

Vision

The newspaper comic strips are filled with wisdom far beyond the level to which they may first appear to have been written. A cursory glance may get a gratuitous chuckle in appreciation of the superficial silliness of the “goings on” of the main characters in these comics. Later on, however, a deeper look will get a raised eyebrow, so to speak, at the wisdom expressed by a newspaper comic strip. One such comic strip, as memory serves me, was called simply “Will-yum”.

The main character in this seemingly now extinct comic was a little boy who quite frequently would have his wisdom expressed while he was in the act of digging a hole using a pick and shovel. The strip would progress through the expressed thoughts and ideas as the menial labor task would go on...both the task and the ideas would usually come to fruition, with a purpose and a goal having at last come together as a reward for the faithful follower of the strip as it went on from day to day. Nowadays, the subject would be using a power posthole digger using a gasoline engine. This would cut out some of the wisdom expressed, since the oeuvre of simple people doing simple tasks could not be relied upon as a means of reaching the “working class people” to whom the strip seemed ostensibly to be focused.

In the comic strip, Will-yum was a basic little boy with a purpose in mind when he took up the task of digging his hole. He would labor intensely and faithfully focus upon the arduous procedure of extracting the dirt from the envisioned hole. Will-yum had a goal and he had a picture in his mind of what he wanted his hole to look like, and, he saw it through to the end of this task, not being dissuaded by anything until fulfillment of this goal was accomplished. He also had a philosophical outlook as this job went on, which was expressed in his comments as this strip went from panel to panel.

Serving the Lord requires both vision and purpose if we are to be effective as His witnesses and servants. We read about the great servants of the Bible and the effectiveness of their work. This was largely due to the fact that they never lost sight of the respective purposes of the individual callings they experienced, no matter how menial the task might be. What mattered to them was the accomplishment of the unique job God had sent them on and the goal of becoming pleasing in the sight of the Lord by the satisfaction of these duties to which He had dispatched them. This was done through willingness to serve and fearless dependence on Him for strength. The vision lay not in the accomplishment of a specific task, but rather in the Lord Himself. He was their vision.

We are told “Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life”[i]. We are also told that we will not be tested beyond our ability to endure[ii]. We are further reminded that God has promised never to leave us or forsake us[iii], and that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age[iv]. I would assert that with these promises we have inspiration, encouragement, and vision to serve. We have the Promise of Almighty God to stand with us if we let Him, and, even if we forget that promise, He is still true to it, never leaving us alone if we adhere to the Promises He gave. Besides, we sometimes “dig a hole” in order to start the foundation for something bigger. I’ll bet the Empire State Building started with a pick and a shovel.

[i] Revelation 2:10

[ii] I Corinthians 10:13

[iii] Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5

[iv] Matthew 28:20