

No True Work Is Vain

by J.R. Miller

The sermon emphasizes that true work for God is never in vain, highlighting the silent yet powerful influence of faithfulness and God's presence in our efforts.

Scripture: Psalm 126:5-6, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 5:16, John 12:24, 1 Corinthians 15:58, 2 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 6:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 6:10

Topics: "Faithfulness in Service", "The Power of Silent Influence"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes that no true work for God is ever in vain, using the apparent failure of Jesus' life and death as a profound example of how what seems like failure can lead to glorious success. He encourages believers to remain faithful in their duties, asserting that the true impact of their work may not be immediately visible but will ultimately bear fruit in God's timing. Miller highlights that real success lies not in visible results or applause but in the silent, transformative influence of God working through us. He reminds us that God's work often occurs quietly, like the sunbeams and dew that nourish life without fanfare. Ultimately, if we are true to our calling and allow God to work through us, our efforts will never fail to produce blessings.

Transcript

No true work for God ever fails. Was there ever in this world such other apparent failure as there was in the life of Jesus, at the close of the day he died? Nothing seemed to be left. The Cross had buried in black floods of shame all that was beautiful and worthwhile in that blessed life. Even the little handful of followers he had gathered about him during his troubled years had lost all confidence in him as the Messiah. Yet we know that what seemed failure, was most glorious success. The history of Christianity these nineteen centuries, is the story of the influence of Jesus.

When you have done your duty any day, when you have been true to God in your work, in your witnessing -- it is impossible that you have failed. Sometime -- it may be years hence -- but sometime the good will be apparent and the blessing from your faithfulness will be wrought out before the eyes of the world. It is not the noise we make that produces impressions. Nor are the visible results the truest and deepest. Christian teachers sometimes feel that their work with their pupils has failed, because they do not see the tearful eye after the tender lesson, and the instant change in the life after the earnest appeal. The preacher thinks his work has failed because his sermons do not draw crowds, and do not leave startling results. The best work is wrought in the silence.

Said Frederick W. Robertson: "For teachers -- What is success? Not in the flushing of a pupil's cheek or the glistening of an attentive eye; not in the shining results of an examination, does your real success lie. It lies in that invisible influence on character which He alone can read, who counted the seven thousand nameless ones in Israel. For ministers -- what is ministerial success? Crowded churches, full aisles, attentive congregations, the approval of the world, much impression produced? Elijah thought so, and when he discovered his mistake and found out that the Carmel applause subsided into hideous silence, his heart well near broken with disappointment. Ministerial success lies in altered lives -- and obedient, humble hearts."

We should set it down as a principle, that only as God works in us, will our work have power; and that ordinarily God works silently. Elijah waited, and a terrible storm swept among the mountain crags; but the Lord was not in the storm. Next there was an earthquake and the mountain was shaken to its base; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then came fire -- the lightning leaped from cliff to cliff and the deep gorges blazed; but the Lord was not in the fire. When these startling manifestations of energy were gone by, then God came. There was "a still small voice" -- "a sound of gentle stillness" -- and that was God.

How silently the sunbeams pour down all day long! No one hears their falling. Yet what mighty energy there is in them! What wonderful results they produce! How silently the dew comes down in the darkness; yet in the summer morning all the leaves and flowers and grasses are gemmed as with diamonds, and there is new life everywhere in field and garden and forest. So it is in all life. It is not noise nor sensation which produces true spiritual results; it is God in us, the Spirit working through us, the love of God breathing in our words, in our acts, in our life. We know how silently Christ wrought. His voice was not heard in the streets. The Spirit of God moves upon men's hearts and changes them -- but no one hears the Spirit's movements.

But if we work thus, hiding ourselves away and letting God use us, and if we are true and faithful to our duty -- our work shall never fail. Sometime, somewhere, there will be blessing from it. We may not see results at once. Our pupils may go away from our most earnest teaching, apparently unimpressed. Sorrowing ones may appear to receive no comfort from our sympathy or from the divine words of consolation which we speak to them. Congregations may scatter away after the preacher's most solemn appeals, appearing to carry with them, no deep and lasting influence from his words. But if God is truly in our work -- then blessing and good will sometime surely follow. Years hence, it may be, the strong man will bend over the humble teacher's grave and drop a tear as he says, "It was her sweet patience, her loving, beautiful life, her earnest words, her faithful holding up of Christ before my eyes -- which led me to my Savior."

The dewdrop sinks away into the heart of the rose and is lost, forgotten. But all day in the hot sunshine, the rose is more lovely and pours out a sweeter fragrance. Your words of comfort spoken to a sad one, sank down like the dew into the depths of the sorrowing heart and seemed to be altogether lost. But the life grew stronger as the blessed sympathy of your spirit touched it and as the truth you spoke entered into it, and soon was restored to peace and joy.

The preacher goes home discouraged and hides himself away from sight, feeling that no good has been done by his sermon, because no one spoke of any help or benefit received from it. But in one life and another and another, among those who heard him -- there is new hope, new courage, new resolve, new inspiration!

One listener goes home and seeks his neglected altar and prays, the first time in months.

One is encouraged to try again to overcome his besetting sin.

One goes out to find some needy one to whom he can minister in Christ's name.

One is stronger all the week amid the toils and tasks of a busy life -- and lives more sweetly, more earnestly, more lovingly.

Thus the sermon which in secret the minister wept over, after preaching it, thinking it had done no good -- really blessed many lives, inspiring, quickening, cheering, arousing, rebuking sin, comforting sorrow, kindling hope. If only God is in us in our work -- then we need not be anxious about results. Our noise may make no impression, but God's silence works omnipotently.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/no-true-work-is-vain/>

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