

Christ's Teachings on Work

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ABSTRACT

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English defined "work" in several ways. Accordingly, this paper considers the ways in which Christ in the Epistles considered work. The sources will be The New King James Version. The data are arranged in my Tandem English in which a word that ends a paragraph begins the next one.

Key Words: Bible, Christ, work, teachings.

INTRODUCTION

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Language defines "work" in many ways.¹ accordingly, such variables are selected from The New Testament in order to expound on how Christ used work during His life.

The Bible edition will be The New King James Version.²

Question can always be asked. For instance, what does *The Holy Bible*² say about work? In particular, what did Jesus Christ Himself say about work?

Be it noted that to answer the last question is my self-imposed duty on this occasion.

STUDY

Occasion for Christ to speak on work arose first after he went up on a mountain.

As He put it, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good **works** and glorify your Father in heaven."³ On another occasion, when he sent out the Twelve, he mentioned that "a **worker** is worthy of his food."⁴ In this connection, Christ actually pronounced woes when He found it necessary to do so:⁵

Then He began to upbraid the cities in which most of His mighty **works** had been done, because they did not repent:

Woe to you. Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty **works** which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty **works** which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Day of reward was promised by Christ. He said clearly that "the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his **works**."⁶ An odd method of reward was shown in the story of the hired labourers who were eventually paid exactly the same amount. As they complained, "These last men have **worked** only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day."⁷

Day of reckoning came when a man who had two sons requested them to "**work** today in my vineyard."⁸ As Christ explained, one of them first said that he would not go but later went. In contrast, the other son accepted to go and yet did not!

Not to do according to their words but "according to their **works**"⁹ was what Christ recommended to the multitudes in connection with the scribes and the Pharisees. He also pointed out that, as far as those people were concerned, "all their **works** they do to be seen by men."¹⁰

Men who witnessed when a woman used very costly oil to anoint Christ's head were reported to be annoyed. On becoming aware of their

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annoyance, Christ said, "Why do you trouble this woman? For she has done a good **work** for me."¹¹ In fact, Christ used every opportunity to teach even in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. On one occasion, their surprise was reported as follows:¹²

"Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands."

Hands of Christ in healing were not fully used in some places.

Thus, among his own country and house, "He could do no mighty **work** there, except that He laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them."¹³ However, even King Herod, who had killed John the Baptist, noticed Christ's powers and supposed that "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at **work** in Him."¹⁴

"Him" referred to a particular outsider. Christ said to His disciples that such an outsider should not be forbidden to cast out demons in His name. As he told them, "no one who **works** a miracle in my Name can soon afterward speak evil of Me."¹⁵ He also gave his disciples another piece of advice:¹⁶

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.

It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his **work**, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming —

Coming to the question of repentance, Christ warned as follows:¹⁷

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty **works** which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented a great while ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you.

You must not work on the Sabbath! This was the order given by the ruler of the synagogue.

In fact, he went as far as to say to the crowd who witnessed Christ's healing on such a day that "There are six days on which men ought to **work**; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day."¹⁸

Day of triumphal entry into Jerusalem was specially described:¹⁹

And as He went, they spread their clothes on the road.

Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty **works** they had seen...

Seen by the disciples was another interesting event. When these disciples urged him to eat, the surprised them by saying, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish his **work**."²⁰ He continued: "My Father has been **working** until now, and I have been **working**."²¹ Then, He told them that "the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that He himself does; and He will show Him greater **works** than these, that you may marvel."²² Furthermore, He affirmed that "the **works** which the Father has given Me to finish—the very **works** that I do —bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me."²³

Me and My Father relationship was stressed by Christ Himself:²⁴

Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may **work** the **works** of God?"

Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the **work** of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Therefore, they said to Him, what sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?

Do Your **works**²⁵ in Judea rather than in Galilee was what His brothers told Him. Apparently, they said this because "even His brothers did not believe him."²⁶ In reply, Christ told them that "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its **works** are evil."²⁷

Evil or sin was what people thought of as the cause of illnesses in those days. In contrast, as regards the man who was born blind, the following conversation took place:²⁸

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered. Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the **works** of God should be revealed in him.

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I must **work** the **works** of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can **work**.

Work done by Christ was used by him to combat the schemes planned by His enemies. He also argued thus:²⁹

“Many good **works** I have shown you from My Father. For which of those **works** do you stone Me?”

The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good **work** we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.” God, according to Christ, was His own Father. He asserted so as follows:³⁰ “If I do not do the **works** of My Father, do not believe Me;

“but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the **works**, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

Hand in hand, the Pharisees and the chief priests made their plans against Christ. Nevertheless, for a long time, they could not succeed. “What shall we do?” they had asked, “For this Man **works** many signs.”³¹

Signs were performed by Christ through his Father. He explained matters fully:³² “The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the **works**. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the **works** themselves.

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the **works** that I do he will do also; and greater **works** than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

DISCUSSION

From the numerous situations in which Christ adumbrated on work, it is clear that He set much store on work.

CONCLUSION

It is time to conclude. I do so with the very last entry in *The Holy Bible* concerning **work**. Christ Himself said it with authority:³³ “If I had not done among them the **works** which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father.

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Citation: Wilson Onuigbo, "Christ's Teachings on Work", *Journal of Religion and Theology*, vol.2, no. 3, pp. 25-27, 2018.

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