

'Retired'

by Samuel Logan Brengle

The speaker reflects on the prospect of retirement, emphasizing the importance of preparation, spiritual growth, and service, and finding fulfillment in the glory of the Lord.

Scripture: Psalm 92:14, Isaiah 40:31, Joel 2:28, Matthew 25:21, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Philippians 1:6, 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Hebrews 12:1, 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 2:10

Topics: "Spiritual Vigilance", "Retirement"

Description

Samuel Logan Brengle emphasizes that retirement is not an end but a new beginning in the spiritual journey, encouraging believers to remain active in prayer, meditation, and service even in their later years. He reflects on the swift passage of time and the importance of preparing spiritually for retirement, viewing it as an opportunity for deeper engagement with God and others. Brengle draws inspiration from biblical figures like Paul and John, who found purpose and vision in their own times of retirement, urging the faithful to continue their work for the Kingdom of God. He reassures that the glory of the Lord will shine even brighter in the twilight of life, and encourages a spirit of vigilance and readiness for the ongoing battle of faith.

Transcript

There is no discharge in that war.' 'They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' 'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.'

When I was a little lad, time went by so slowly and the years seemed so long, that I felt I should never be a man. But I was told that the years would not seem so long when I got into my teens. So I waited in hope, and after what seemed a century or two I reached my teens, and sure enough the years tripped by a bit more quickly. Then I got into my twenties, and they sped by yet more swiftly, and I reached the thirties and speedily passed into the forties, and almost before I had time to turn around I found myself in the fifties, and about the time I hoped to catch my breath the wild rush of years carried me into the sixties, and now I'm bracing myself for the plunge into the abyss of RETIREMENT!

But is it an abyss? Will it swallow me up, and shall I be lost in its dark and silent depths? Is it not rather a sun-kissed, peaceful slope on the sunset side of life where my often over-tasked body can have a measure of repose, and my spirit, freed in part from the driving claims of the War, can have a foretaste of the Sabbath calm of eternity?

Well, I shall soon know, for abyss or sunlit slope, it is just ahead of me, and in a very little while I shall look into 'The War Cry' and the 'Disposition of Forces' and find my name in the list of those who are RETIRED. However, I am Not distressed in the least about this, but I am thinking about it and laying spiritual anchors to windward against that day.

I know that Jesus said, 'Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.' But I am sure He did not mean that literally, for if so, we should never buy coal by the ton or lay money by for taxes or a new suit of clothes. What He meant was that we should take no anxious thought. We should not worry and fret about tomorrow.

Now the best way I know to avoid anxious thought is to take calm, prayerful forethought. So I am taking forethought against the day of my retirement. I am praying for grace and wisdom for that time, and already I am considering what seem to me to be possible dangers, and arming my spirit in advance against them. I believe in preparedness. Jesus said, 'Be ye also ready.' So I watch and pray and prepare, that I may not be found wanting. I don't want to lose the dew from my soul. The dew of the morning passes away: but there is also the dew of evening -- I do not want to miss that.

Sunset is often as glorious as sunrise, and when the sun goes down 'the eternal stars shine out.' Often the splendor of the night is more wonderful than that of the day. The sun reveals the little things the flowers and grasses and birds and hills and sea and mountains -- these are little. But the larger things -- the immensities of the heavens with their flashing meteors, their silvery moons, their star-strewn depths sown thick with flaming suns -- these are the great things, and they are hidden by the garish light of day, but revealed by the kindly darkness of night.

So I suspect the greater glories, the surpassing splendors of the spiritual world, are yet to be revealed to me as the sun of this life begins to sink beneath western hills. 'At eventime it shall be light.' Hallelujah I do not expect to fold my hands and sit in listless idleness or vain repining when I am retired. There will still be abundant work for my head and heart and hands. I shall probably not be so active on the Field, or be 'going to and fro in the earth' on long campaigns as in the past. But I hope to pray more for my comrades who are on the Field and in the thick of the fight. There will be plenty of knee-work to do; and we have need of knee-workers more than ever, for this kaleidoscopic age -- electric, restless, and changeful as the wind-swept sea -- does not lend itself to prayer, the prayer that gets into close grips with God and the great wants of men, and brings down Heavenly resources to meet vast earthly needs.

I shall meditate more, at least I hope to, and read and ponder my Bible more, and try to match its wondrous truths with life, the life I still live and must live, and by its light try to interpret the life that surges all around me and manifests itself in the great movements, the triumphs and agonies and birth throes of men and nations. Oh, it will be a fascinating study!

I shall find plenty to do. If I can't command a Corps or a Division, or take part in councils, or lead on great soul-saving campaigns, I can talk to my grocer and doctor and letter-carrier about Jesus crucified and glorified, and the life that is everlasting. I can wear my uniform and go to my Corps and testify, and can still take an interest in the children and young people, and maybe out of the books of my experience find some helpful life lessons for them. And in doing this I shall hope to keep my own spirit young and plastic and sympathetic. I don't want to become hard and blind and unsympathetic toward youth, with its pathetic ignorance and conceit, its spiritual dangers, its heart-hunger, and its gropings after experiences that satisfy, its eager haste and its ardent ambitions.

Then there are letters I can write to struggling Officers on the Field -- letters of congratulation for those who are winning victory; letters of sympathy and cheer for those who are being hard pressed by the foe; letters to missionary Officers in far-off heathen lands; letters to those who are bereaved, who sit with empty arms and broken hearts in the dark shadows and deep silence beside open graves where I, too, have sat, whose heartache and deep grief I know, who in vain long

For the touch of a vanished hand, And the sound of a voice that is still;

letters to those who in pain and weariness and possible loneliness are nearing the Valley of the Shadow of Death, where only the Good Shepherd can go with them every step of the way, but where some word of hope and cheer may still reach them from a comrade who thinks of them in love and ceases not to pray for them.

The thought of Retirement does not frighten me, nor cause me to repine, nor kindle resentment in me. Indeed, my long and somewhat heavy and exacting campaigns have left me frequently for a time so weary that my body has cried out, 'Here, now, you have driven me long enough; I am out of breath, exhausted, wearied half to death, tired down to the ground. I want you to retire.'

But then my spirit has risen up and cried out, 'Not a bit of it. Don't think of retirement! I'm not weary. I'm just learning how to fight. I'm getting my second wind. I want to die in the thick of the conflict on the field, at the battle's front, sword in hand, with my boots on.'

So there is my problem. Retirement will give my body a breathing spell, but I am studying how to satisfy my spirit and give it worthy employment, with scope to fly and run and walk and not grow weary (Isaiah xl. 3'). Well, I shall find a way! Paul did, and Bunyan, and blessed and beloved old John on Patmos. Paul was sent to prison, but he talked to his guards and won them to Christ, and by and by there were 'saints in Caesar's household.' And, Oh, those prison letters! Why, we should have missed some of the most precious portions of the Bible if Paul had not been forced into retirement through his prison experiences. I am glad he did not sit down and curse his fate and find fault and let his hands hang down and his knees grow feeble. But he still wrought on and made the years of retirement supplement and complete the labors of his active years.

John found work in his retirement. 'Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions,' said Joel. But John, in his old age, banished to the Isle of Patmos, swept by wintry seas, reversed the order of Joel and saw visions. 'I saw,' 'I heard,' wrote John. What did he see?

'I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it.'

'I saw a new Heaven and a new earth.'

'I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from. God out of Heaven.'

'I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.'

What did he hear?

'I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.' 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.'

One day I went through the book of Revelation and noted the things John saw, and the things John heard. And it occurred to me that God is no respecter of persons, but is eternally the same, and if John had visions and heard angelic voices in retirement, may not I? Bunyan the tinker did. In his filthy jail, surrounded by ignorance and vileness, in poverty and distress, oppressed by hard confinement, he caught visions of Heaven and Hell and delectable mountains and angelic hosts that made his retirement so fruitful as to feed the whole Church of God for ages upon ages.

Even poor blind old Samson, sent into dark and bitter retirement through his sin, at last groped his way back to God and wrought havoc among the enemies of the Lord and of his people and accomplished more in his death than in his life.

So when I am retired I shall not sulk in my tent, nor repine, nor grumble at my lot. Nor shall I seek a secular job to while away my time. For years I resisted God's call to preach. My heart was set on being a lawyer. But against my protest and stubborn resistance was God's insistent call. And since 'the gifts and calling of God are with repentance,' and since 'a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to me,' I shall 'carry on' and do with my might what my hands find to do, and do so with joy and good cheer. But

My soul, be on thy guard, Ten thousand foes arise;

The hosts of sin are pressing hard To draw thee from the skies.

Ne'er think the battle won, Nor lay thine armour down;

The fight of faith will not be done Till thou obtain the crown.

Oh, my soul,

Be sober, then, be vigilant; forbear To seek or covet aught beyond thy sphere:

Only be strong to labor, and allow Thy Master's will to appoint the where and how.

Serve God: and winter's cold, or summer's heat, The breezy mountains or the dusty street,

Scene, season, circumstance, alike shall be His welcome messengers of joy to thee;

His Kingdom is within thee! Rise, and prove A present earnest of the bliss above.

And rejoice, Oh, my soul! for --

In the hour of death, after this life's whim, When the heart beats low and the eyes grow dim,

And pain has exhausted every limb -- The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim And the mind can only disgrace its fame,

And man is uncertain of his own name The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heard, and the last tear is shed, And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,
And the widow and child forsake the dead -- The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.
For even the purest delight may pall, And power must fail and pride must fall,
And the love of the dearest friends grow small. But the glory of the Lord is all in all.
Hallelujah!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/samuel-logan-brengle/retired/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net