

Things That Endure

by J.R. Miller

The things that truly endure are those inspired by love and done in the name of Christ.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:12

Topics: "Love in Action", "Enduring Impact"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the importance of living a life that produces enduring results, contrasting the fleeting nature of many human endeavors with the lasting impact of love and kindness. He illustrates that while many pursuits may seem significant, they often leave no lasting legacy, akin to building 'birds' nests' that are easily swept away. Instead, he encourages individuals to focus on actions inspired by love for Christ and others, which create lasting treasures in the spiritual realm. Miller reminds us that even small acts of kindness can leave a profound and enduring impression on the lives of others. Ultimately, he calls for a life dedicated to meaningful contributions that will be remembered and cherished long after we are gone.

Transcript

In one of the fables of ancient poetry, an angel was permitted to visit this earth. From a lofty mountain top, he looked down upon the cities, palaces, and works of men. As he went away, he said, "All these people are spending their time in building only birds' nests. No wonder they fail and are ashamed."

Building birds' nests to be swept away in the floods, when they might be erecting palaces of immortal beauty, to dwell in forever -- thus, indeed, must much of our life and work appear to the angels who look down upon us from Heaven and see things as they are. Many things that men do, leave no permanent results, nothing to show a little while afterward, that they have been wrought.

No doubt, there are things evanescent in themselves, which yet leave an enduring impression. A rose has but a brief existence, and yet it may leave a touch of beauty on the hearts of those who behold it. Charles Kingsley advises, "Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful. Welcome beauty in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower -- and thank Him for it, who is the fountain of all loveliness; and drink it in simply and earnestly with all your eyes; it is a charming draught, a cup of blessing." There may be good, therefore, in even the most transient things we do. They may leave touches of beauty on the lives of others, or may put inspiration toward sweeter and better living, into other hearts.

But there is a large class of those do not do good to others, nor store away any treasures for themselves.

It is possible to live, however, so that everything we do shall last. In all our busy life, we may be laying gold, silver, precious stones, on the walls of life's temple -- materials which will not be consumed nor tarnished in the fire which shall try men's work.

In the sphere of unseen things, results are rated, not by dollars, but by moral values. Here, a cup of cold water given to a thirsty one in the name of Christ will count for more than the piling up of a fortune for one's self. In this sphere, also, the man whose hands appear empty at the end of his life -- may be rich, leaving to the world an enduring inheritance of good. Writes Kingsley again:

There is no failure for the good and wise.

What though your seed should fall by the wayside

And the birds snatch it, yet the birds are fed;

Or they may bear it far across the tide

To give rich harvests after you are dead.

Our work will last, only when it is inspired by love and is wrought in the name of Christ. Nothing that we do for ourselves, will endure. There is no immortality for vanity and self-seeking. The glory of self-conceit is only a bubble which bursts and leaves but a wreck of froth behind. But what we do in love for Christ and our fellow-men, will live.

One made a costly piece of embroidery, weaving into it many silver and gold threads. The work was then laid away for a time, and when it was looked at again, the whole delicate and beautiful fabric had decayed -- nothing was left except the gold and silver threads. These were as bright as ever, in imperishable beauty. The only threads in the web of a life which will endure -- are the gold and silver threads, which love for Christ and love for men put in.

We do not begin to realize what power even the smallest things, if love is in them -- have to put brightness and a blessing into dreary or empty lives. The memory of a kindly word stays oftentimes for years, in a heart to which it brought cheer and uplifting. A flower sent to a darkened room in some time of sickness or sorrow, leaves fragrance which abides ever afterward. A note of sympathy, with its word of cheer and love, is cherished as dearer than gold or gems, and its message is never forgotten. The greatest deeds without love -- make no enduring record, but when love inspires them, even the smallest ministries of kindness leave imperishable memories in the lives which they help and bless.

It ought to be one of the deepest longings of every true heart, to leave in this world something which will last, which will live in blessing and good.

"Is the world better or worse where I tread? What have I done in the years that are past? What have I left in the way as I passed, foibles to perish -- or blessings to last?"

It is pitiful to spend one's years in doing things that are not worth while, things which will perish and leave no record of good in any life. We should not be content to let a single day pass in which we do not speak some gracious word, or do a kindness that will add to the happiness, the hope, or the courage and strength, of another life. We should seek ever by ministries of love, to redeem our days of toil from dreariness, emptiness, and earthliness -- and make them radiant in God's eye, and in the story we write

for eternity.

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