Devotion #246

**Spinning Wheels**

**1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)** *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*.”

Do you ever feel like you are spinning your wheels when it comes to life? I’m talking about those times when life feels like a car stuck in the mud and no matter how hard you try, the wheels just get stuck deeper and deeper. I spent a lot of time on a farm in my early years so I know how that looks. If I had a nickel for every time a truck or tractor got stuck in the mud that we had to pull out, I would be a rich man. Of course I’m joking about the rich part, but the stuck-in-the-mud illustration is something to which everyone can relate.

With most things in life, getting stuck is no big deal. Like when you can’t figure out a problem at work or when you are behind someone driving slowly but you know you have plenty of time to get where you are going. The times that really bother us are those times when we are late to work, and your boss is wondering what is going on or when you have some challenge that you are trying to overcome but came seem to conquer it no matter how hard try. A good example of that is trying to lose weight. Talk about feeling stuck in the mud! So many people work for years to shed some pounds only to get on the scale and find out that nothing is working. It’s frustrating because most people look for things to be accomplished, for goals to be met, for some result to happen from their hard work. And when it doesn’t, it can be so frustrating that many people quit. They just give up.

Life in the work of serving God can often feel the same way. In serving the Lord, there are many, many times when it feels like nothing is being accomplished or you are running against roadblocks no matter where you turn. Often people are the problem. Often it is those very people who have lost hope because they didn’t see any fruit from their labors in serving God, so they quit. And when they quit, they don’t necessarily stop being a part of the church, but they have no more motivation to push forward and make things happen. And when that happens, the church can get very deeply stuck in the mud. I’m talking about the mud of “Who cares?”, or “Why bother?” or “It’s never worked anyway because no one will come, so what’s the point?”

The Apostle Paul was well acquainted with being stuck in the mud. There are several passages that help us know that because of what he said to others about not giving up. Notice what he also said to the church in Corinth, **2 Corinthians 4:1 (NASB)** *“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart.”* And what he said to the churches in Galatia,**Galatians 6:9 (NASB)** *“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary*.” Paul was a great example of what often happens to people when they enter a life of serving the Lord, they start out excited and full of energy but as life goes on, everything becomes more difficult. He was accused of being a fake. He was beaten physically, almost to the point of death. He was shipwrecked, bitten by a snake and often without food. If anyone was an example of how easy it is to feel stuck in the mud with wheels spinning, it was Paul.

But his words to the churches were words that did not come from his flesh or his earthly mind, they came from God. God was the one reminding Paul that his own labor for Jesus was not in vain. That message is for us too, just like it was for Paul and those whom to whom he wrote. You and I must remember in the most “stuck” times of our lives that God is capable of getting us out. We must never lose heart to the point where we fail to serve the Lord just where he called us. That can be as a mom or dad or son or daughter or student or boss or construction worker or teacher. It doesn’t matter where you are in life, God wants your priority to be serving Him. But in serving Him we must always remember that this is His work, meaning He accomplishes it as He sees fit, in us and through us. Sometimes we see results and many, many times we see nothing. So, the Word of the Lord to us is just like it was to the people in Paul’s day. Keep serving. Keep doing. Keep pushing forward. Souls are at stake and what you don’t perceive happening now will be rewarded on the day we stand before the throne of God. One day you will be rewarded for what you did for Him in this life. I don’t know all of what those rewards will be, but they will be more than enough to show you God was with you the whole way – standing right beside you pushing through the mud.