

Labour at what lasts. 1 Corinthians 15:58

[1 Corinthians 15:1-58, Isaiah 25:6-9]

Some of you have asked what I plan doing after retirement, and I have to confess that, beyond the next few months I have as yet no idea.

I have deliberately taken the advice of an older minister who said to a colleague – don't accept any opportunities for six months, just let things settle.

But on the other hand while I am short on specifics it is quite clear what God wants me, and you, to be doing with our lives, at every stage of life

Scripture, God's word, is our sufficient guide, and God in His word says to us:

1 Corinthians 15:⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling (abounding) in the Lord's work, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

What I and you have to do with our lives is 'be steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord'

Abounding is better than excelling. Excelling can suggest an emphasis on quality – doing the Lord's work better than you do other things.

"I'm pretty ordinary at gardening, but I excel at the work of the Lord."

But abounding suggests volume, overflowing with the Lord's work, richly occupied with the Lord's work, and that is the sense

And we should do this because the hard work, the labour and toil of doing that, in living that way, will not be in vain, not be fruitless, not be to no purpose

And that gives you the two parts of this talk

Firstly, what is it to be steadfast, immoveable, abounding in the Lord's work – and in particular, what does the apostle mean when he is talking to the Corinthians, and us, about the Lord's work – and to answer that we will have to think about what Paul has said previously, not just in this chapter, but the whole letter.

Secondly, why can Paul and we be sure that kind of life won't be wasted, is the life that will be seen to have borne fruit that lasts into eternity.

Steadfast, Immoveable, Abounding

So, what is the kind of life we are to live?

Paul started chapter 15 by speaking about the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15: Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. ³ For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve.

He ends the chapter by calling on the Corinthians to be three things that should go together in those who believe that gospel.

Having taken their stand on the gospel when they believed, publicly acknowledged its truth by joining the Christian movement, they have to persevere, continue steadfast, firm in their commitment to this gospel that Paul preached and they believed.

And they must be immovable – not depart from the gospel's teaching in anything, not allow themselves to be budged or nudged away from the gospel of Jesus as the foundation of their lives

And that firm commitment to the truth of the gospel is to show in giving themselves to the work of the Lord revealed in the gospel.

These are not three responses, but one

Being steadfast and immovable in your commitment to the gospel, your commitment to its truth and saving power ("through which you are saved v. 2)

Will and must show in giving yourself to the work of the Lord for that is a work to which the truth of the gospel commits believers.

If you are not abounding in the work of the Lord, it suggests an instability in your commitment, a wavering instead of a firmness, abandonment not perseverance, that you trusting in some other Jesus than the Jesus of the gospel who is Lord

Note it says always and abounding

Always – being constant in your commitment to the gospel, you will be constantly engaged with the work of the Lord

Always – in every circumstance and stage of life – school, uni, as you mature, in work, out of work, in retirement, married, single, with children, without children

And you will be abounding, overflowing in your commitment to that work, constantly giving yourself to it

The work of the Lord will be the main meal, not the optional side, in your life

Your first thought, not the afterthought,

This is how I am to live my life in the years that are left to me, and how you are to live your lives if you believe the gospel

Being steadfast, immovable, always excelling (abounding) in the Lord's work,

But what is the work of the Lord?

There is a bit of debate about this

Some will say it is any work you do, if you do it for Jesus. Your career, your art, if it is done with the right attitude, is in itself of eternal significance.

Others say that goes way beyond what is said here, or anywhere in Scripture, about our work

and runs the risk of allowing us to identify our career as the work of the Lord and so we do not need to think of doing and actively pursuing anything else – like sharing the gospel

In everything we do, whatever we do, we have to do it for the Lord.

As the apostle said to slaves at Colossae

Colossians 3: ²³Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, ²⁴knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ.

Ephesians 6:5-8, Col. 3:22-24

Those believing slaves who engage in their work as servants of Jesus, serving ‘as to the Lord’, working ‘for the Lord’ will receive a reward from their faithful Master, but that does not mean their mucking out the stables is the Lord’s work and in itself of eternal significance.

It is work they have to do, work in which they can honour Jesus, but it is still work marked by the futility that attaches to all human work after the fall [Gen. 3:17-19].

And the same is true for us. We are to honour the Lord in our work – what ever it is – IT, bicycle mechanic, shop assistant, doctor, housework by working as to Him. But the work itself will still be marked with the futility that is a feature of the work of this age, and is not what Paul is getting at here by the work of the Lord.

Others say the work of the Lord is much more specific. They want to restrict the work of the Lord to the work Paul and Timothy are engaged in. Paul says of Timothy as he serves Paul and the churches *he is doing the Lord’s work, just as I am*

1 Cor. 16: ¹⁰If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear while with you, because he is doing the Lord’s work, just as I am. ¹¹So let no one look down on him. Send him on his way in peace so that he can come to me, because I am expecting him with the brothers.

And in 1 Cor 3 Paul describes himself and Apollos as workers for the Lord in the Lord’s field

1 Cor. 3: ⁸Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labour. ⁹For we are God’s coworkers. You are God’s field, God’s building.

So on this view the work of the Lord is what Paul, and Timothy, and Apollos are doing, summarised as evangelism and edification, sharing the gospel and building up believers in the faith

These things are undoubtedly the work of the Lord, and whatever our understanding of the work of the Lord these things must be front and centre.

But the danger here is that our understanding of the work of the Lord is not comprehensive enough.

We can, for a start, think too narrowly of evangelism and edification, confine it to learning a gospel outline and leading a growth group,

And with this view we can start to think that anyone who does not give themselves to evangelism and edification full time is unable to abound in the work of the Lord

But that would be self-defeating for Paul as the great conclusion to chapter 15.

He is calling every believer in Corinth to abound in the work of the Lord, and some could say, as some of us might say, my circumstances and my gifting, and Paul has already spoken about the necessity of a diversity of gifts, means what you are asking – to have a life and ministry like yours, is just not possible. That would have been the case for slaves, and they are part of the Corinthian congregation [1 Cor. 7:21-22], and for most people with a family to feed.

So what is the work of the Lord Paul is calling us all to abound in?

Let’s come at the answer from another direction,

by asking what Paul has called on the Corinthians to do so far in this letter, what he has on Jesus' authority asked them to work at, to labour at, as believers in Jesus. If you are not familiar with first Corinthians, read it through and test what I say, but Paul has already asked them to work at a lot of things because they are the Lord's.

Let me mention some examples.

In chapters 1-4 Paul has asked them to abandon boasting in people and their achievements which was dividing the congregation to boast only in Christ crucified, the boast shared by all Christians and which unites

That is, he has told them that because of their loyalty to Jesus they are to change, abandon, a deeply ingrained cultural attitude, one which up till then was central to expressing their identity and status.

It seems the work of the Lord, what believers do for Jesus' sake, involves changing your thinking to conform to the truth of being saved by the crucified Jesus, and acting on that truth – in this case by relating to the congregation [chapter 3] as the Lord's temple, holy to Him, and so with thought and costly care.

Then in chapter 5 he has called on them to exercise discipline on people who say they are believers but living a life that denied they were God's holy people.

The work of the Lord involves taking action to protect the church from sin, to maintain its identity as the community where Jesus' reigns through His word, a word that calls us to godly living [1 Cor. 5:7-13] – and that can be hard.

Another example – In first century Greco Roman culture men frequenting prostitutes was normalised. It was accepted as ok, but Paul in chapter 6 calls on believers to live chaste lives, to remember that they were bought with a price and should glorify God with their bodies.

The work of the Lord, what the Lord commands His people to do, involves a costly commitment to personal holiness, to conforming your private life, your sexual activity, to His word.

The work of the Lord is quite broad in its scope, and Paul has more.

In chapter 8 he called on the strong believers not to do anything that could harm the weak, those who had not yet fully grasped the truth there is only one God. Instead they were to relate to those weaker brothers and sisters as those for whom Christ had died, so precious as to be worth any sacrifice to protect, including curtailing their own freedoms.

In chapter 10 Paul commands them to avoid the idolatry involved in sharing in feasts in idol temples. We might think – of course. But for the Corinthians staying away from idol feasts meant separating themselves from the majority society, with consequences for social acceptance and commercial relationships

And in chapters 9 and 10 Paul has also called on them to follow His example, the example he gives because he himself is following the example of Christ, in becoming all things to all people so that by all means he may save some [1 Cor. 9:19-23].

1 Corinthians 10: ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, ³³ just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved.

11 *Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.*

The work of the Lord includes the work the Lord Himself did and which He commands His people to share in, the work of seeking the good of others in their salvation

Another big example.

In chapter 14 Paul has asked them to discipline their use of their gifts so that what everyone pursues in their participation in the gathering is not the opportunity to demonstrate how gifted or spiritual they are, but the building up of others.

1 Corinthians 14:26 What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything is to be done for building up.

Using your gifts and behaving in our gathering for the good of others, for their encouragement and growth in the faith, is the work of the Lord

And after chapter 15 Paul continues to teach what the Lord expects of His people - contributing to the collection for the poor vv. 1-4, supporting travelling gospel workers v.11, submitting to those, like the household of Stephanas who have devoted themselves to the service of God's people [15-16].

The Lord through His apostle is commanding the Corinthians, and us, to do all these things. They are what the Lord wants us to work at, the work of the Lord.

So the work of the Lord definitely includes evangelism, just as

It definitely includes seeking to build others up by our use of gifts

But it is more, stretching into every aspect of our lives and relationships.

Rosner summarises the work of the Lord as any activity that would be undertaken out of commitment to Christ, that we would not naturally engage in were it not for faith in Christ, especially activity that is burdensome

The kind of things we've seen Paul calling the Corinthians to

– showing consideration for the poor, being sexually self controlled, abandoning socially accepted and expected boasting to preserve unity in Christ, controlling our freedom and the expression of our gifts to promote the good of others, shunning commercially advantageous idolatry, putting yourself out to gain a hearing for the gospel.

Seeing this you could say the work of the Lord is the work of pursuing love [1 Cor 14:1] out of love for the Lord Jesus, the love which must characterise every believer [1 Cor. 16:22].

1 Corinthians 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him. Our Lord, come! Writes Paul, for if you don't love the Lord it shows you haven't grasped the gospel, for it teaches us we were God's enemies and yet the Son of God freely, because of God's love, died for us to save us. [cf. 1 Peter 1:8]. How could we not love Him who has laid down His life for us.

To be a believer is to love Jesus, and where you love Him you will

love those He loves, and love them in the way He commands

And so the work of the Lord is to love the lost and do everything you can to save them, to seek to bring them back to God by bringing the gospel to them and making it possible for them to hear it

For Jesus loves the lost. We know that for we were lost, and in love He sought us and brought us back to God by His death

And the work of the Lord is to love Jesus' people, those for whom He died, by dying to ourselves – our freedoms, our pride, our entitlement, our desire for praise – to in all things promote their good as Jesus died to promote our good.

And it is to maintain ourselves as individuals and as a community whose lives are ruled by His word, a holy people who encourage in word and deed godly lives of love in each other

This life of love is the life standing firm in the gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus commits you to.

And it is for Everyone, every one of us, not just for those with the gifts and calling of a Paul or Timothy.

All of us are to love the lost and where we can help them hear the gospel that saves, to live lives that make it easier for them to hear the message we speak

All of us are to love Jesus' people, and pursue the welfare of our brothers and sisters in all things

And that love, abounding in the work of the Lord, will be Costly,

It is costly to seek the lost

Paul's commitment to seek the lost cost him dearly

He could speak of himself in this chapter as

*1 Corinthians 15:³⁰ Why are we in danger every hour?³¹ I face death every day, as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.***

But even before the experience of opposition

It is costly to love others enough to want them to be saved

Costly to think of what might set others at ease and change your behaviour to do that

Costly to work up the courage to have a conversation about Jesus with a workmate

Costly to set aside time to pray for them

Costly to think and plan about how you can help others hear the gospel, and then to invest the time in implementing your plans – whether it is inviting them to an event, or to Christianity explored, or to a meal with conversation

Costly to let the reality of the judgement that awaits them disturb your getting on with your life

Costly to live with the grief of wanting them saved and seeing them stubbornly resist your efforts

It is costly to love and seek the lost, to love as Jesus loved

And it is costly to love and seek the welfare and growth of your sisters and brothers

Costly to wait for others, to sometimes keep silent, to use your gifts for the good of others and not your own satisfaction

Costly to curtail your freedom to do what you like so that you don't cause others to stumble,

Costly sometimes to commit yourself just to showing up, saying no to other things, so that others are encouraged by your presence

Costly to separate yourself from culturally dominant idolatries like careerism, or finding security in money

Costly to live a sexually self-controlled life

There is a cost in abounding in the work of the Lord, in loving others for the sake of Jesus, loving them in the way Jesus loved them.

Why would you give yourself to always, not just when you feel like it, to always abound in the work of the Lord?

Paul tells us.

It is because we know that in the Lord our labour – our toil – Paul is talking of hard work – our toil is not in vain. It won't be wasted, fruitless, useless

1 Corinthians 15:⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling (abounding) in the Lord's work, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Rather doing the Lord's work will be of abiding value, matter for eternity

You know this, wrote Paul to the Corinthians

How? How did the Corinthians know that their labour in the Lord would not be in vain?

How do we know that?

The Corinthians and we can know it because of what Paul has written already in chapter 15

We know our labour in the Lord is not in vain because Jesus rose and His resurrection means ours is certain.

And that resurrection life is both in continuity with this life so what you do now matters [1 Cor. 6:12-20], and gloriously transformed to be the life that can live in the presence of God

I am going to read through the chapter now with brief comments, so that you can share Paul's confidence our labour for the Lord, that commitment to costly love, is not in vain

Will be able to say in your heart, I am determined to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for I know

Any questions – come and ask

Let's start at the beginning

1 Corinthians 15: Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand² and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.³ For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve.⁶ Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.⁸ Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, he also appeared to me.

⁹For I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.

Jesus' resurrection, says Paul, is at the heart of the Christian message

There is no Christian gospel v. 11 that does not proclaim Jesus' resurrection

And it is a Witnessed event in history, part, along with the death of Jesus', of God's plan to save His people revealed in the Old Testament

And we see from the gospel witness Jesus' resurrection is bodily – raised in the body in which He died – with the wounds still visible [John 20], to be touched, spoken with, to eat with

This is where all Christians start – believing Jesus who was crucified and died on that cross has risen.

And Jesus' resurrection means believers will rise

Addressing a local Corinthian issue Paul says to deny our resurrection is to deny Christ's resurrection

1 Corinthians 15: ¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; For Christ is truly human like us. If it is not possible for humans to be raised, Christ can't be. And the consequences?

¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. ¹⁵ Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ—whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

There is no Christian faith unless Jesus has risen, risen in the human body in which He died. And that means to be a Christian, to believe the gospel, is to be committed to the resurrection of believers.

In fact, Paul says, Christ's resurrection guarantees ours. Risen He is the firstfruits – the offering of the first of the harvest that makes the rest of the harvest acceptable, and risen as the second Adam He the King [Psalm 8, 110] to whom all things will be made subject, including death itself

1 Corinthians 15: ²⁰ But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. ²² For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

*²³ But each in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he puts all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be abolished is death. ²⁷ For **God has put everything under his feet.***

[And then Paul adds, to prevent any misunderstanding, *Now when it says "everything" is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. ²⁸ When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.*]

Jesus' resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father has already happened. So it is only a matter of time now until death itself is subjected to Him at the last day and then believers, those in Christ, will rise at His coming.

Jesus resurrection, having happened already in history, means the resurrection of believers is certain.

But what is the relation of our present bodies to our risen bodies?

And What will the resurrection be like? Will it be worth the cost we pay now, or just more of the same – with the grief and pain of our present bodily life?

Paul starts responding to those questions by addressing those who seem to be saying that a bodily life that is both in continuity with our present life and fitted to live with God is inconceivable

1 Corinthians 15: ³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?” ³⁶ You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow—you are not sowing the body that will be, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he wants, and to each of the seeds its own body.

Look around you. All around you in nature you see a new life, a new bodily life, coming from what is dead, the seed of plants. Seeds are dead – unresponsive, not growing – until sown.

And then v. 37 the life that comes from it, while in continuity with the seed sown, is transformed.

Resurrection is continuity, with transformation.

And God has lots of kinds of bodies, all showing that they are particularly suited for their environment

³⁹ Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. ⁴¹ There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor.

The transformation of our bodies will be great, and it will be great because our bodies will have a new source of life, life from Christ, not Adam

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; ⁴³ sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; ⁴⁴ sown a natural [psychikos] body, raised a spiritual [pneumatikos] body. If there is a natural [psychikos] body, there is also a spiritual [pneumatikos] body. ⁴⁵ So it is written, The first man Adam became a living being [psyche]; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit [pneuma]. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual [pneumatikos] is not first, but the natural [psychikos], then the spiritual [pneumatikos].

The point Paul is making is that our resurrection bodies will be so different because they are animated from a different source. The source of life in these present bodies is the life, the psyche, of Adam, marked from the fall by death and decay.

But the source of life of our resurrection bodies, what animates them, is the Spirit of Jesus. And receiving life from Jesus our resurrection bodies will be like Jesus’.

⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ Like the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; like the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Jesus’ resurrection means our resurrection will be glorious, when we receive transformed bodies fitted to live in heaven, in the presence of the living God, and it will be glorious because this is the body we will receive from Christ, a body like Christ’s

And Paul reinforces that point by saying that even those who are alive at Christ’s return must still receive new bodies.

1 Corinthians 15: ⁵⁰ What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality.

Only the life we have from Jesus is fit to live in the presence of God. The life from Adam, mortal and corruptible, can never live in God's presence. And

1 Corinthians 15: ⁵⁴When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

⁵⁵ ***Where, death, is your victory?***

Where, death, is your sting?

⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*

In our resurrection the demonstration of Jesus' victory over death is complete, and this is a victory He has won for us through dealing with our sins, taking on Himself the punishment of death the law prescribed for sin – dying in our place to bring us to life.

Just as his death atoned for all our sins, so His victory over death is complete, a victory to be revealed at the last day in which believers in Jesus will share.

Believers, our end is certain – bodies changed to be like Jesus' glorious body, bodies which will never know death or corruption, fitted to live in the presence of God in the new heaven and earth

It is certain because Christ has risen, and His resurrection means the end of death itself is sure, for He has risen to reign and have all His enemies subjected to Him

Because believers and only believers share in Christ's victory over death, whatever the cost, it is worth being steadfast, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always

In the end we all have a choice,

We can either reject the gospel and its proclamation of Jesus' resurrection and live the life of those who have no hope beyond this life, living just for its fleeting pleasures – as Paul says

*1 Corinthians 15: ³²If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus as a mere man, what good did that do me? If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.***

Accepting that our lives and all we do are 'in vain', purposeless

Or we can believe the gospel

That is a choice believers make once when they become Christians, come to believe Jesus has died for our sins and risen again and reigns now at God's right hand with all authority

And it is a choice we keep on making by living each day in accord with the truth of the gospel

Living each day *steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work*

Because we know the risen Lord will raise us from the dead, and so we know that what we do now in our bodies is not in vain, but matters for eternity for our present bodily life is in continuity with our risen life

Love our saving Lord Jesus and make the choice to abound in the work of the Lord

Loving those whom Jesus loves

Loving them in the way Jesus has loved them

Seeking to save the lost

Building up our sisters and brothers in the faith

Dying to self to live a life that puts no stumbling block in the way of people believing or our brothers and sisters persevering

Honouring Jesus with our bodies in a life of holiness

This is God's will for me in whatever years I have left, and for you

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.