

19. Some More On Dead Works

We are continuing our study today on the subject of dead works, which, as we considered earlier, marked out a religious person from a spiritual person, and it is important for you to know the difference.

We have been trying to understand what it means to have a form of godliness without its power. Or, in other words, what it means to be just religious as opposed to being spiritual. Now the danger of this is that religiosity finally makes everybody into a Pharisee. Spirituality is what conforms us to the likeness of Christ. The contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees is so great and so vast, we need to see that there is equally vast a difference between being spiritual and being religious.

Dead works are spoken of in the New Testament as something that we need to repent of. We already saw five characteristics of dead works in the previous studies. They are works done without joy, without love, without zeal, works done without faith, and works done for personal gain and honour.

Now we want to look at a sixth characteristic of dead works: These are works which are done merely to ease one's conscience. You see, all of us have a conscience, and that conscience disturbs us when we do something which we feel a bit uneasy about. In fact, the heathen people also have it. Paul says that all people in the world, even if they have no external law, have a law written in their hearts: "Their conscience, bearing witness, either accusing them or now even excusing or defending them" (Rom. 2:15). It is the same with us.

Conscience develops in sensitivity as we hear the

19. 繼續談無用之功

今天,我們繼續來學習「無用之功」這個話題。正如我們前面討論過的,無用功將屬宗教的人與屬靈的人區分開來,因此,瞭解這二者的區別是非常重要的。

我們想試圖理解,空有敬虔的外表卻沒有從神而來的力量是怎麼回事。換句話說,與「屬靈」相反的「屬宗教」是什麼意思。要知道,宗教本身有把任何人變成法利賽人的危險。而靈性的生活則要我們變得更像基督。耶穌與法利賽人之間的對比是如此的強烈和巨大,同樣的,我們要由此看到屬靈與屬宗教的巨大區別。

新約聖經告訴我們,做無用功是需要悔改的。前面我們講了無用功的五個類型,那就是沒有喜樂、沒有愛、沒有熱情、沒有信心,或是為了個人的名利,所做的事奉工作。

現在我們來看無用功的第六個特徵:就是那些僅僅為了良心稍安而做的事奉工作。要知道,每個人裡面都有良心,當我們做些不太對勁的事情,良心會讓我們不安。這良心,異教徒和不信教的人(就是聖經說的外邦人)也有。保羅說,世界上所有的人,就算那些沒有外在律法的人,也有律法寫在他們心裡:「他們的良心一同作證,或作控告、或作辯護」(羅馬書 2 章 15 節)。我們也是同樣。

在我們留神傾聽聖靈聲音的過程中,良心會逐漸變得更

voice of the Holy Spirit. But our conscience can sometimes urge us to do something and we do merely to escape this harassing voice of conscience; not out of love for God or because we feel this is what God wants us to do, but merely to escape the harassing voice of conscience! I will give you an example. You may feel one morning that you haven't read the Bible, and you are getting out for work. Then your conscience tells you, 'Hey, you haven't read the Bible.' And so, you open the Bible, and sit down for two minutes, and maybe read a Psalm or read a proverb or a few proverbs, and then you close the Bible. Your conscience is now eased, and you can go to work peacefully. Otherwise, you may fear, perhaps, that you might have an accident on the road or something like that. This is not spirituality; that is superstition. It is like people keeping the Bible under their pillows to have clean dreams - another superstition that is.

People can pray, when they feel, 'Oh, I haven't prayed.' So I kneel down and spend five minutes just to ease my conscience, and then my conscience is relieved and I get up. I haven't become spiritual, I am just religious. You know, for the same reason people may go to meetings, or pay their tithe, or give money to beggars, just to ease one's conscience. All such works are dead works. They are not evil works. I mean, to pray or to read the Bible, how can it ever be evil?

Now there is a difference between doing these things as a discipline. I am not saying that we should read the Bible only when we feel like it. We don't live by feelings. We do what is right whether we feel like it or not. It is like going to work. You don't go to work only when you feel like it. You don't tell your children to go school only when you feel like it. Even if it is raining, you still put on your raincoat or take an umbrella and go to work. It is a discipline; you need

加敏感。 但有時候,知道某些事是神要我們做的,我們做了,卻並非出於對神的愛,而只是為了逃避良心的譴責!舉個例子來說,某個早晨你沒讀聖經就想出門去工作了,良心對你說「嗨,你還沒讀經呢」,於是你坐下來,也許花了兩分鐘讀點《詩篇》或是《箴言》。現在你的良心安穩,可以帶著平安去上班了。 因為你害怕如果沒讀經的話,可能會在路上遇到事故之類的。 這不是屬靈,這是迷信!還有類似的,有些人把《聖經》放在枕頭下面,認為這樣可以避免做噩夢,這也是迷信。

有時候你覺得「哎呀,我還沒禱告呢」,於是跪下來花了五分鐘禱告,只是追求一個心理平衡,良心安穩了然後就起來結束了。 這樣的你還沒有屬靈,只是在遵行宗教慣例而已。 有些人參加聚會、或是交什一奉獻、給乞丐錢,也是這樣的心理,只是尋求心理平衡良心安穩而已。 這樣的事奉也同樣是無用功。 這些都不是邪惡的事情,祈禱和讀經怎麼可能是邪惡的?

然而,你需要注意,抱著那種心理做這些事,與通過這些事來自我約束是不同的。 我不是說我們該只在感覺有心情的時候才讀經,因為我們不該靠感覺活著。 無論感覺如何,我們都要去做「正確的」事情。 如同上班,不是靠感覺,想去的時候才去。 你不會同意自己的孩子有心情才去上學。 你就算下雨,穿雨衣打雨傘也得去上班。 這是一種自律,每個人都需要的自律。 同樣的,我們不是在有心情的時候才去讀經和禱告。 可能很多時候你都沒那份心情。 因此,我們基督生活的一

that. Similarly, we don't read the Bible or pray only when we feel like it; Most of the time you may not feel like it. So, there is a place for discipline in the Christian life. That is not a dead work. Discipline is a very, very good thing for all Christians to have; to have a discipline of reading the Scriptures, and of communion with God every day, of going to meetings regularly, etc.. But there is a difference between that and just seeking to do something to ease our conscience.

For example, it also could be in the matter of evangelism. A preacher can stir you up and say, 'There are millions of people dying without Christ. What are you doing about it? Why are you sitting, earning your living? Why don't you go?' And you decide to give up your job and go to reach the perishing millions without any call from God. You leave your job, you go to some other place to do Christian work and, after some time, you are just frustrated. You acted on the emotion of a moment, or perhaps to relieve a guilty conscience. Now isn't it a good thing to go to some difficult place to preach the Gospel? - It certainly is. But do you know the number of people who have gone to all these places and were frustrated because they did not wait upon the Lord? They did not seek to see or examine themselves why am I going? Is it to ease my conscience, or is it because I love the Lord, and I see the Lord pulling me in that direction? There is a lot of difference. Otherwise, you can end up with an endless round of dead works, like in a merry-go-round you go round and round and round and round and in the end you can waste your life.

Seventhly, dead works are works that are done out of fear of divine judgment. If you look in the Old Testament you will find that that was the only way God could get most of the Israelites to obey Him. You see that particularly in Deuteronomy 28:15

部分,就是自律。 自律不是無用功。對基督徒來說,自律是非常非常好的功課,約束自己按時讀經,每天與神交談,定時參加聚會,等等..... 然而要知道,自律與尋求心理平衡,是不同的。

再舉一個例子,傳福音的工作也會有類似情況。當牧師說「這世上有成千上萬的人,還沒來得及認識基督就死去了,你該怎樣做?為什麼你還坐在這,只考慮自己的生活?為什麼不出去傳福音?」這話攪動了你的情緒,然後你在沒有神召喚的情況下,自己決定辭去工作,去「拯救」那些面臨消亡的人。這樣的你,辭去了工作,到某處開展傳教工作,結果一再受挫。這種情況,其實你只是情緒用事,甚至只是為了擺脫罪惡感。那麼現在要想一下,深入那些困難的地方傳福音到底是好事還是壞事?可以肯定那不是壞事。然而你知道嗎?很多人是由於在這個問題上沒有等候神,自己做決定,結果陷入了困境。他們沒有尋求神的心意,也沒有審視自己去的理由。在這樣的決定之前,你需要冷靜下來,捫心自問,我究竟是為了尋求心理平衡呢,還是由於愛神並在這件事上得到了神的帶領?這兩者之間有著巨大的差別。你若不小心,將會導致許多許多的無用功,像在旋轉木馬上一圈一圈,結果浪費了許多生命和時光。

接下來,無用功的第七種類型——出於對屬天審判的畏懼。當你在看舊約的時候,對大部分以色列人來說,那是唯一能讓他們順服祂的方法。尤其從申命記 28 章 15 節開始到這章結尾,摩西說「若不聽從耶和華你神的話,不謹守遵行他的一切誠命律例,就是我今日所吩

onwards and right through the end of that chapter that, 'If you don't obey the Lord, and do all these things I am commanding you,' says Moses, 'you will be cursed in the city, cursed in the country. You are going to have confusion and rebuke and sickness and your enemies will defeat you and you will have poverty and all types of problems.' And so, the Israelites obeyed. You know, this is the way we get children to obey us - by the fear of punishment. There is no other way to get a little child to obey.

When we obey God out of fear of punishment, it is better than disobedience. Certainly I would say that dead works are better than evil works. But God says, 'You better repent of doing things merely because you are afraid of punishment.' Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (Jn. 14:15); and not like it says in Deuteronomy 28 - 'If you don't want to be punished, keep my commandments.' There is a lot of difference between the emphasis in Deuteronomy 28:15 to the end of the chapter and what Jesus said in John 14:15. See, many Christians have not really understood that there is a great difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

That motive, the thing that impels me to do something, is what God sees and is what makes us spiritual. For example, if we avoid telling lies because we are afraid we would be caught, well, that is a good motive, but that is not the best motive. Jesus did not refrain from telling lies just because He was afraid He would be caught, but because it was dishonouring to the Father. It is contrary to God's nature. That is why He avoided it.

Now, if a doctor tells you, 'Because you have bitterness and an unforgiving attitude towards others, you are suffering from asthma or rheumatoid arthritis or migraine, you better give up your

耐你的,這以下的咒詛都必追隨你,臨到你身上。 你的城市和田間都要被詛咒,擾亂、責罰和疾病會臨到你,敵人會打敗你,你會面臨貧困和各種各樣的問題。」 就因為這樣,以色列人順服了神。 你知道嗎,我們經常需要用這樣的方式來應付孩子,就是用責罰的威力使他們聽話。 對於很小的孩子,很多時候其它方法是沒用的。

然而就算我們出於畏懼去順服神,也總是好過悖逆祂。 也就是說「無用功」總是好過「惡行」。 然而神說「僅僅出於畏懼責罰而做事,這個方面你要悔改。」 耶穌說,「你們若愛我,就必遵守我的命令」(約翰福音 14 章 15 節),這不同于申命記 28 章裡「你們若不想被責罰,就必遵守我的命令」。 這兩處強調的內容有著很大的區別。 你們看,很多基督徒其實還沒有明白,舊約與新約是有著巨大區別的。

動機,驅使我們做某件事的動機,是神所看重的,也是使我們成為屬靈生命的基礎。 比如說,如果你避免說謊的原因是害怕被戳穿,這很好,但卻不是最好的動機。 耶穌節制不說謊話,不是出於怕被戳穿,而是怕不榮耀父神。 因為那是與神的天性相悖的,所以耶穌不去說謊。

現在我們假設醫生對你說,「你心裡對人有怨恨和不饒恕的態度,因此你將遭受哮喘、風濕性關節炎或是偏頭痛作為懲罰,所以你最好放棄心裡這些苦毒。」 結果很可能你就會遵守了。 為什麼呢?就是為了得到療

bitterness or wrong attitude towards others and be positive,' you may do that. What for? - To be healed - Because you don't want to be punished. But those are not works done for the glory of God. They are dead works.

So you see, there are many, many examples we can take where we do something because we are afraid, believing, if we don't do it we will be punished. You don't want to get a sickness; you don't want to get a judgment from God. And with that selfish fear of judgment, we can avoid doing a lot of things and live a fairly upright life. But that is not spirituality.

Let me now tell you an eighth characteristic of dead works. We also find in Deuteronomy 28 opposite of what we have just considered. It is works that are done for the sake of obtaining a reward. You know that that is another way in which we deal with children. We tell the children: okay, if you finish your homework, I will give you a chocolate or take you for an outing. Or, if you come first in the class, I will get you a bicycle to go to school, and then they work hard. In the Old Testament God had to deal with the Israelites like that. In Deuteronomy 28: 1-14, God says, 'If you are careful to keep all My commandments, you know what will happen? You will be blessed in the city; you will be blessed in the body; God will bless your children; God will bless the animals in your field and your fields will prosper; and you will get rain upon your land and God will bless you in so many ways.' So they kept the commandment, because they wanted to be blessed.

Do you know how much of this there is even amongst Christians? The apostle Peter once asked Jesus, just after the rich young ruler had refused to give up all that he had to follow the Lord. Peter compared himself with that rich young ruler and said in Matthew 19:27, 'Lord what about us? We have

愈。因為你不想被懲罰。然而這種情況下你的努力,並非為了神的榮耀。因而這些努力也是無用功。

現在你看,我們生活裡有很多很多這樣的情況,由於怕被懲罰而做的事情。你不想生病,不想被神責罰。帶著這種源于自私的畏懼,可能很多事我們都不會去做,甚至活得相當程度上非常合乎正道。然而,這卻並非是屬靈的生命。

下面請讓我告訴你無用之功的第八種類型。在申命記 28 章裡,和我們前面探討的內容正好相反,那就是為了得到獎勵而做的事奉。這是我們對待小孩子的另一個方法,告訴他們:好,你要是做完作業,我就給你買巧克力或者帶你出去玩;或者,你要是考班級第一,我就給你買自行車。然後你發現孩子很用功。舊約時代,神對待以色列人就像這樣。申命記 28 章 1 到 14 節,神說,「你們若小心的遵守我的命令,知道將會怎樣嗎?你的城市、你的身體都會得到祝福,神也會祝福你的孩子、你田裡的動物,你的地也會有好收成,總有好雨降給你,神會在方方面面祝福你。」然後我們就看到以色列人遵守著誠命,因為他們想要蒙祝福。

你知道基督徒裡有多少,也是如此嗎?曾經那個有錢的少年人拒絕放棄全部財產跟隨主,爾後使徒彼得問耶穌,他把自己和那個有錢的少年相比,「主啊,那我們呢?我們已經撇下了所有的來跟從你,撇下了漁網和我的工作,撇下了在加利利作為漁民的生活保障,跟隨了你。將來我們要得什麼呢?」(馬太福音 19 章 27 節)

forsaken everything; I gave up my nets and my job, the security of being a fisherman down in Galilee and I have followed you. What am I going to get out of all this?' And Jesus answered this question on what was he going to get out of it with a story of a man who employed labourers in his vineyard as described in Matthew 20:1-16.

The essential point in that parable is, if you read it carefully, that the first few groups who came to work, all came with an agreement to receive a certain amount of pay at the end of their work. The last group was the only group who came without any agreement to receive any pay. That was the main difference between that last group and all the other people who preceded them. And what was the result? The last group worked for only one hour whereas the first group worked for 12 hours. In the end, when it came to pay the wages, we see the master rewarding the last group first. They got twelve times the pay of what the first group got. If we compare what their hourly wages were, they got for one hour what the other people got for twelve hours. And there, the Lord was answering Peter's question: if you work thinking what you are going to get out of it, you are going to be the last. But if you work joyfully, cheerfully, without thinking of what you are going to get in return, you are going to be first.

Dead works are works done for the sake of obtaining a reward. The only type of work that God wants is works done out of love joyfully and cheerfully. Quality means much more to God than any amount of quantity. He is looking for a response of love and gratitude from us, not compulsory service out of fear or out of hope of obtaining a reward.

你如果仔細讀,會發現這個比喻的一個重要之處,就是這些先來的,是簽了合同的,注明了在工作結束後會收入多少。然而只有最後一組是沒有合同來保證任何收入的。這是最後一組與前面其他組的截然不同之處。結果怎樣?最後一組只工作了一小時,而第一組工作了十二小時。我們看到在工作結束後,雇主卻先獎勵了最後一組。如果我們計算時薪的話,他們實際得到了第一組的十二倍的收入。主用這樣的比喻回答了彼得:你要是做工的時候一心就想著最後的獎勵,那麼就將成為最末尾的。然而你若是帶著喜樂和愉悅去工作,不在意最後的所得,那麼你將成為第一的。

為了得神的獎勵而做的,是無用之功。神唯一想要的,是我們出於愛,帶著喜樂甘心所作的。神更看重「質」而非「量」。祂尋求的是我們用愛與感激對祂的回應,而不是我們出於恐懼或是貪圖獎勵而對祂的事奉。