

The Barrenness of a Busy Life

by Don Currin

The sermon warns against the danger of substituting work for worship, neglecting personal communion with Christ, and losing the Spring from Whom our ministry has grown.

Topics: "Intimacy With God", "Prioritizing Worship"

Description

Don Currin preaches on the tragedy of substituting work for worship, highlighting how Satan's strategy is to keep believers busy with nonessentials to prevent them from forming an intimate connection with Christ. The danger of neglecting personal communion with Christ is emphasized, as illustrated by the story of a lost spring that once brought healing. The importance of daily withdrawing from the noise of the world to strengthen one's heart in God's presence is stressed, with reminders from Hudson Taylor, Vance Havner, George Mueller, and Oswald Chambers on the significance of prioritizing worship and intimate fellowship with God above all else.

Transcript

The Tragedy of Substituting Work for Worship

Satan called a worldwide convention. In the opening address to his evil spirits he said, "We can't keep true Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from having conservative values. But we can do something else. We can keep them from forming an intimate, abiding experience with Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to church, read their Bibles, and have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time so they do not have time to have an intimate fellowship with Christ. This is what I want you to do: keep them busy in the nonessentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds."

How tragic it is that the devil has been so successful in getting so many believers to overextend themselves today in this world's pursuits to the neglect of fellowship with Christ. In the Song of Solomon 1:6, the writer laments, "they made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept." While busily engaged in the maintenance of temporal affairs, he had forsaken His first love. Diligent in the cares of life, he had tragically neglected his own soul's nourishment.

Hudson Taylor warned of the danger of allowing the demands of this life to keep us from maintaining the vineyard of our fellowship with Christ.

Our attention is here drawn to a danger which is preeminently one of this day: the intense activity of our times may lead to zeal in service, to the neglect of personal communion. Such neglect will not only lessen the value of the service, but tend to incapacitate us for the higher service. Let us never forget that what we are is more important than what we do, and that all fruit when not abiding in Christ must be fruit of the flesh and not the Spirit. As wounds when healed often leave a scar, so the sin of the neglected communion may be forgiven and yet the effect remain permanently.

The story is told about a spring whose waters had certain medicinal properties so that those who drank from it were helped in the cases of various infirmities. In the course of time, homes sprung up around the spring. Later, a hotel was built, then stores of all kinds. Eventually, a town grew into a city! Years passed. Then there came a day when visiting tourists would ask, "By the way, where is the spring from which this grew?" Dwellers of the city would rub their hands in embarrassment and say, "I am sorry that I cannot tell you, but, somehow, in the midst of all our progress and improvement we lost the spring and no one knows where it is."

Could it be that in the midst of all our ministerial progress we have lost the Spring from Whom it has grown? It is possible that while we were boasting in the successes of our church growth strategies in the 1970s and 1980s we lost the divine Spring of His glory? Certainly we could not have been so consumed in the work of building our ecclesiastical kingdoms that we were negligent in worshipping the King of Kings? Vance Havner said it right when he warned, "There is nothing that crowds out the quiet hour any more than the very work that draws its strength from the quiet hour."

I am convinced that it would do many a believer well to stop and evaluate whether he has been too busy for God. In spite of personal growth, no saint can weather the storms of this present age without daily withdrawing from this world of noise to get his heart strengthened in the presence of God. Not even the most apt theologian can overcome the weakness of the flesh without having his soul renewed by Him that is altogether lovely in the secret place of prayer. As that man of faith, George Mueller, put it, "Let none expect to gain mastery over his inward corruption in any degree, without going in his weakness again and again to the Lord for strength. Nor will prayer with others or conversing with the brethren make up for secret prayer."

May it be our resolve to make it our discipline each day to never entertain the presence of any man until we have met with God. I am persuaded that if worship is neglected we will hinder the work of Christ and trouble our brethren in the ministry. As Oswald Chambers cautioned, "Worshipping God is the great essential of fitness. If you have not been worshipping... when you get into work you will not only be useless yourself, but a tremendous hindrance to those who are associated with you." Let us be diligent to daily meet with the Master.

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