

Holy Addiction! Saved to Serve

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[0:00] 1 Corinthians chapter 3, we'll turn there in a moment, but just to lead in, firstly I'm talking about works, works tonight.

! Now in the Bible it talks about works, it talks about faith. In the Bible it says that we are saved by grace through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast.

It's not of any working of our own, it's all of his work, it's all of that finished work, that completed work that happened at that rough piece of wood stained with Christ's blood.

That's where it happened. That's where salvation happened. For you and for me, it can happen.

That was the place that Christ bought our salvation by paying for our sin there.

And no working that we can do can ever merit that or deserve it or give us any favours with God really. No works of our own. The Bible says that all our works are as, even our righteousness is the very best thing about you and me.

[1:12] God counts them as just filthy rags, just dirty rubbish, just rags. Just like the rags you clean your dipstick with in your car. That's how worthwhile we are as far as our works go. That's the value of our works.

But nevertheless, as a Christian, when you're saved, when you become a believer, God wants us to be active as Christians, to be active in our faith. Because in James it says that faith without works is dead.

So when you really get to know the Lord as your master, as your saviour, you become his servant, you become his follower, and you want to serve and you want to live pleasing to him.

And in Hebrews 11, 6 it says, But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

So without faith it's impossible to please God. Now you might be, I don't know, people might think of a name such as Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa, lovely lady, as far as well meaning and full of good works and trying hard to be a nice person.

[2:25] But if she did not have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and saviour, if she didn't trust Christ as her personal saviour, then all those good works are valueless, then they're worth nothing.

And any good work that we can do, we might be very charitable and giving and kind and work our fingers to the bone in a good cause and give all our money to the poor or some worthy cause.

And yet works without faith is dead too. Works without faith is not pleasing to God. We can't please God. All of our working cannot please God.

It's got to be faith. Without faith it's impossible to please God. As much as any one of us might try as far as our reckoning or understanding of a God might be, that we want to be living right and living by some code of good living or good kind of ethics.

None of that can measure up. The Bible says that we all fall short of the glory of God. It's as if there's a distance there or a height there that as much as we might strive to attain it, as much as we might strive to reach God's standard of perfection, of glory, of holiness, of Him being perfect as we know He is, any working and doing of our own will always fall short.

[3:46] It will always not be enough. It's like a ladder that just doesn't reach far enough. That's as much as your works can do. It might give you a feeling that you're getting closer to God, but without faith it's impossible to please God.

Faith means to trust Him. It means to put your whole heart's trust in what He has done and not any work of your own. So just to introduce things, what I'm saying tonight, I'm encouraging God's people, the saved, to work.

Now that's the message tonight, so don't mistake what I'm saying, that you can do any kind of working that will earn heaven, because you can't. It says that, not of works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

Not by works of righteousness that we have done, or can ever do. But yet, as a Christian tonight, talking to you, if you can trust Him, if you can trust Christ and be a Christian, I want to urge you tonight to have faith that works.

Faith that works. Not that we're saved by works, but that our works are a natural consequence of our faith. They naturally follow on. That a Christian who's saved will work for God.

[4:57] And we read that there in 1 Corinthians 3 verse 9, where we read, For we are labourers together with God. In part it says, For we are labourers together with God.

It says there that we are working together, we're co-working, we're working alongside God. I know that in the Bible the Lord Jesus says, Come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Rest for your souls. He says, Take my yoke upon you, and yet learn of me. It's got the sense of a yoke at how you see oxen ploughing together. They team up. And that's the sense of how we're yoked together with God.

We're joined together with Christ. We're saved and we're working His work on planet earth. And it's a privilege. People tonight, for any one of us tonight, if you're a Christian, it's your privilege to serve God.

To serve Him with your mind, your heart, your will, your hands, your feet, to be His servant on planet earth. It's not by works that we are saved, but we are saved to serve.

[5:59] Saved to serve. I've heard they said that in China, in some churches, when a person says, I'm going to trust Christ, and they make a public testimony that they've decided to become a Christian, and that's a wonderful thing to do.

I can remember back as a young man, that I stood up in a meeting and responded to, wanting to publicly declare that I was going to stand for Christ. It was a scary moment for me.

It was scary, because I thought of people watching me, of what people might say, but the challenge of the time was to respond and to declare my faith in Christ.

And so that meant a lot for me to do that in that particular meeting. And it's said that in churches in China, when a Christian commits to Christ publicly and declares openly and publicly as a testimony to their faith in Christ, as Christ says, we should declare him before men, confess him before men. The leader of the church welcomes them into the church, and he makes this statement, Jesus now has a new pair of eyes to see with, new ears to hear with, new hands to help with, a new heart to love others with.

[7:10] So when you become a Christian, Christ comes and lives within you. Christ comes and it's no longer I that lives, but Christ that lives in me. When you become a Christian, you become a brand new man.

It's a brand new creature in Christ. And Christ says to us, he says, follow me, follow me. And it takes guts to be a Christian. It takes guts to stand up for Christ, to follow Christ.

He says to you, follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. And he didn't mean a cross that was some kind of padded, easy kind of cross, some little cross you might wear around your neck, or some kind of comfortable, shiny cross.

It was not a cross that you wear under your clothes, or wear over your clothes. He wasn't talking about some kind of fashion statement. He was talking about carrying a cross, a bleeding, rough and rugged cross, that you would have to die upon.

That was the sense of his challenge, of his call to the people at that time. He says, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me. The people that took up the cross, the cross, there was no going back, there was no turning back.

[8:13] They were on a one way trip to a hill, to be nailed upon that cross. That was the picture that Christ painted, of how it means to be a Christian, to be a disciple. It was a cross with our blood on it.

A cross with our blood, as we recognise his work. He says, take up your cross. Take up your cross. That's a challenge, isn't it? And sometimes it's a challenge, it's a sacrifice, to commit to Christ.

In some countries, it does mean your life's blood. For us, it's pretty much easy come, easy go in Australia. You're not going to get any great persecution for it. I mean, you might as a Christian in the workplace, sometimes you'll get derided and scoffed at, but really nothing like in other places, in other countries.

And 1 Corinthians 3, it goes on in verse 13, Paul writes about the testing, and the examination of the works of your life. You're going to be there, Christian tonight.

You're either going to be at this judgement place, this examination place, where your works are examined, or if you're not a believer, you'll go to the other judgement place, which there's only one sentence for that.

[9:17] Guilty. What's the sentence? Hell. There's only a one-way ticket of that judgement place. But if you trusted Christ on planet Earth, the judgement price has been paid by Christ's blood.

And Christ will say, this one doesn't go to that judgement, because I've already paid the price with my blood for this one. But you will go to a judgement, not for your salvation, because you're saved, but a judgement for your works.

And that's what Paul's writing about here. 1 Corinthians 3.13, he says, Every man's work shall be made manifest. He says, The price shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire.

And the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. It's not saying about salvation, it's talking about your work. Saying, what kind of sort is your work? In other words, how you've lived your life, what you've got to show for your life.

And for some there in that section, it talks about how they've got word, hay and stubble. A fire comes and poof! It's just a pile of ashes. For some it comes and it's gold, silver and precious stones.

[10:23] It's what you've got to show for your life. How you've lived it. What you've got to show. Life isn't just these few years on this planet. It's eternal. You are an immortal soul.

Everyone here has an ever living soul. And you'll live one place or the other. It's about Christ's blood that makes the difference. That's the dividing line.

That's the branch in the road. When you decide what you're going to do with Christ's blood.

Whether you're going to decide that you're going to accept his sacrifice in dying and paying the price for your sin. Or whether you're going to say no.

I'll choose my own way. I'll refuse the blood. I'll refuse salvation in Christ. I'll go my own way. And the Bible says that there's a broad way and it's the way that leads to destruction.

And the road ends in hell. We're friends tonight. But for those who trust Christ, they're still on the examination by fire. But for your works. And your works will be made known. And it's our privilege, people tonight.

[11:21] It's your privilege as a man of God, as a woman of God tonight, that you can serve him. You can serve Christ to work, to labour. In Romans 12, 11 it says, We should be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

When we become a Christian, we become fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. There's a fervency. We get excited. It's life worth living. This is life with the ultimate purpose of knowing our Creator, the one who made us.

And that we are made for His pleasure. Now that's the ultimate eureka, isn't it? The ultimate moment. Wow, I've got it. That's the light bulb moment of life where your life can turn around at salvation.

And then, as you trust Him, as you follow Him, the question for every believer here tonight is how useful am I in serving the Lord, in His service? When we rise to the challenge.

When we work with zeal, with fervor, with fervency, with enthusiasm. The people in Nehemiah's day, in Nehemiah 4, verse 6, it talks about the wall being built, the construction project of Nehemiah.

[12:30] And for some it said, the people had a mind to work, in Nehemiah 4, verse 6. When you get saved, when you become a Christian, there's lots of opportunity to serve your Master, your Lord and Saviour.

To be in His service. Really it's OHMS, like they used to put on old envelopes, on His Majesty's service. It's the greatest privilege that any of us can have, to not only know Him, but to serve Him in

some way.

And that can be manifold ways too. 1 Corinthians 15, verse 58, Paul writes, he says, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

For as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. He says, be steadfast, be rock solid, be unmovable, be steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

It's got a sense of abundance of fruit, of being useful. And he says there that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. It's not in vain. The life that you live for Christ, the things that you do for Christ, are not in vain.

[13:35] They're going to be worthwhile. And there's going to be something to show for your life. And really, it says there, abounding in the work of the Lord. It's in His service. Sometimes we can wonder, I know as a Christian, and different things that we might do, we might wonder about the money we put in the offering bag, or we might wonder about the value of certain ministries, of certain things, when you might see discouragement and setbacks.

And you might wonder, is it worth it? Is it worthwhile? Is what I'm doing worthwhile for God? But God says, yes, if it's in the Lord, if it's work in the Lord, then it's not in vain in the Lord.

It will be worthwhile. Your labour is not in vain in the Lord. And for every Christian, there's an unfinished task. Really, as the Bible says that the Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, there's an unfinished task.

Because there's still many that haven't heard the message. There's still many that need to hear the Gospel message. And there's an unfinished task. And he hasn't committed it to angels. He's committed it to you, to me, to every believer, to every Christian, that we should burn for God, as John the Baptist did.

John 5.35, it says, He was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. Can you be a burning and shining light for Christ? Maybe each one of you might think about, how bright am I shining?

[14:56] Am I a burning and shining light? Being like John the Baptist, have a zeal. As it says in Titus 2.14, He died. He died. He died. He died. He died.

He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He had a desire that was eating him up. He wanted to, he had a zeal for the house of God that was consuming him.

He had a zeal for God, for the work of God. Can we be that kind of people who are dedicated to the kingdom of God? Now, today it's a fact, and I just saw a drug addict's needle out the front of the church the last day or two.

People are addicted. People are addicted to all kinds of things, good and bad. But we especially think of bad addictions, don't we? Of bad addictions of drugs, of drink, of all kinds of addictions to things that are going to hurt us and harm us and harm other people.

[16:05] Many people would have addictions to various things. It's a fact. The Bible says there's a good kind of addiction. And I'd like to see some of these addicts in this church.

People who are addicts in this church, as it says in 1 Corinthians 16, 15. In part it says they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.

People have addicted themselves to the ministry. They've addicted themselves to serving God. God matters. Serving him matters. Ministry matters. It counts.

It's worthwhile. It's valuable. It's important. These people in 1 Corinthians 16, verse 15, they had to do it. They were addicted to ministry, to serving the Lord, to serving God's people.

They were consumed with it. It was their driving passion. And addiction means that it's being given up to a habit. Given up to a habit. Or, as Webster's defines it, the state of being devoted.

[17:05] You know, we can be addicted. You can be addicted to drugs. You might have to get up in the morning and have your cup of coffee. Or, but worse, you might get up in the morning and neither drink.

You know, I know people that have been like that. They've just got to get the next drink. Start shaking until they get one. You know, there's people like that. They're addicted to it. It's a driving

force. It's an all-consuming thing.

It's just central and focused in their mind that they must have it. They must do it. That's the wrong kind of addiction, of course. But yet, here in 1 Corinthians 16, there's a great kind of addiction that you can have.

To be addicted to the Lord Jesus Christ. To be fired up and on fire. To be zealous. To be passionate. To be longing and wanting to serve Him.

To live for Him. It's a holy addiction. A holy addiction. A noble addiction. An addiction that is commended by Paul. And the Lord is on our mind all day, every day.

[18:05] That's the kind of addiction that we can have as a Christian man. As a Christian woman. When we want to see every opportunity. Realise that we can see to serve Christ.

To love Him. To believe. To do His will. And it's our duty, people today, to reach our city for Christ. It's our duty to be absorbed with that which matters.

The gospel message. And to be His worker. His workmanship. In Ephesians 2.10 it says that we are His workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. We are His workmanship. It's got the meaning in the Greek of a work of art. You are a work of art. You are one of a kind.

You are a workmanship that He has fashioned. That He has created. He has shaped you. And made you who you are. Through life's experiences. Through the past. Through the present.

Through your talents.

[19:03] Through your learnings. Through the experiences sad and otherwise of your life. He has shaped you and made you. And if you're a believer tonight. You've been formed and designed for Him to use.

As His vessel. As a container for God. His workmanship. Created unto good works. In Philippians 2 it talks about how we should work out our own salvation.

With fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you. That's the wonderful thing. God which worketh in you. Both to will and to do of His good pleasure. And so we should take salvation seriously.

You are His workmanship. Created for good works. Work out your salvation. With fear and trembling. Take it seriously. This is not something to have some kind of casual interest in.

Or where you might find some spare time to squeeze it into your busy agenda. Or just some passing kind of casual kind of curiosity. About what Christianity is all about.

[20:02] This is your life. Christ is your life. And He is your all. Christ in you. The hope of glory. He is in all and all in all.

He is the one. He is that one that should drive us. That should be our passion. That should be the one we long for. The one we long to bless. To serve. To please. And not to be idle.

You know the Bible talks much about idleness. Of slovenliness. Of slumbering. And sluggardliness. You know the Bible says in Proverbs. Consider the ant.

They are sluggard. You know this. It's a picture of a man who's lounging around doing nothing. Like the. I guess the. Ocker norm. You know sitting there on his easy chair.

With his bare belly. You know the one that would be a sluggard doing nothing. The Bible says consider the ant. And get busy. You know the ants. They are always scurrying here and there. Always active.

[20:55] Always about doing something. And God wants you to be active. Like a bumblebee. Going about the work of God. Working and serving. And blessing God and others.

And it's your works. It's your life. It's your character. That should show that you belong to the saviour. There's an activity that we all can engage in.

Or we can be guilty of idleness. Idleness. There's a story told about some guys in a church. And there's four guys in this church. There was Fred somebody.

Thomas everybody. James anybody. And Joe nobody. They're all neighbours. And they were just like you and me. In this church. And they were odd people. And most difficult to understand.

The way they lived was a shame. All four belonged to the same church. But you wouldn't have enjoyed worshipping with them. Everyone went fishing on Sunday. Or stayed at home to visit some friends.

[21:50] Anybody wanted to worship. But was afraid somebody wouldn't speak to him. So guess who went to church. Nobody. Really nobody was the only decent one of the crowd. Nobody did the visitation.

No visiting sick people. Nobody worked on the church building. Once they needed a Sunday school teacher. Everybody thought anybody would do it. Anybody thought everybody would do it.

And you know who did it. That's exactly right. Nobody. And it happened that a fifth neighbour came. Who didn't know the Lord. Into the community. Everybody thought that somebody should tell them about Jesus.

About the gospel. About salvation. Really anybody could have done it. You probably know who finally won him. It was nobody. Nobody. And this parable. It kind of. It's obviously tongue in sheep. Talking about how. Sometimes we always think. Somebody else will do it. Somebody else will. Will help. Will minister. Will do. That which needs doing. About the church. But it's up to you.

[22:48] Every one of you. Find your gifts and callings. The abilities that God has placed in your life. And get the job done. Work till Jesus comes. The repeat time will come. Aim to be excellent.

Aim to be faithful. Aim to be diligent. You know. All of us can find something to do. There was a story told. Of a young Christian. Standing at a street corner.

Handing out some gospel tracts. There he was. Handing out tracts. To the people going by. He wasn't saying very much. People thought. He's being a little bit rude. You know. He wasn't really saying anything.

And they thought that maybe. He should. Someone should tell him to speak about the saviour. But. Then with gestures. The young Christian explained. That he could not speak. He was mute. He could not speak. But he was doing what he could. Amen. He was doing what he could. Likewise you. Every one of you. You might think. What can I do to serve God? You might think.

[23:44] I've got not much to offer. I've not got much. Talent. Or ability. And. I've got all of these reasons. Why not? Why I should not serve God. But. Let God use.

Who you are. Let God use you. As you have the ability. As it says in 1 Peter. 4.11. Let him do it. As in ministry. As of the ability. Which God giveth.

And. Just another. Account. In 1956. There was a famous missionary. Called Jim Elliot. He was speared to death. He went out to.

This. Dangerous place. Where there was. Man eating. Natives. And he was speared to death. Along with four of his colleagues. By these tribal people.

That he was going to preach the gospel to. He was trying to tell them. About the saviour. And Jim was a passionate follower. Of the Lord Jesus. And about four years before he died. He wrote this.

[24:41] When it comes time to die. Make sure. All you have to do. Is die. When it comes time to die. Make sure. All you have to do. Is die. Don't miss those neglected opportunities.

Those neglected ministries. Those neglected. Opportunities to serve God. Make your life count. Make it something. That there's something to show for it. As you've lived a life.

That's pleasing to God. That you can serve God. According to your ability. Don't wait till. The day of your death. To realise. Wow. I should have been. I should have been more of a.

A useful Christian than I was. There's things that I've neglected to do. That I've missed out on doing. There's unfinished business. Be about your father's business. About your master's business. He says. Go work. Son. Go work. You know. The son. That were idle in the marketplace. One of the parables. Where they're standing around. Kicking a stone on the ground.

[25:39] You know. Idling away their day. In chit chat. Or side talk. And they missed the opportunity. To get involved. And the parable there. Is that. The master beckons them.

To go. Into the harvest field. To get busy. To get busy for God. Is the picture for us. And you know. We can get busy. We can commit ourselves. We all can get busy. We've all got.

Occupations. And. Thoughts about the future. Of. Endeavours. We want to. Do. Of.

Places. We want to see. Or. Work that we want to do. But. At the end of it all. At the end of your life. What will it be to show for it? Mostly.

And. First. Foremost. Is. Do you know Christ. As your Lord. And master. Your saviour. Do you know him? He's the one who died on the cross. To pay our price.

[26:36] There's only one saviour. No other philosophy or religion. No. No church can save you. No. No good works can save you. No denomination can save you.

But Jesus Christ the Lord. Is the one who says come. Unto me. Come to me. And I will take. That burden of sin away. And then. As you follow him.

Commit. To. Following. In his tread. Follow him. Be addicted. Have that spirit. Of the men and women of God. Of faith of old.

They were addicted. They were committed. They were devoted. They had that zeal. They caught the vision. They had an addiction. An addiction. That controls their lives. That influences their actions.

That's the kind of addiction you can have. As a Christian. When you love Christ. And you realise what it matters. What really matters. What really counts in life. Is Christ.

[27:31] And him crucified. That's what counts. Nothing else counts. Not any friends or family. Who might scoff and mock at times. But Christ and him crucified. That's what counts.

And I urge you today. To be sold out to Christ. To see what he has done for you. And really when he has done so much for you. What little can we do.

Really. Not to deserve it. But in response. As a saved man. As a saved woman. There's work to be done. And it's not for the praise of men. You might get any recognition.

For what you do. I know there's a lovely lady here. Who soldiers away. Doing some menial tasks. Just washing their cups and saucers. After the morning service. And that's a ministry.

That's a ministry. She's addicted. To the ministry of the saints. That's a blessing. And it could be just something as simple as that. The question for everyone tonight. What's controlling you?

[28:26] What's your addiction? What is it that you're addicted to? Is it hurting or helping you? Will you switch to that holy addiction? Of being Christ's servant. Of serving him.

Of loving him. But most and foremost of all. Are you saved tonight? As I say. It's impossible to please him without faith. That's the starting point.

That's the first. Really the beginning and the ending. Is faith. That's all that we get to heaven for. Is our faith in Christ. And then everything else is a bonus.

But don't miss this as Christians tonight. Make your life count.