

## The Work of Our Church

Hebrews 12:1-2

### ➤ Preface

Illus: This week the news made a fanfare about a set of twins born new year's eve. One was born late night 12/31 and the other early morning 1/1. They said they were born on different days, different months and different years. True, but they were still twins born only minutes apart just like other twins. There's nothing wrong with jazzing it up some but the it is still the same.

Such is the case of the work of the church. The church is in the business of doing the Master's work. That has not change and will not change.

As we begin a new year, it is important that we be reminded that we are doing the work of God the Creator.

### Scripture

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV*

### Introduction

William Carey was a Cobbler (shoemaker) who became a pastor. While making shoes in his shop and reading the scripture, Carey heard the call: "If it be the duty of all men to believe the Gospel... then it be the duty of those who are entrusted with the Gospel to endeavor to make it known to all nations." As Carey sobbed out, he responded; "Here am I; send me!"

When he met with a group of ministers to discuss his calling, the moderator gave him this response; "Young man, sit down; when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."

William Carey remained faithful to God's calling and became the first Baptist missionary. I don't have to tell you what great missions exist today.

We must never take lightly the significance and high calling of the one we serve.

Today I want to speak with you about the work of our church. To discuss our purpose as a church, you simply need to look at our church logo on your bulletin.

### What is this great work to be accomplished?

#### 1. We must be **growing** in God's Word and understanding.

We must learn the teachings of Christ and obey them.

Christ says if we do not love Him we will not obey Him.

How can we obey if we do not learn His teachings of the Word?

God's word is where we find answers to life's questions.

God's word is where we find peace in a world of turmoil and pain.

God's word is where we learn to make our marriages of other relationships work.

God's word is where we find wisdom to view life from a divine perspective rather than human pessimism.

God's word is where we learn to understand that God has a purpose for each and every one of us.

God's word is where we nurture the faith that gives us great boldness as a church.

We must offer biblical, informative and challenging Bible study for every age group. We have doubled our Sunday School attendance in the last few years. We must continue to offer SS, Wednesday night bible study, Beth Moore studies, AWANA, Youth ministries, Sr. adult ministries and numerous other bible studies.

We must encourage our people to attend bible study. Together we must grow in our understanding and relationship with God.

## 2. We must practice loving one another.

Because of God's love, we must practice love.

Yes, practice just as a physician practices medicine or an athlete practices a sport, we must practice love.

Our love must be put into action not just words.

Christ says if we say we love Him but do not love our brothers, we are liars and we in fact do not love Him.

The natural response to our relationship with Him is to love others. The ordained response to grace is grace. The ordained response to forgiveness is forgiveness.

Loving others is a key step in putting our faith into action.

How do we love one another?

We start by not putting one another down.

We refrain from smart comments and cute sayings that belittle people.

We replace them with words that lift up and encourage one another. We build up our fellow believers and encourage them.

Some people have tongues like the ginzo knife that slices and dices those around them.

Others always have something nice and uplifting to say. Some people drain our spiritual gas tanks while others fill them up.

Love begins with our words and expands to our actions.

Love then grows to genuinely caring for one another, and then into ministering to one another, and finally to sacrificing for one another.

Illus: Churches today are feuding over music. It is all about contemporary vs. traditional music. That fire does not rage in BBC because we love one another enough that we want everyone to worship. Churches that feud over music should realize that underneath the music issue is a lack of love for one another.

Love for one another becomes true love when we are willing to sacrifice. You can make the sacrifice this Saturday and help with work day.

## 3. We must be busy reaching the lost with the gospel.

Illus: Several years ago when our family joined a Baptist church, they had a fellowship after church. One lady said they were glad to have us and then turned to another lady and said aren't we glad to have the Tuckers as part of our church. To which the lady responded, "Yes but it is time to close the doors, we have enough."

Too often that is some people's attitude. If this is your attitude, get on your knees and ask God to change your heart.

I know there may still be some at BBC that feel that way but not many. God is giving us a love for reaching out to others. Our budget reflects it and every aspect of our church ministry it about reaching others.

Every church is either moving forward or moving backwards.

There is no neutral ground for churches.

If we are not sharing the gospel of Christ with others, we are moving backwards.

It is not just the responsibility of the pastor to share the gospel. It is the work of the church. It is the responsibility of every believer.

Like a Jubilee - We must share the good news of forgiveness and eternal life in Christ.

I have been on mission trips to Honduras, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Belize and Mexico. In 2009 we are all on a mission trip in our places of work and our community.

About 3 years ago I made this statement in a sermon, "A sleepy little church in the Barnwell community needs to wake up and realize that the mission field has come to us." That statement remains true today.

Together we must realize the opportunities God has placed before us and we must be reaching out with the gospel.

**So, what are some practical ways we can go about our mission?**

**1. We must put aside those things that entangle and divide us.**

At the heart of God's grace is underserved mercy.

God's grace is pardon without justification.

Every Christian knows the truth, "I am a sinner!"

And, "I do not deserve God's forgiveness but His grace gives me forgiveness!"

Therefore, we must forgive others.

There is simply no room in God's work for harbored anger, resentment or refused forgiveness. Not one of us has the right to withhold forgiveness.

We must clear up our differences and move forward with the business of the Master.

**2. Only by remaining steadfast will we see God's purposes accomplished in our church.**

Paul uses the analogy of a runner in a race to encourage us to stay the course.

Like a runner, we must be mindful of the prize and keep persisting in God's work. (Jason's SS class, only 1)

We already know the outcome. The battle will be won and the church will be triumphant.

We must see to it that we are among the faithful.

**3. We must have faith in God for the opportunities, resources and results.**

In the words of William Carey; "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God."

We must expect and attempt great things. As our church we are not limited to man's visions or man's resources.

We no longer say, "well, we are just little ole Barnwell or we are just a little country church"

We are the family of God with the Master's business as our responsibility and the Master's resources at our disposal.

**4. Our eyes must remain fixed on Jesus.**

But I am afraid of failure. What if this or that goes wrong?

Our savior is powerful enough to see us through the challenges and struggles if we just keep our eyes on Him.

➤ **Conclusion**

Most successful businesses have a business plan. A business plan is a carefully crafted plan that outlines the mission statement of the business. It includes specific goals and a timeline for the goals and objectives.

The work of the church is different. The work of the church is not limited to the imaginations and strategies of man. The work of the church is much more important.

I understand the objectives and the mission of the church but I do not know the details of how we will get there. I don't have to know the details of how we get there.

God has the plan. Our job is to be faithful and willing.

Illus: Last year we refinanced, renovated, called staff and accomplished many things. These were all things led by God. God will provide the opportunities, the resources and the people.

May each one of us respond; "Here am I, send me!"

May we be faithful in our work of Growing, Loving and Reaching.