

The Works of God

Sunday, March 22, 2020 at The First Congregational Church of Marshalltown,
Iowa

Scripture: John 9:3 "Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.'"

Introduction: The parrot that quoted Scripture

There is a story of an elderly widow who had three hardworking, fairly wealthy sons. For her 90th birthday her sons tried to outdo each other with the impressive gifts they gave her. One gave her a home movie theater, the other a brand new car, and the third a trained parrot that could recite over 500 Bible verses. At dinner on her birthday they asked her opinion regarding their gifts. She thought the movie theater was grand, but could not see the screen well enough to really enjoy the movie. She thought the new car was beautiful, but didn't drive anymore so it just sat in the garage. Her favorite gift was the bird. It was delicious. She didn't understand the bird's purpose, and purpose is one of the benefits of the covenant and one of the themes of this episode in the ministry of Jesus.

What we won't consider but is worth considering

To set the stage, we note that the Lord Jesus has endured another long argument with the religious leaders of His day, concluding in one of the boldest declarations of His divinity in the Gospels: "Before Abraham was, I Am." Then He found a man blind since birth, and the disciples asked whether his ailment was due to his sins, or maybe his parents? Jesus dismissed both options, preferring and appeal to the work and glory of God. He then said that He needed to do the works of Him who sent Him while it was still day, for night is coming. This raises several questions that we will acknowledge but not try to address this Sunday: How did the Lord discern the "works of Him who sent Him?" Of what kind of day and night did Jesus speak? Did the Father actually have this man live with blindness for years just to heal him? Today we're just going to look at the notion that God works in people. Consider the phrase, "that the works of God should be revealed in him."

What we will consider this morning

Works of God are revealed in people. Jesus claimed one of the works the Father called Him to do was to pray for this man born blind. All His miracles,

instructions and actions impacted people around Him, and they were works ordained by God, who still does works in the lives of people today. Why not you? In fact, Scripture states that people who are followers of Jesus have their own portfolio of works to be done during the course of their lives.

Ephesians 2:8-10 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*"

So we have our own set of "works", projects that impact those around us according to the will of God. So how can we tell that we are working the works of God in our lives? I think that 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 offers us a clue: "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart." When the Apostle Paul wrote of letters of reference and declared to the people of the church of Corinth that the only letter of reference he needed was his concern for them. I think that is what made him a candidate for the Holy Spirit to do works of God. They were written on his heart. He had a concern and passion for his people.

Application & Conclusion

From that I would suggest a couple of questions when considering God's work in our lives. Is prayer precious? Do you care for other people so much that their lives are written on your hearts? If so, then you are a candidate to be involved in a work of God. I believe that the Holy Spirit of God works through people who follow Christ often, and often without their knowledge. But that means that everyday obedience can be miraculous, can be ordained from before the foundation of the earth. Jesus had projects, works of God, and so do we. Pray hard. Care for people. Move with compassion when you have the opportunity to do so. God works through people just like you today. It is part of your purpose for being here.