

The Servant



Newsletter for under-Shepherds and other Servants of God /5523 Newberry Drive/Raleigh, NC 27609

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The purpose of this newsletter is to pass along information and ideas to help the Lord's servants as they minister to others. Feel free to use any of it in your ministry

God At Work

Sometimes we see the sign "Men at Work" along the thoroughfare and it is a warning to be careful. Sometimes when we come upon the scene we see a number of men leaning on their shovels and not much is going on. Would it not be wonderful if we could be assured that God was at work in the church and anyone who came by would have no doubts about it? Which sign should be posted outside your assembly, God at Work, or Men at Work?

Isaiah makes it clear that God wants to work. Sometimes we get in the way. *"His work is before Him"* Isa. 40:10. No amount of work that we do can save a single soul. John put it this way: *"Not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God"* Jn. 1:13. We are His work. I must say it again. "We" are his work, and we are not finished yet. Be assured, when He is done, God will let us know, and He will take us home. The fact that we are still here is evidence that there is still work to be done in us.

It is His Word that He uses in His work. When God works it shall be seen of all. *"And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." "Prepare ye the way of the LORD." How does God work? "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." (40:4)*

Sometimes I am too high for my own good. God makes me low. Sometimes when I am too low, God lifts me up. There are times when God holds me against the straight edge and it is clear that I am crooked. Then there are the "rough" places. I still have many jagged and rough spots. God has still much to make plain. Yes, his work is before him. We are God's building project. God is not finished with us yet.

Dust

"He Remembereth that we are dust" Ps. 103:14

Dust is seen as innumerable *"Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude." 2Ch 1:9*

Dust is seen as something infinitesimally small. *"Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind:" Ps. 18:42*

Dust is something inanimate *"What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall I declare thy truth? Ps. 30:9*

Dust is a symbol of ignobility *"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate." Isa. 47:1*

Dust is something that is insignificant *"Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Isa. 40:15*

He knows that we are dust. But OH MY, what God can do with dust. We may be dirt- but we are God's dirt. Watch what God can do with dirt. When God made the worlds and the stars he made them out of nothing. He spoke and the sun began to burn in the sky- he spangled the heavens with a billion stars. He said "let there be light" and "there was light."

He called upon the earth to bring forth- and it did- plants, trees, grass and flowers. Then he made the critters. They began to crawl, and hop, leap and fly. But, when God made man, that was a piece of work. He didn't make him *ex nihilo*. He made him out of dirt.

Someone reading this might be feeling like dust or like dirt right now; that is, Small, common, insignificant, powerless, low-down, and well- dirty. You're in luck.

We stand before a God who delights in doing great things with the low down (1Cor. 1:26-31).

Watch God at work in Eden "God formed man of the dust of the ground" Gen. 2:7. But this man (made out of dust) quickly forgot what he was. He didn't believe God. If we could show him a Bible text, we would show him the warning of Jesus in John 15:5 "... without me ye can do nothing." But he didn't believe God's word, so he would have to find out the hard way. Perhaps you have found this out the hard way. Dust without God is just dirt.

God told Adam that if he disobeyed he would die. And for these many thousands of years (as if adding insult to injury) men have thrown dirt on wooden coffins as someone repeats the prophetic words- "ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Adam, without God your just dust!

When you come to the place where you remember that you are dust you have come to right place. You have come back to gates of Eden where God can make a new creation. Where is this place? Where is the portal back to paradise? Come to Calvary and see.

The Bible says that sin will not only bring you "low down" and into the grave, it will take you to hell. But God has a remedy. He wants to lift you up. For this he sent his Son, his Only Begotten Son, Jesus to rescue and raise you up and give you and abundant and an eternal life.

This is the miracle of the New Creation. Come to the lowest place on earth. Come to the foot of the cross. See what havoc, what horrific sorrow sin has caused. See the spectacle of the Son of God paying for sin- your sin, my sin. And yes, feel like dirt. That is called conviction.

Admit that you are a sinner and see that sin must be paid for. See that sin is so

serious that nothing less than the sacrifice of the sinless Son of God was sufficient. Humbly accept God's gift- Accept his payment for your sin debt. Believe in the necessity and sufficiency of His sacrifice for you on the cross. This is the message we must preach.

The Bible says "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Ja. 4:10). The word humble is derived from the word "humus" which means, well- dirt. The Bible says that "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Ja. 4:6). Pride will condemn people to remain lost forever. But if one will humble themselves and trust Christ as their personal Savior- God promises to make that one into a new creation. Yes, we are dirt- but watch out world - watch what God can do with a little dirt.

Now, How God made us is not as important as Why He made us. "All things were made by him and for him. (Col. 1:16).

GRACE

Grace is God at work. *"It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do his good pleasure" Phil. 2:13.* Christianity is no "self-Improvement" program. We can take no credit. We are more likely to "get in the way" every time we "try to help." We provide the dirt. God plows it, God levels it and grades it. God may have to dig out deep boulders that have no business in being there, but he does it. In Matt. 15 is a story of God at work. There we see grace and faith together. The Syro-phenician woman is "before him."

"Have mercy on me," she cried. "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs," said Jesus (15:26). How different the from modern-day

preaching that is careful not to offend. How different from the "How to Win Friends and Influence People" approach of our day. One thing stands in the way of God's building program: Pride. God will gladly help us move it out of the way.

The Syro-phenician woman was not going to allow pride to stand in the way of a miracle. *"Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table," she responded.* With that settled, God did a great work in her life. *"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. 15:28*

Dust

God stooped down in Eden
And there in Eden's clay
The Great Almighty God
Began to show the way
To make a thing of nothing
And yet to be the crown
Of all the earth's created things,
Of all things, the most renown

He shaped this strange and
Curious thing
of matter, Oh so low,
Then breathed his breath into it;
It came alive and rose up to go.
But soon forgot
From whence it came
Or why it had been made,

It tried to live without the one
Of whom it needed aid.
Because it traded truth for lies
It must learn again in dust
That without God it is nothing
And to live, faith is a must.



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