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# The Message Of The Week

Presented by

REV. JAMES W. BUCKINGHAM

Pastor Of

South Main Street Baptist Church



Rev. James W.  
Buckingham

## To Resign --- Or To Re-Sign

I used to think that the ministry was composed of pip-squeaks and squirts. That was before I realized that the first requirement for being a minister was to follow Jesus — and that pip-squeaks and squirts don't have the inner strength to pick up the cross.

In looking around I find ministers of all kinds. Some are weak and broken in body, but even with this, most are giants in the faith. And like Kipling's servant, "By the livin' Gawd that made you, You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!"

No one is under greater pressure to give up and resign his calling than the modern pastor. Pressures from within and without are constantly at work tempting him to say, "What's the use? Why break your back and heart when you could get a 9 to 5 job and live like a normal person — serving God as a layman?"

What minister, when things get real tough, hasn't said along with Elijah, "It is enough, O Lord, take away my life . . . ?" The great Matthew Henry once thought his entire ministry a failure and said, "So many have gone from us and so few have been added to us." John Wesley used to have to preach with even his wife making faces at him from the congregation.

But as some have so vividly found out, if a man is looking for appreciation, he's wasting his time in the ministry. After all, the Christian life is not so much measured in the number of bouquets thrown, as by the number of brickbats pitched. God's people have usually been on the receiving end of more mud than medals.

So, the easy thing to do is give up and quit. It pleases your enemies and your friends don't blame you.

Others, instead of designing, simply become resigned. They accept the status quo and go along with the line of least resistance. The early Christians, however,

didn't adjust to the situation — they ADJUSTED THE SITUATION. Can you imagine that young priest, Martin Luther, saying: "I don't like the way things are going, but don't expect me to stick my neck out"? Or, Wesley, "I know the church is dead, but don't ask me to risk my bread and butter on being a non-conformist"?

So — being a Christian is difficult. But who said the road would be easy? The bickering and feuding among little people — the emotional conflicts — the neurotics who bring their domestic and business frustrations over into the church. And for the pastor — to long to be a prophet and to be relegated to the role of a wet-nurse instead. So the popular trend is to cower back into the church building and redesign the program to become more socially palatable.

But I am convinced that the more acceptable we are to this status-seeking, thing-worshiping age the less effective we will be. Still, what do you do when you become like the man Woodrow Wilson once described who had "worn out his constitution and was living on his by-laws"? Do you resign from your commission and quit? Do you become resigned and adjust? Or do you re-sign and re-enlist?

Yet you had better not ask God to restamp your marching orders these days with the idea that it will enhance your reputation and insure your personal success. For history proves that even though we no longer stone prophets, that still beneath our thin veneer of civilization there beats a black heart of sin—and that the more subtle methods of crucifixion are just as deadly as the cross.

No, the totally lived Christian life is not easy—but it is glorious. A man who had resigned the ministry was asked what he missed most about his former calling. His answer can be understood by every man and woman who has ever put a hand to the plow—"I MISS THE TRUMPETS IN THE MORNING".

So instead of resigning—instead of being resigned—why not RE-SIGN, face the