



# *FALL 2018 DEVOTIONAL*

*WEEK 4: Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> – Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>*



## *I AM HOPE*

**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church  
Dr. D.Z. Cofield, Senior Pastor  
Mark Slone, Devotional Editor**



**Monday, November 12, 2018**

## **“Light (Good Works/Deeds)”**

*For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

**Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)**

When a sports commentator is providing play-by-play commentary on a sporting event, he or she will have the opportunity to observe some of the most gifted athletes in the world perform extraordinary athletic feats. One of the highest forms of flattery that can be bestowed upon an athlete is to have one of his/her exploits described as “poetry-in-motion.” In other words, the action of that athlete is beautiful to watch.

In this passage, the term “handiwork” in Greek is “*poiema*,” which means “something made, a work, workmanship.” Another interesting fact about the Greek term “*poiema*” is that we derive the English terms “poem” and “poetry” from it.

This passage of scripture not only allows us to understand that we are God’s “divine poetry,” we also learn that God has a divine purpose for each of us to fulfill. That is why Paul writes that we are “...created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” The Greek term for “works” is “*ergon*” which means a deed/action that completes an inner desire/purpose.

Essentially, when we receive salvation through Christ, we must move forward to perform the works that God prepared in His divine imagination for us to complete.

These works or tasks could be the general call that all of us as Christians are obligated to perform (love all people, witness about Christ, etc.) or it could be a personal call (Preaching ministry, Deaconship, Christian Counseling, etc.).

As Christians, we are completing the works that God has predestined in His divine imagination for us to complete. In His eyes, we are considered “poetry-in-motion!”

Have you committed yourself as a Christian to find out and operate in the purpose that God has planned for your life?

**In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. – Jesus (Matthew 5:16)**

– Min. Juene Franklin

**Tuesday, November 13, 2018**

## **“Would God Vote for You?”**

*<sup>12</sup> So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

**Philippians 2:12-13 (NASB)**

Did your emotions run high during the 2018 mid-term elections? I know mine did and as well as many others. Nowhere in history have we seen such chaos in the White House. Unthinkable things have been said and done by people who have been elected and trusted by Americans to complete the tasks for which they were elected. Voters expect those they elect to live up to moral standards, not only in their public life, but their private life. However, the false accusations and dishonesty of some of our nation's elected officials are compelling many people to scratch their heads in disbelief and awe. The one person chosen to protect, lead with integrity, and put America first somehow has lost credibility among many of his subordinates, as well as among his peers. Why? Because many people feel he is unqualified and unequipped to do the job for which he was chosen to do.

As God's Elect, how well are you performing in accomplishing the task that God has elected you to do? If God gave you a performance review for the year, would you be rated as commendable, or would God be scratching His head in disbelief?

In Philippians 3:12-13, Paul commanded the church at Philippi to walk in obedience to the Lord by doing the work for which they were elected to do out of reverence to God. God not only chose them, but He also elected them for a specific purpose. What does God want from you? He expects you to walk in obedience to His Word. He wants you to work towards growing in the likeness of His Jesus Christ. Paul says you are equipped through the power of the Holy Spirit to complete the work, because it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure. In other words, the Holy Spirit is at work in us to

shape our will to desire what God desires and perform the work that God wants us to do. However, you may ask, "Why should I do that?" It is all about God's pleasure. His Glory. The truth is, God is only pleased with His Son. Although God views you like His son in position, God wants you to be like His Son in practice. What work did Jesus accomplish? What did He do? He Loved! Jesus demonstrated love towards God and for others by meeting the needs expecting nothing in return. Jesus always reminded His followers that His goal and ambition was to do the work of His father.

As God's Elect are you fulfilling the work for which you were chosen? Are you walking in obedience, loving all people? Are you striving to live up to God's standards, not only in your public life but your private life? Are you avoiding falsehood and embracing truth with integrity? If not, confess, repent, and embrace God's forgiveness. Remember God's grace and mercy qualifies you for the job, and the Holy Spirit equips you for the work for which you were chosen. Remember, you won God's vote on the Cross.

God works in Believers; Believers do God's work.

**Without work, nothing grows but weeds.**

– Min. Darrell Rose

**Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

## **“Actions Speak Louder Than Words”**

*<sup>14</sup> What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? <sup>17</sup> Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

### **James 2:14-17 (NASB)**

People say things and make promises they have no intention of keeping on a daily basis. For instance, you can tell someone you love him or her as many times as you want, but until your behavior coincides or aligns with that, the other person will probably not believe you. When a person's actions contradict what is being said, it begs the question if they are really sincere. In other words, there is a direct correlation between what people say and what people do, actions show their real attitudes, rather than what they say. This principle is especially true as it relates to Believers. What we do, our lifestyle or behavior, actually speaks volumes, compared to what we say, as a true testimony of who we are.

In today's devotional passage, James, the half-brother of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, challenges any Believer who claims to have faith, and thinks that their belief alone, without any good works (deeds done in obedience to God), is satisfactory in God's sight. However, faith not accompanied by works has no saving value. Basically, anyone can say they have faith, but if their lifestyle remains

selfish and worldly, then what good is that faith? In essence, it is merely faith that believes *about* Jesus, not faith that believes *in* Him. That kind of faith, believing about Jesus, can't save anyone. Instead, the faith that saves is faith that proves itself in the actions it produces.

In verse 15, James illustrates this principle using a hypothetical situation – someone in the congregation, desperately needing clothing and food, and being turned away with empty words. Unfortunately, this situation is a reality, today. There is hardly a church today, within whose walls, there are not Believers who live without adequate food and shelter, or other needed resources. The point is that, something could be done for this needy person. There would be plenty of clothes and food in the church to care for this person, but the person was sent away empty-handed, with a prayer, but no clothing on their back or food in their stomach. James asks, “*What use is that?*” Faith that does not result in actions, to meet needs, is no more effective than a pious wish for the poor person to be warmed and fed. Words without action accomplish nothing.

James asserts the principle in verse 17, “... *So faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*” If there are no positive actions, no works, no deeds, that accompany a professed faith, then it is no faith at all, it is dead and useless. If those around us note our actions, they should be led to know the faith that motivates them. If others hear us speak of faith, they must also see us act out that faith.

Those around you who see your actions should be led to know the faith that motivates them. Those around you who hear you speak of your faith, must also see you act out that faith.

## The right actions prove our faith to be real faith.

– Min. Mark Slone

**Thursday, November 15, 2018**

### “Somebody’s Watching You...”

*And maintain good conduct among the non-Christians, so that though they now malign you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God when he appears.*

**1 Peter 2:12 (NET)**

Impact...

What mark are you leaving? What will people remember about you?

I believe that God expects you and me to be more than ordinary. In fact, to live a life of impact. We are to be light in the darkness, salt to the world, and ambassadors of Jesus Christ so that we can impact the people around us.

There are passages in scripture that speak to how we should live our lives, such as:

*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy... (Hebrews 12:14 NIV)*

*Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. (Proverbs 3:3-4 NIV)*

Peter goes more in depth in our highlighted passage when he says, “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (1 Peter 2:11-12 NIV).

The world is watching us. And many people make the decision to become a believer by watching how we live. Since unbelievers watch us all the time and draw their own conclusions, we need to abstain from sinful desires. We will all spend a lifetime fighting sin in various forms. And it is a battle we will always lose if we fight on our own. With God’s help, we can change, and with His grace, we can fight and win the battle.

Live an excellent life. Live your life so that even unbelievers are impressed by your behavior. Christians ought to be the most honest people on earth, the kindest, the most gracious, and the most trustworthy. Unfortunately, it’s often the opposite; people do not want to interact with Christians. Why? Because they are turned off by the way Christians act.

Whether we know it or not, like it or not, unbelievers watch us all the time. They study us from a distance and they pay attention to how we do things. People who don’t know Jesus are watching:

**Friday, November 16, 2018**

- How you handle problems at work.
- Whether or not you laugh at dirty jokes.
- How you dress.
- How you spend your money.
- How you raise your children.
- How you respond when tragedy strikes.
- How you deal with difficult people.

Usually you aren't aware you're being watched until much later. Years may pass and then you receive a letter telling you that someone knew you way back when, and your Christian example played a big part in their coming to Christ. And don't be surprised when your faith is attacked unfairly. Live so that no one can make an honest attack on you, do good works anyway, and leave it all in God's hands.

Your life is not for you. Your life is to be a blessing to other people! Your purpose in this life is to direct people to know the Savior. To live an extraordinary life means to leave a legacy of impact.

Will the world remember that you were in it? That's really the wrong question. The right question is, "Will the world remember that Jesus was in it because of you?"

**How are you working out your divine family likeness in your day-by-day walk, behavior, and conduct?**

– Min. Mark Taylor

## **“Making God SMILE!”**

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

**Hebrews 13:16 (ESV)**

When was the last time you went out of your way to help someone and your act of kindness did not result in the outcome you expected? The person or persons didn't say, "Thank you"; or they didn't seem to care; or they responded with an attitude of entitlement; or they just didn't seem to notice what you had done. How did that make you feel? And because of these experiences, you now are hesitant or cautious to help again, or are very selective in who and when you help someone. You may have come to be indifferent to this idea of showing kindness. The question to ask yourself is this, "Is my current attitude towards helping others acceptable to God?"

In our text for today, the author exhorts Believers, "*not neglect to do good and to share what you have.*" In essence, he is commanding Believers to act counter to today's culture, which can be described, basically, by one word, selfishness. This "me, myself, and I" attitude is also found among Christ-followers. And the writer is calling our attention to our Christian duty of loving God, loving ALL people, and serving others. And the best way to show this is through serving and making our resources available to those in need. This was Jesus' attitude when He said, "*Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*" (Matthew 20:28, ESV). He

did the greatest good for all mankind, when He gave His life to pay a sin-debt that He didn't owe. Then God our Father raised Him from the dead, now shares His life with all who believe in Him (Romans 6). You and I, Christ-follower, are called to follow His example, in doing good and sharing what we have.

After the author exhorts Believers as to the what, of our Christian duty, then he explains that the proper motivation for everything we do should be the desire to please God, a desire to bring Him glory (see 1 Corinthians 10:31). All of our acts of kindness and sharing are considered "*sacrifices*," an offering to God, for the purpose of pleasing Him. So, as we discharge our Christian duty, of doing good and making our resources available to those in need, this is a beautiful picture of worship. The apostle Paul identifies this Christian duty as an act of worship, when he says, "*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship* (Romans 12:1, ESV).

When God presents us with diving opportunities to obey Him and we do, it serves a two-fold purpose. One is that it benefits the recipient of our service. They give praise to God for answered prayer in meeting their needs, through His children. Secondly, it is pleasing to God, our Father, because we are acting like Him; we are an extension of Him. It puts a smile on His face. Our Father is satisfied with or approves of our conduct. What child does not want to please their parent? When we render acts of kindness to others, not motivated by trying to make ourselves look good, draw attention to ourselves, or please man, but solely for the purpose of pleasing God, it may go unnoticed by man, but God sees everything.

*For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for His name in serving the saints, as you still do. Hebrews 6:10 (ESV)*

**What will you do, today, to make God SMILE?**

– Min. Mark Slone