我们的义举,在神眼中都是可憎的,可以顺着下水道冲走了。“人所尊贵的,是神看为可憎恶的。”(路加福音 16 章 15 节)

你若不彻底清除生命里的无用功/死行,就没法成为一个属灵的人。假如你为神做工,目的却是为了挣工钱,那就是无用功。神会给你提供钱来支持你的需求,但如果你服侍神的目的是为了挣钱,那么会怎样?你可以把它叫做事奉工作,然而却并没有真的事奉神,那是既事奉神又事奉钱财。

愿神帮助我们睁开眼睛,救我们脱离无用之功。