

**Text: Gal 6.9; 1 Co 15.58**

This morning I decided to take a week off from Hebrews to talk about a subject I've been thinking about lately. I will address a similar theme this afternoon, so I hope you will be in that service also.

Today, our subject is Revival.

If you are a fan of British literature, you may know Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. Many critics think that *Bleak House* is Dickens' best work. It is monumental, to be sure. British television made it into a mini-series which was later packaged as a movie for North America.

As the title suggests, there is a lot of "bleakness" to go around.

Early in the movie, there is a scene where it is pouring rain. Lady Dedlock, one of the characters is in the library of her home with her husband, Sir Leicester Dedlock. Here is the dialog from that scene:

**Sir Leicester Dedlock:** Is it still raining, my love?

**Lady Dedlock:** Yes.

**Sir Leicester Dedlock:** Remarkable.

**Lady Dedlock:** And I am bored to death with it.

**Sir Leicester Dedlock (chuckling):** Well...

**Lady Dedlock (whispering):** Bored to death with this place, bored to death with my life, bored to death with myself.

**Sir Leicester Dedlock:** What was that, my love?

**Lady Dedlock:** Nothing. Of consequence...

The subject I want to talk about is living the Christian life. This is my title:

*Weary or Abounding?*

I have cited two passages as the texts for this message:

**Read Gal 6.9-10** [application section of Gal] and **1 Cor 15.58** [just after the resurrection chapter]

The KJV puts the Galatians passage this way:

And let us not be weary in well doing

To contrast with the theme, I'd like to read another passage which describes the character of the Athenians when Paul met them:

## Read Ac 17.16-21

I want to think about three states of being:

1. The pursuit of new things
2. Weariness with new things that are now old things
3. Abounding in the Lord's thing

**Proposition:** The goal of revival is a life driven by a purpose, not a life kept to a fever pitch.

### I. The peripatetic pursuit of the new (Acts 17.21)

#### A. Peripatetic (def.)

1. The adjective has two meanings
  - a. of, relating to, or given to walking
  - b. moving or traveling from place to place<sup>1</sup>
2. As a noun, it can mean “a follower of Aristotle or his philosophy”

Apparently, while Aristotle was lecturing, he would “walk up and down” the room absentmindedly, with seemingly no purpose.

A peripatetic pursuit, then, is one that is always active, never gaining its object.

#### B. The Athenians were addicted to the new

1. In my notes on Ac 17, some commentators think Luke is making fun of the Athenians — this was a well-known trait
2. Some new thing

“**Some new thing** (τι καινότερον [*ti kainoteron*]). Literally ‘something newer’ or ‘fresher’ than the new, the very latest, the comparative of καινος [*kainos*].”<sup>2</sup>

“What’s the buzz?” (dated slang!)

<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Mish, ed., *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

<sup>2</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ac 17.21.

3. When Philip of Macedon was approaching Athens to besiege the city, Demosthenes rebuked his fellow-citizens for their idleness

“Why, then, was he more successful than we in the late war? I will be frank with you, men of Athens. It is because he always takes a personal share in the hardships and dangers of the campaign, never neglects a chance, never wastes any season of the year; while we—for the truth must out—sit here idle; we are always hanging back and passing resolutions and haunting the market-place to learn the latest news.”<sup>3</sup>

- C. Our world is addicted to the new — especially newer and bigger sensations

1. Sporting events
2. Concerts
3. The latest fashions
4. New television shows (new seasons of shows) and new ones to replace the old

Now, I don't want to criticize this spirit too far, because it is a very human quality to be intrigued by the new. Who doesn't like new things?

- D. The trouble with the pursuit of the new

1. When you are pursuing the new as new, you will never be satisfied, because everything becomes old
2. And pursuit of the new can lead you to leave off some very good things that aren't new anymore

When someone becomes a Christian, there is often a sense of excitement, as every new thing the new Christian learns is life-changing, intellectually and spiritually challenging.

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<sup>3</sup> Demosthenes, *Demosthenes, with an English Translation by J.H. Vince, C.A. Vince, A.T. Murray, N.W. DeWitt, N.J. DeWitt.*, trans. J. H Vince et al. (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press ; W. Heinemann, 1926), 11.17.

But after a while, perhaps you haven't learned it all, but you've learned a lot, and spiritual things lose that fresh appeal.

## II. The stultifying sense of the same old thing (Gal 6.9-10)

A. The theme of Galatians is justification by faith alone

1. Paul taught the theology
2. Then he applied the theology, instructing the Galatians to

“expel the agitators, love your neighbor as yourself, keep in step with the Spirit by manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in your lives, practice church discipline by restoring those who have fallen, bear one another's burdens, examine yourself in light of the judgment seat of Christ, and provide material support for those who instruct you in the faith”<sup>4</sup>

3. All these things are summarized here as “doing good”

B. The good things that Christians do can bring spiritual weariness or depression

1. The potential for “growing weary”
  - a. KJV “faint not”
  - b. ESV “give up”

The word has the root of “to loose, to destroy” [λυω - the verb beginning Gk students learn so they can grasp the verb system]

**be exhausted in strength, become weary, give out**<sup>5</sup>

All your energy is “loosed out” — dissipated

<sup>4</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary (Nashville, Tenn: B&H, 1994), 425.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

## 2. The negative energy of “losing heart”

- a. “to lose one’s motivation in continuing a desirable pattern of conduct or activity”<sup>6</sup>

Here the root is “evil” or “bad” with another prefix, the preposition “in”

- b. The word has the idea of “taking in the bad” – becoming disheartened

## C. The hindrances to doing good joyfully

“This precept is highly necessary; for we are naturally reluctant to discharge the duties of brotherly love, and many unpleasant occurrences arise by, which the ardor of the best disposed persons is apt to be cooled. We meet with many unworthy and many ungrateful persons. The vast number of necessitous cases overwhelms us, and the applications which crowd upon us from every quarter exhaust our patience. Our warmth is abated by the coolness of other men. In short, the world presents innumerable hinderances, which tend to lead us aside from the right path.”<sup>7</sup>

1. One hindrance is that the new becomes old
2. Another is that the new shows itself to be hard (especially if we are tackling life in the flesh, not the Spirit)
3. And another is the vast range of responsibilities and duties we find are laid upon us
  - a. By well meaning Christians who tell us what we ought to do
  - b. By our growing understanding of the Bible and God’s will
  - c. By the over-whelming burden of needs that those we minister to represent
  - d. And even by our old desire for “something new”
4. It isn’t just that the newness wears off, it is that weariness sets in

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<sup>6</sup> Bauer.

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Galaxie Software, 2002), Gal 6.6.

### III. The abundance of the work of the Lord (1 Cor 15.58)

#### A. This is a summary verse

1. It at least sums up the teaching of 1 Cor 15 (on the resurrection)
2. G. Campbell Morgan thought this verse summed up everything in the epistle from 1.9 on (I tend to agree)

The verse was used in the funeral of a dear friend of mine who died two weeks after our wedding. His pastor quoted it of my friend Chis, with a slight adjustment: "Chris was 'always a-bouncing in the work of the Lord'"

#### B. The balance between pursuit of the new and weariness: steadiness and purposefulness

##### 1. Steadfast

- a. Original meaning: "seated in one's place"
- b. Comes to mean: "firm, immovable, steadfast"<sup>8</sup>

##### 2. Immovable

- a. Unshakeable
- b. Steady<sup>9</sup>

##### 3. Abounding

- a. "to have such an abundance as to be more than sufficient"<sup>10</sup>
- b. To have more than enough
  - 1) More than enough to do
  - 2) More than enough to think about
  - 3) More than enough to occupy persistent attention

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (International Bible Translators (IBT), Inc., 1889).

<sup>9</sup> Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 375.

<sup>10</sup> Louw and Nida, 560.

## C. Achieving the balance

### 1. The spiritual disciplines:

- a. Bible reading and prayer
- b. Church attendance
- c. Feeding the spirit not the flesh (separation from the world)

### 2. Learning to love God supremely

- a. The first commandment
- b. The indescribable joy

Jn 10.10 ... I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

## Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The goal of revival is a life driven by a purpose, not a life kept to a fever pitch.

I would have you fall in love with Jesus and simply live for him every day.

The longer I serve the Lord, the more I want to serve the Lord.

Learn to pursue the Lord and his things, and you will not grow weary (although you might be tired at times).