

Past Performance And Future Results

Ponder: Resting on your laurels

Scripture: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10, ASV).

"Past performance is no guarantee of future results." You've seen or heard that caveat from advertisers selling various investment products. And it's true! The market goes up; the market comes down. Even in a "bull market," today's rising star may be tomorrow's bankrupt business.

In our own lives, we must not presume that our past performance guarantees our future eternal dwelling with the Lord. Make no mistake, we're not talking about boot-strapping our way to heaven! Salvation by works of merit has never been God's way, and for that we should be thankful. The facts remain that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9), and He will give the crown of life to those who remain faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

We correctly say that baptism into Christ is the beginning of our obedience to Him, not the end. That being true, we must deepen our faith to withstand the trials that threaten to overwhelm us, as illustrated by the rocky soil of Matt. 13:20-21. We must not allow the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life to choke out the word of God in our lives (Matt. 13:22). In short, as the Hebrews writer said in 3:12, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

One errs grievously by saying, "I know I'm delinquent in serving the Lord, but I was baptized umpteen years ago, so it's all good!" The same is true when one says, "I used to do this, that, and the other in service to the Lord, but not anymore," yet he still expects to go to heaven. The church at Sardis had a name (i.e., a reputation) that they were alive; but Jesus classed this formerly active, working congregation as dead! (Rev. 3:2). Their past performance didn't guarantee future results. Of course, a congregation is only as alive as its members, so let each one of us examine ourselves. Are we working or resting on our past activity?

Remember, past performance doesn't guarantee future results.

Hymn: "I Want To Be A Worker For The Lord"

Prayer: Father, help us to persevere to the end. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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