

A Christian's Labor *John 6:15-29*

I read an article on the National Health Service website about the **causes of insomnia** which said, *"It's not always clear what triggers insomnia, but it's often associated with..."*

- *stress and anxiety (i.e., worry)*
- *a poor sleeping environment – such as an uncomfortable bed, or a bedroom that's too light, noisy, hot, or cold.*
- *lifestyle factors – such as jet lag, shift work, or drinking alcohol or caffeine before going to bed.*
- *mental health conditions – such as depression or schizophrenia.*
- *physical health conditions – such as heart problems, other sleep disorders and long-term pain.*
- *certain medicines – such as some anti-depressants, epilepsy medicines or certain steroids."*

Since this is Labor Day weekend, I would like to talk about what a Christian should labor for and how we can find rest.

Please open your Bible this morning to the ***Gospel of John 6***

Allow me to set a backdrop for our passage this morning. In ***John 6*** we find the account of the ***Feeding of the 5000***.

We also studied the feeding of the 5000 in our ***Mark*** series; as a side note, there are only two miracles written about in all four Gospels: Jesus' resurrection and the feeding of the 5,000.

Here in the *Gospel of John*, a crowd of people had gathered to hear Jesus and when evening had come...

Jesus' Disciples wanted to send the people away so they could reach civilization to buy food and find lodging for the night.

But **Jesus asked** Philip a provoking question to make the Disciples realize who He is. Philip was from the area, so that may explain why Jesus posed this question to him specifically.

Jesus asked in *John 6:5*, "*Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*"

John 6:6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. NKJV

And Philip said, "*It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!*" (*John 6:7*).

Jesus wanted to shatter their closed-minded expectations and make them realize He could do more than just little miracles.

When we willingly offer the Lord every part of our life, "*Do we believe the Lord will use ordinary things in our life to create extraordinary things for God's kingdom purposes?*"

Christians must never believe our resources are too little to serve God. Jesus used a *Lunchable* and fed 15-20,000 people with it.

When we obediently bring our life to the Lord sacrificially, no matter how insignificant we may think our gifts or talents are; the Lord will use them to fulfill His plan.

When we fully surrender to the Lord, He will do far beyond what can be imagined.

*Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in **us**,*

Ephesians 3:21 to Him be glory in the church. NKJV

With these verses in *Ephesians*, Jesus tells us His power is shown through His followers, the church.

This morning Jesus communicates to labor for the everlasting things, not for the things that will perish and rest in His plan.

I. The One who creates the storm, can calm the storm.

Read *John 6:15-21*

The crowd wanted to make Jesus King, but they did not realize He had first come to His creation to be the Sacrificial Lamb and to offer His life as a ransom for lost sinners.

The crowd wanted an earthly king but did not recognize Jesus as the Heavenly King of Glory.

The crowd was concerned with things of the **physical world** as well as defeating the Roman Oppression, but Jesus came to save them from their sin, and they just didn't get it.

These people were sheep without a shepherd, and they wanted a shepherd who would do their will, not a shepherd to follow.

So, Jesus slips away before they got a chance to force Him into a situation that was contrary to God's plan.

Jesus needed some time alone with the Father to fellowship with Him, hear His voice, and stick with His plan.

Have you ever been at a point in your life where you couldn't hear the voice of God and were not sure what to do?

When trying to discern the Lord's voice, sometimes we need to be alone and give God time to speak into our lives.

It is **often** during quiet times, when we are alone with the Lord, that He reveals His will and plan to us.

It is not said here in the ***Gospel of John***, but we know from the other ***Gospels***, Jesus compelled His disciples to go on to the other side, ahead of Him.

Mark 6:45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. NKJV

As the Disciples go and board the boat, they have no idea what storm is awaiting them.

Jesus had withdrawn to the mountain near the Golan Heights and the Disciples boarded the boat, on the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is near the hills of northern Israel and is nearly seven hundred feet below sea level.

The Sea of Galilee is about eight miles wide and over twelve miles long from north to south.

According to *Follow the Rabbi.com*, the Sea's location made it subject to sudden and violent storms.

Storms developed when an east wind dropped cool air over the warm air rising from the sea.

This sudden temperature change produced fierce storms in a short time and these storms obviously scared the people.

But Jesus compelled them to go, and they followed His leading.

Imagine battling a raging storm for hours as you were stuck in the middle of the lake, because Jesus told them to go.

You see, sometimes the Lord calms the storms in our lives and other times He allows the storm and calms us!

Jesus will give us perfect peace in the storm as we set our minds on Him.

Mark 6:48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. NKJV

Imagine being these Disciples, it was night, and they were in the middle of this storm.

After they rowed for a few miles, the storm was raging, and they were scared; but they also saw someone walking on the lake. I don't know about you but that would have been a good time to learn how to pray!

Jesus calms them by simply saying, “***It is I; do not be afraid!***”

What is amazing about this narrative is, Jesus not only calms the storm, but He is the One who created the storm as well.

Mark 4:40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

Mark 4:41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" NKJV

The reason we as His followers, can trust Jesus is because He is the creator and the One who can calm all of life’s storms.

But if we were honest with ourselves, we would say,

Sometimes we create the storms found in our lives, by our own failures and sins; yet the Lord can still **calm** those storms when we repent and call on Him to save us.

In the darkest hour of our lives, when the storm is raging, Jesus says to us, “***It is I, do not be afraid!***”

It is not the Lord’s will for Christians to live in fear. Trust Him!

Why do we wait until we have almost capsized our lives to call upon the only One who can calm the seas of our situations?

Hebrews 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,

Hebrews 6:20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. NKJV

II. Don't work for things that won't last.

Read ***John 6:22-27***

The day after the crowd received food from Jesus, they notice He was missing; so, they went across the Sea to find Him.

I love how Jesus answers their question in ***John 6:25 "Rabbi, when did You come here?" NKJV***

Instead of answering them, Jesus reveals their hearts to them by telling them why they were there.

You see, they wanted to be fed again; they were seeing Jesus as a magician instead of as Lord of the universe.

In ***vs. 26***: Jesus penetrates their **hearts** to reveal their true motives! ***"You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. NKJV***

In other words, He tells them, ***"You are only interested because you had full bellies. You are concerned with things of the flesh, and I am trying to reveal Spiritual truths to you.***

Matthew 6:25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 6:27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? NKJV

Jesus knew these people were not sincere in their adoration for Him, they simply loved Him as long as they were getting what they wanted.

Jesus was calling people to a **personal** commitment which required a sacrifice. He was calling them from impure motives to pure motives.

Salvation is a free gift from the Lord, but when we truly come to faith in Christ, we will willingly give Him every part of our life.

John F. Kennedy famously said, “*And so, my fellow Americans: Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.*”

In *vs. 27*, Jesus warned them about the things they were chasing.

Re- Read *John 6:27*

Life in this world is temporal; only the things that make a difference in eternity truly matter.

The most important thing in this world is having a **relationship** with Jesus Christ, by the free gift of eternal life which comes through faith.

Charles Thomas Studd was a British missionary who wrote a poem, and one line reads, *“Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.”*

Mark Cahill wrote a book entitled, *“One thing you can’t do in heaven...”*

The introduction of the book starts out with these questions...

Three hundred million years from now, what will be the only thing that will matter?

Will it matter how much money you made? Will it matter what kind of car you drove?

Will it matter who won the NCAA football and basketball titles this year?

Will it matter who you took to the homecoming dance?

Three hundred million years from now, the only thing that will matter is who is in heaven and who is in hell.

If who is in heaven is the only thing that will matter, then who is in heaven, should be one of our greatest concerns now.

Jesus tells us in ***Matthew 18:11***, ***“The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”***

If it is of the utmost importance for Jesus to reach the lost, shouldn’t it be a major priority for us as well?

The real question is, “*What are you doing of significance today that will matter 300 million plus years from now?*”

Jesus taught us not to store up for ourselves earthly treasures that can be destroyed or stolen. After all, we brought nothing into this world, and we can take nothing out of it.

There is certainly no eternal value in, living our lives for ourselves, looking to get out of life all that we can, as the world system would have us believe.

Yet there can be significant eternal value in what we do with our lives during the exceedingly short time we are here on earth.

So, Jesus told them not to labor for things that perish, which causes them to ask another question.

III. Give me the “I must do” list.

Read *John 6:28*

Basically, these people were asking the same question we hear all throughout the scriptures, “*What must I do to be saved?*”

But listen to this question; “*What works must I do?*”

It is very typical for our flesh to want to fix the issues of life through our own **strength**.

If you give me a to do list or a check off sheet, I can accomplish the things on that list by 8am and then I can go on living life for Myself!

But the way to eternal life seems like an oxymoron. The Lord has made salvation completely free, but it costs everything.

Audio Adrenaline's song the **Good Life** Chorus: *"This is the good life I've lost everything I could ever want and ever dream of..."*

This is the good life I found everything I could ever need here in Your arms.

What good would it be if you had everything but you wouldn't have the only thing you need?"

Receiving Eternal Life is not something you can work towards; the only way to receive Eternal Life is to admit you are empty and have **nothing** to offer.

The only way into heaven is to accept a free gift that can never be earned or bought.

IV. You must be "All in".

Read **John 6:29**

"All-In" within the game of Poker is a bet that places all of a player's chips into the pot.

"Lifehouse" has a song entitled "**All in**" and some of the lyrics say... *"And I'm all in, nothing left to hide I've fallen harder than a landslide I spent a week away from you last night..."*

Now I'm calling, calling out your name Even if I lose the game I'm all in, I'm all in tonight... Yeah, I'm all in, I'm all in for life."

You see, we need to recognize that every true believer has been set apart by God and **for** God.

Ephesians 2 tells us we are not saved by WORKS; but we are saved to do good works. Salvation is free, but God wants to invade every single cell of your being.

He wants you to realize He is the very air that you breathe.

You can't work for Salvation, but since it costs Jesus everything to buy you; He wants you to be *All In* for Him!

Halfhearted devotion to the Lord will not suffice!

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. NKJV"

MAMMON is a biblical term Aramaic in origin, that refers to all material wealth or physical substance.

In other words, the tangible, physical things, of this life!

The only things we can take to heaven are our rewards and other people. If God uses us to bring someone to faith, then we will see them in heaven.

When we use our gifts and talents for His kingdom, we will receive rewards and crowns on the day we see Jesus.

Those are the only things we can take with us to heaven.

When we received God's gift of salvation, we were given certain spiritual gifts. Paul told the church in Corinth the body of Christ is made up of many parts.

1 Corinthians 12:20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. NKJV

If you are exercising your spiritual gifts, you are playing a significant role in the body of Christ by doing that which has eternal value.

V. Practical Application.

Most of us have been raised with the mantra, *"If you want something, you have to work for it."*

What does, "If you want something work for it", mean?

This statement implies if we desire anything, expensive or not, we have to work hard for it, or we won't get it. Nothing is free.

This is probably why so many religions take the offer of a free gift of salvation from Jesus Christ and turn into a list of "I have to's".

This is also probably why the people in ***John 6:28*** asked, ***"What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"***

Re-read ***John 6:27-29***

When we bring our lives to God in a spirit of obedience and sacrifice, no matter how insignificant we may think our gifts or talents are; the Lord will use them to fulfill His plan.

1. The One who creates the storm, can calm the storm.

We need to be ever mindful that the One who creates the Storm is the same One we have a personal relationship with, and He is able to calm the storm.

Whether we are going through a trial God has allowed in or life, or we are experiencing consequence for our own actions, God is able to work through that storm for your good and His glory.

2. Don't work for things that won't last.

What are you laboring for? Things that will matter or things that will dissolve in the end.

Charles Thomas Studd was a British missionary who wrote a poem, and the end line reads “*Only one life, ’twill soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.*”

3. We cannot complete a to-do list to earn Salvation.

Receiving Eternal Life is not something you can work towards; the only way to receive it is to admit you are empty and have **nothing** to offer.

4. God wants us to be “All In”

Every true believer has been set apart by God and **for** God.

By exercising your spiritual gifts, you are playing a significant role in the body of Christ by doing that which has **eternal** value.

5. The Lord wants to give us His rest.

Matthew 11:28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." NKJV

A theological definition of **rest** is...freedom from work, toil, strain or activity. **Rest** is the cessation of motion or action of any kind, and applicable to anybody or being.

The Lord's **rest** is a **rest** from labor, from mental exertion, and of body or mind; knowing He loves us and gives us **salvation**.

A body is at **rest** when it ceases to move, but the mind is at **rest** when it ceases to be disturbed or agitated. So, **rest** also means freedom from whatever worries or disturbs you.

R. Kent Hughes said, "*As Christians, we understand there is no rest for the soul, apart from Christ.*"

God's eternal **rest** is found within a person and His name is Jesus Christ. We trust Jesus for Salvation, joy, peace, and love as we **rest** in His **goodness**.

Stop striving and **rest** in the Love of Christ!

Jesus' salvation is free, and He wants to give you abundant life. Surrendering and resting in Him always gives us the best life.