

The Desire to Retire

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." I Corinthians 15:58

God did not give you your vocation for the purpose of making money. Our Lord clearly teaches in His Sermon on the Mount that He will provide for your needs so that you can be profitably occupied doing His work.¹ Your vocation is your pulpit. For this reason, you have no biblical ground for wanting to retire. Most believers who do want to retire, want a little bit of heaven this side of the grave. Such may be possible for the Philistines, but definitely not for the serious follower of Christ.

It may happen that one morning you awaken to find that you cannot get out of bed, forcing you into retirement, but that is different from desiring to retire. In your service for Christ, He may lead you out of your current vocation into some other form of service, but in this case you are merely "changing pulpits." I am not aware of any place in Scripture where God encourages retirement.²

Those who say that they look forward to retirement testify that they have lost their purpose for living here on earth. God did not give you your life to spend as you see fit. Paul teaches that it is unthinkable that one for whom Christ died should live for himself.³ The desire to retire is an expression of despair. It means that you have lost your rudder and do not know why you are here or where you are going.

¹ cf. Matthew 6:25-34 ² Numbers 4 says that the various Houses of the tribe of Levi may serve in their respective capacities for twenty years, but does not speak of retirement either before or after their years of service. ³ II Corinthians 5:15