

Laborers Together with God

Sermon delivered on May 29th, 2016

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Scripture Text: [1 Corinthians 3:1-9](#)

Introduction

We live in a broken planet, literally and spiritually. Literally, the earth's crust is cracked. It is broken into seven large tectonic plates. These plates move and as they move they collide, forming deep ocean trenches, mountains and volcanoes, and causing earthquakes.

But the earth is also broken spiritually. This was not the original state when God created Adam and Eve. They were created pure and good. But when Adam and Eve had fallen into sin, they became corrupted and they were ruined by sin. When men decided to do what he wants, decided to live life without God; the result is **ruined lives** and **broken people**.

But here is the good news; in the midst of this brokenness, in the midst of these ruined lives and broken people, there is a **gracious God** and a **glorious Gospel**. God through the Gospel invites us and there are two invitations.

I - God invites us to an living relationship with Him

[Matthew 11:28](#) Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29:](#) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [30:](#) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The Gospel reveals that there is a gracious God who invites us and offers us forgiveness and salvation.

[2 Corinthians 5:20](#) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

He invites us to be reconciled to Him, to have a real living relationship with Him. He invites us not just to be involved in religious activities and attend church, not just a Sunday morning only kind of relationship but to be involved in every moment of our lives. He invites us to a close and intimate relationship and fellowship with Him, which is an amazing thing if you really consider who we are and what we have done.

II - God invites us to an amazing partnership with Him

[1 Corinthians 3:9](#) For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Not only does God invite us to Himself, into an intimate relationship and fellowship with Him, He also invites us to labor together with Him. God has a plan to rescue sinners, to mend broken people and ruined lives. This plan, He has revealed through the Gospel. And now, God gracious-

ly invites us to partner with Him in the Gospel proclamation. When you receive the gospel of grace, immediately God calls you to partner with Him in His beautiful plan of rescuing sinners. This is a gracious and glorious invitation.

Think about Creation

[Genesis 1:1](#) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

When God created the universe, He did it without our help. There were no people to help and give God advise as to what and how to create. He created the whole universe and He did it alone.

He did not need anyone and anything. He spoke everything into existence without anybody's help.

[Romans 11:34](#) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? [35:](#) Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? [36:](#) For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Think about Redemption

[Luke 24:46](#) And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

When Jesus Christ purchased our redemption, He did not need us. Christ suffered and died and He did it alone without our help. He did not need any help from us when He rose from the dead.

[John 10:17](#) Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. [18:](#) No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

Think about the Great Commission

But now in the Great Commission, God included us. God invites us to be partners with Him in the Gospel.

[Matthew 28:18](#) And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [19:](#) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20:](#) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

[Luke 24:47](#) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. [48:](#) And ye are witnesses of these things.

[Mark 1:17](#) And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

[1 Corinthians 3:9](#) For we are **labourers together with God**: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Why did He include us, in this plan of rescuing sinners? Can He not do it all by Himself? He can, if He pleases, by His Holy Spirit get directly at the hearts of men, but that was not His design.

God who is self-sufficient and who does not need anything, chose to use human instruments to carry out His purposes. He chose to use human workers.

What a gracious invitation! His invitation is, "*Work, not only for me, but with me!*"

As we labor with God there are three things we must remember:

1. Laborers are simply ministers of God

Laborers are instruments in the hands of God.

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos? They are ministers, they are servants, they are instruments God used. And through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.

1 Corinthians 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8: Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

Laborers are really nothing. It is not about us. The workers are nothing at all without their master, and all the preachers and Christian workers in the world can do nothing unless God be with them.

Do not give too much credit to the personal worker, Evangelists, Pastors. Know them that labor among you, and honor and respect them for their work's sake, but do not put your confidence in them for the success of the ministry. Remember we are nothing but "laborers together with God." We should focus on the Master and not upon the servants.

2. Laborers are utterly dependent upon God

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6: I have planted, Apollos watered; **but God gave the increase.** 7: So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; **but God that giveth the increase.**

Paul and Apollos with all their spiritual gifts and abilities, can do nothing, without the Holy Spirit. Paul may plant the seed—and Apollos may water it; but God alone can make it grow!

We know this is true in the natural realm: the most expert farmer can cultivate the soil, plant the seed, water it, pull the weeds, but he cannot make the seed germinate, and grow, and blossom, and bear fruit and ripen. He is dependent upon many things. Dependent on the sun, the wind, the weather and etc. Just as the natural farmer has no power or ability to cause the seed to germinate and grow so have we no ability to give the increase as spiritual farmers. God must give the increase.

We cannot give men a new heart and a right spirit. Salvation is a miracle. Our experience teaches us this. We think we have converts, and we are not long before we are disappointed in them.

A drunken man came up and told a preacher one day and said, Preacher, I am one of your converts. The preacher replied, "*Sure you are my convert, for if you were the Lord's convert you would not be drunk.*" God must give the increase.

[John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.](#)

3. Laborers must diligently labor

Laborers must work. They are called laborers because they labor. We must labor because there is a world that is fallen and broken that needs to be rescued. And how is this to be accomplished? **Not by sudden miracle, but by faithful human labor.**

Yes, it is true that it is God alone who gives the increase, but we must not despise the laborers. Because God has graciously chosen human instruments and the foolishness of preaching to carry out His plan of rescuing sinners.

[1 Corinthians 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.](#)

[Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.](#)

Though it is God who "giveth the increase," yet Paul must plant and Apollos must water.

Our ultimate example of spiritual labor is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.](#)

Jesus said, "*My Father is always working, and so am I.*" and He calls us to do what He Himself is doing.

*Work, for the night is coming,
Work through the morning hours;
Work while the dew is sparkling,
Work 'mid springing flowers;
Work when the day grows brighter,
Work in the glowing sun;
Work, for the night is coming,
When man's work is done.*

God gives us the opportunity **not just to work for Him but on work WITH Him!** He included us in His plan to rescue sinners. And on our upcoming Anniversary Sunday we have that oppor-

tunity to actively participate in that plan. Let us rescue sinners, by inviting our lost family and friends and give them opportunity to hear the Gospel.

I am praying that God would bless our Anniversary Sunday with first time visitors but we must work.

Closing Thoughts

In light of the truths that we are laborers together with God and that He alone gives the increase, how should we then serve Him?

1. Let us serve together in unity

1 Corinthians 3:8 **Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:** and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9: **For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.**

Division, jealousy, competition, unbelief, and apathy will hinder the work. We must be one as we work. We have different responsibilities and yet working as one. One plants and another waters. Just like a choir; sopranos, alto, tenor and bass, singing different notes and yet if they are singing in harmony it sounds as one voice.

Since we are co-laborers with God we ought not compete with one another, let us not quarrel, for we are co-laborers with God. We are on the same team. Realizing that we are on the same team, it ought to promote unity among all whom God laborers.

2. Let us serve God with humility

Since we are nothing without God, let us cry earnestly unto Him for help as we serve Him. We are and must be dependent upon God for the increase. Remember what our Lord to His disciples said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Let us pray together and we will rejoice together. Let us pray earnestly. Pray and fast. Pray always. Pray in your closet, in your bed, at your family altars, at your work, and in the car. Pray everywhere. Let us pray as a Church for God's blessings whenever the Gospel is preached whether in this assembly or when we are witnessing.

3. Let us serve God with confidence

As you serve God with all your heart, God is with you.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

If I am working with God, God is working with me.

When you serve God, when you seek to win somebody to Christ, remember God is with you. If the Lord who has all the authority is with us, therefore we cannot and will not fail. God is jealous about His honor, He will not let His Name be dishonored; He will make sure we will have success.

AMEN!