THE URGENCY OF OUR TASK

MEMORY VERSE: "**I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work**" (John 9:4).

TEXT: Luke 13:1-5; Ezekiel 3:17-21; John 4:35-38

The task of taking Jesus' saving gospel to the sinful and drowning world is urgent and important at all times. The world will soon come to an end (1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 1 John 2:17) and the opportunity for service to the Lord will also close with it. There is the dreadful reality that the time of Gods mercy may pass when seekers may not find Him (Isaiah 55:6). It is therefore dangerous to delay or fail to preach the gospel. Every lost opportunity leaves the heart more hardened and makes it more difficult to come into conformity with God's will (Hebrews 3:12, 13). Therefore, believers should preach while the opportunity lasts and sinners should respond and be saved while the Spirit is calling.

Question 1: ***Why is gospel-preaching by every believer very urgent?***

1. DUTY OF SAVED WATCHMEN

(Ezekiel 3:17-21; 2 Kings 9:17-20; Romans 10:13-15; Isaiah 62:6,7; Jeremiah 6:17; Revelation 3:14-22)

The work of a watchman is to warn others of impending dangers. The prophet is the watchman of God to warn careless evildoers of the dangers of sin (Jeremiah 6:17). Few realise they may be close to death. Many fail to recognise there is only a step between them and death (1 Samuel 20:3).

Sinners inside and outside the church must be warned of the danger of sin. Everyone should be given the opportunity of hearing the saving gospel of Jesus Christ which is the power of God unto Salvation (Romans 1:16). But how "**how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?** (Romans 10:14). We are expected to go and win them so they will not be damned (Mark 16:15,16). Those who hear the gospel, repent of sin and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and person Saviour will be saved. The task of warning the careless and guiding him unto salvation is not optional for the believer. We are compelled to warn the sinner and the backslider to repent; else, we too risk our own place with God.

Question 2: ***What is the work of a watchman?***

2. DANGER OF INDIFFERENCE TO THE UNDYING VISION

(Revelation 3:14-19; Ezekiel 34:1-6; Isaiah 32:9; 47:8; Amos 6:1; Zephaniah 1:12; Matthew 22:5; 24:12; John 4:35-38; Matthew 18:11; Mark 4:29)

The Laodicean church was indifferent about spiritual things; consequently, it was on the verge of getting its relationship with God severed. The case of this church is similar to the state of many believers today. Half-heartedness in the service of the Lord has never

pleased God. All those who profess devotion to God but are by their lives and desire uncommitted to Him, are condemned in the scripture.

Question 3: *What will be the end of the sinner who refuses to repent?*

Saul, the first king of Israel, Jehu, the people of Judah, Amaziah and Judas Iscariot were all partial in their devotion to the Lord and received the consequent punishment. The Lord expects that having saved us, He will use us to save the world (John 17:20; 21:15-17). To be lukewarm, indifferent or nonchalant about the urgency of the task of the gospel is to heartlessly damn the world for which Jesus bled and died (Isaiah 53:1-5).

Question 4: *What is the danger of indifference to the urgency of our task?*

Causes of lukewarm disposition to gospel-preaching include absorption in business (Luke 14:18), procrastination (Acts 24:25) and insensitivity (Acts 28:27). But the Lord is calling us to repentance (Revelation 3:19).

"**Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest**" (John 4:35). The Lord, in this text, draws a correlation between the natural way of sowing or planting seed with the spiritual sowing of the seed of the word of God. In either case, harvest time is eagerly awaited. With the right preparations, the seed sown is sure to germinate with the promise of fruitfulness and a good harvest. The time to go is now. They are ripe already for the harvest (Mark 4:29). We must not be like the disciples of Christ who could not see the already ripe bountiful harvest from Samaria about to be gathered into the Kingdom. If we are too preoccupied with the mundane things of life, we will fail to see sinners with wounded hearts, bruised by sins and heading towards destruction. We are to immediately put the sickle, because the harvest is come (Mark 4:29).

3. DIVINE REWARDS OF SOUL-WINNING

(John 4:36-38; Psalm 126:5,6; Daniel 12:3; Proverbs 11:30; 1 Corinthians 9:19)

The labour of soul-winning is not without reward. Jesus says in our text: "**And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together**" (John 4:36). This reward is partly in the present time and in the future also. As the harvester rejoices when his fruits are gathered into the storehouse, so does the soul-winner when souls are won to the Lord. In fact, the more fruits the harvester gathers, the more his joy; so too the greater the number of souls won to the Lord, the greater the joy of doing the will of God. Thus, Jesus says, "**Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples**" (John 15:8). And this is the primary duty of the believer. Jesus emphasised this when He said, "**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain…**" (John 15:16).

Question 5: *What are your rewards as a soul-winner?*

Beyond the present, the reward of soul-winning is largely in the future when the saints shall be gathered home to glory. "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast,**

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

GHS: 105, 108 & 231