

“Whatever you do is common. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart. None of this half-hearted stuff, none of this half-way, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for me.

That's the NIV version. Let me read you the New Living Translation. It says, work willingly, willingly, not because you have to, because you want to, because you're willing.

Work willingly at whatever you do. As though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Let's be honest, people get on your nerves sometimes, don't they?

Yep, they do. People just get on your nerves. But that's exactly why the NLT says, work as for the Lord, and not for people.

Not for people. All right, I'm going to use a very familiar parable for you this morning to try to bring what I want to pass, what I believe the Lord wants me to share with you this morning. The title of this message isn't worth the effort.”

“Okay? The parable is the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's found in Luke's Gospel, chapter 10, and in the beginning of the 30th verse there, through the 37th verse, Jesus tells this parable about a man who's leaving from Jerusalem going to Jericho.

Now, history tells us that this was a treacherous journey between Jerusalem and Jericho. There were many thieves that lie there. And most likely, the fact that this man was leaving from Jerusalem, we can pretty much assume that he was a Jewish man.

And I will tell you why this matters in just a little bit. But he's going down to Jericho, and the Bible says that he fell among thieves. They robbed him, they beat him, and they left him for dead.

With no care for him whatsoever, took his clothes, took his money, took everything he had, and just left him there. Now, you and I have an enemy, the thief of John 10, 10, who sometimes will leave you feeling very similar to that right there. He will steal your joy.

He will steal your happiness. He will steal your excitement. He will take your help.”

“He will do all of these things, and then leave you beside the road there, just to fend for yourself, or just to wither up and die, or to just throw up your hands and quit. That happens, because that's what he does. That's what he's always done.

That's what he will always do until that day comes. All right? And that day is coming.

So here we have this guy, and he's lying there. He's just minding his own business, going about on his journey down to Jericho, and this happened to him. We don't know why bad things happen to good people in life.

But they do. But they do. But that doesn't mean that God isn't still faithful.

Because God has people prepared to come along that we don't even know about. Well, thank goodness the preacher came by first. Whoo!

The priest was journeying along, and he comes by, and, you know, there's a word in the Bible, and I've told you before, I believe that every word in the Bible is there because it's supposed to be for a purpose. But I think God put this word in this Bible for us. The word is chins.

“By chins. The priest came by. By chins.

You know, if you've been here very long, you know I don't believe in coincidence. That's chance. I believe in opportunity.

That chance is opportunity. You wonder how come I had to come by there. It's an opportunity.

All those sheets of paper over there are an opportunity for you, okay? This was an opportunity for this priest as he came by. And the Bible says, what was an opportunity for it?

To be a blessing. Church, we are called to be a blessing to other people. Do you realize that?

You like it when God blesses you. You like it when you feel blessed. And if we can be a blessing to somebody else, we ought to do that, you know?

Instead of telling them what we really feel like and how we feel when they run the cart up your heels in Walmart, try being a blessing, smile at them, and say, oh, it's all right. It's okay. It happens, you know?

And it does happen. You don't like it, but it does. But this guy had an opportunity here.”

“He had an opportunity to be a blessing to this guy. He was a priest, means he was a Jewish priest. This guy laying in the road ditch was a fellow Jew, and the priest came, and the Bible says he saw him lying there in that site.

Why did he do that? I don't know. I don't know.

Maybe, maybe he was like us. He was running late for something. If it wasn't for running late, we wouldn't run at all, would we?

We know what time we're supposed to be there. If you don't have a watch, you have a phone. Everybody got the phone, and that phone's got an alarm on it.

You can set it. It's got a clock on it. It'll tell you what time it is.

Why then, if we know it takes us 20 minutes to get somewhere, do we leave at a quarter till? Because we're running late. Maybe he was just running late for something.

And when we're running late, we're in a hurry. And when we're in a hurry, every slow person, slow driving person in town gets in front of us.”

“They're not the ones that are late. We are. They left early, so they can take their time.

Maybe he had run a little late. Maybe, maybe he had on a brand new priestly road. I mean, this guy is laying beside the road.

He's beaten. He's bloody. I mean, he's just laying.

He's a mess. He's all dirty laying there in the dust of the road. And maybe, maybe he just, you know, I don't know.

I don't know. Maybe he just had too much on his plate. He didn't think it'd take one more time.

Maybe. I don't know. But anyway, he passed on by.

He went on buying. The next guy that came by is a Levite. And if you don't know what a Levite is, they're the people who kind of took care of the church.

The modern translation would be the deacons. All right? One of the deacons came by by chance.

Again, an opportunity.

And the Bible says this guy came and went over and looked at the man. Bible says the preacher saw him. The deacon walked over and actually looked at him.

Got close to him. Was nearby."

"Well, I'm going to tell you this, but I'm telling you, he thought, man, this guy's a mess. He, he, I don't know. Now, we don't know why he chose to go and pass by on the other side either.

Maybe he was too busy. Maybe he was in a hurry. Maybe he just didn't want to get involved.

Because when you get involved in something, it's going to take some time, and it's going to take some effort, and all this other stuff, and you know, and we got a lot to do, and he had a lot to do, and perhaps he made a note in his mind, or whatever, and said, I'll request prayer for him at church. What I'll do. I'm not saying the man didn't need prayer, but he needs a little more than that too.

Sometimes you need to put legs on your prayers. Your legs on your prayers, okay? So anyway, they all passed by him.

Passed him on by. They both decided in that moment that that guy was not worth the effort. He just wasn't worth it."

"And they justify that decision by, I'm too busy, I don't have time, wish I could, but I can't. But the bottom line, what they're saying is, he just not worth the effort. Or more appropriately, he was just not worth their effort.

But then we're told in the 33rd verse, a Samaritan came by. Why? Was it significant to point out the fact that this was a Samaritan?

Could you remember the story when Jesus met the woman at the well, and he asked her for a drink of water? This woman was a Samaritan. And you remember, she asked the question, it's in John 4 and 9.

She said, why do you ask me, a Samaritan woman, you being a Jewish man, for a drink of water? Because the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. We don't like each other.

We don't get along. So how come you're asking me for water? Over in the 8th chapter of John, about verse number 48, I believe it is, the Jews said to Jesus, accused him of being a Samaritan, and said, he's got a devil, because he's a Samaritan."

"The Jews and the Samaritans did not get along. They did not hang out together. They did not go to one another's house for dinner.

You know, they didn't like each other. But this guy is a Samaritan. And the Bible says he saw him.

He really saw him. You know, we have the ability to look at something and not see it. Yeah, we can look at something and totally miss it.

The preacher missed it. The deacon missed it. But this Samaritan saw him.

He saw him as he was. Not as he appeared. He saw him.

He didn't see a Jewish guy laying there. He saw a person in need. We need to learn to look beyond what we see or what it looks like and see what it is and know what it is and be willing to put forth that effort.

He saw him. And the Bible says he had compassion on him. He was willing, and he saw a man that needed somebody to reach down and help him up and help him a little bit."

"And he was willing to put forth the effort it was going to take to do that. Now, this guy was not just traveling just to be traveling. He had a place he was going.

He had something he was going to do. But he saw somebody in need and was willing to put forth the effort to help him to get him back up on his feet. Church, how many times do we walk by and miss an opportunity to be a blessing to somebody because we're not willing to put forth the effort?

You know, it takes less effort to smile than it does to frown. It's a scientific fact. Your muscles to smile than to frown.

Why do we mean mug so much? You know, if we would just smile, it can change everything, right? This guy stopped.

This guy stopped. The scriptures tell us he went down and he bound up his wounds. His wounds.

He helped him. And then the Bible says he put him on his own beast. We don't know if it was a donkey or a horse or whatever, an oxen."

"We don't know. But he put him on his own beast, which meant that guy, the Samaritan, was going to walk. And he's going to let a total stranger ride.

And he took him to the next town where there was an inn, a hotel, perhaps. And he put him in there. And he told the innkeeper, I got to go on and do my business.

Just, you take care of him till I get back, and I'll settle the bill. He didn't know him. He didn't know anything about him.

All he knew is he had a need, and this guy had the ability to help him with that need, and he saw the fact that he was worth the effort. And he put the effort in. He showed mercy.

Jesus asked the question, then, for those he was talking with, he says, which of the three do you guys think was a good neighbor? First guy, the second guy, the third guy. They all agreed.

Well, the one who showed mercy, the one who put forth the effort. Well, Jesus said, can you believe he said this? Go and do well."

"Samaritan thought this guy was worth the effort. 1 Corinthians 15 and 58 says, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. God will bless your effort if you're willing to put forth the effort for His glory.

God will bless it. All right, we just finished up Bible school. We had a wonderful week.

Margaret, you got my picture? If you would put that picture up for me, please. This was commencement night.

You see, there are children from that side all the way to that side. You know what I think about that picture? Now, Bible school, holy cow.

I mean, you saw the numbers. I mean, kids, we had 116 to 1st, I had 116 to 2nd, I had 118 to 3rd, 123 to 4th, my goodness. Now, that's a lot of young people.

That's a whole lot of kids. I don't know how many are up there. I didn't count them, but I'm going to say there's 100 plus easily across there."

"And, you know, our leaders, Megan and Angie did an outstanding job getting everything put together. Amen. They did a great job.

They did a great job. Yes. Yes.

And we had people who helped set up, people who helped take down. We had crew leaders. We had craft leaders.

We had smack people. We had security people. We believe in taking care of God's greatest blessings.

We're security people. We had people in charge of the games. We had miscellaneous people just helping wherever they could.

We had people. Now, I can tell you now that you missed it, if you didn't work in Bible school. We had people that fed us dinner every evening.

Yeah. Yeah, we did. Oh, and I'm not talking about bony and cheese and peanut butter and jelly.

We had lasagna. We had tacos one night. I mean, come on, people.

We had pizza, and if you can imagine it, we had it. I mean, kinds of pizza. Yeah.

Yeah. We had those people. We had people fixing hot dogs before they could grab a sack on the way out and go to Marion Pool on Friday night."

"We had 90-plus adults here almost every night. That's the ones that got counted. You know, we had others that didn't get counted, but they were here.

Do you know why they were here? Because they believed that DBS was worth the effort. We all agree on that, don't we?

Yeah. Our young people are worth the effort, right? I mean, look at that bunch up there.

Well, I'm going to tell you guys something. BBS is one time a year. But you know what we have year round?

We have Discovery Garden. What's that? That's the nursery.

We have, and I know I'm biased, we have the cutest babies anywhere else. I'm telling you, we do. We do.

And the nursery is for birth to two years old.

Babies, yeah, they can be yucky and messy. But when they're not, oh, they are so, oh, don't you, honey, just hold that baby. And they smell so, most of the time, they smell so good.

There are times they don't, okay, I got that, I got that. But the vast majority of the time, man, they just, oh. And then we have something called King's Kids."

"Yeah, King's Kids. From three years old to five years old. Nursery is from birth to three.

King's Kids is from three years old to five years old. And they go in and they learn about Jesus, and they have activities to do all of these things. And they have snacks.

And then we have Children's Church. We have two groups, Alpha and Omega. The Alpha group is kindergarten to second grade, and Omega is third grade, up through fifth grade.

And then we have Youth after that, which is sixth grade through high school. We even have a college class now for our mature young people. You know what I mean.

My daughter is an English major. Got a doctorate in English. I am her worst nightmare.

Punctuation, pronunciation, all that stuff is so optional in my world. I say it like it's spelled, and I spell it like I hear it. All right?

All right. My point. If this bunch is worth it, what about all these programs we got here?

Are they worth the effort? Are they worth the effort? And why ain't y'all signing up?

Gosh, you're doing so good, children."

"The nursery needs volunteers. King's Kids needs volunteers. Children's Church needs volunteers.

And maybe the little ones ain't your age. Kyle and Duncan used to help with the youth. There are things we can do, but we've got to decide they're worth the effort.

Instead, we pass by the King's Kids room, and we pass by the nursery, and we pass by the Children's Church room, and we say, woo, I hope somebody helps them, and we pass by. They are worth the effort. And we put that effort in, what you get out.

I don't know any of it. Yes, every adult that worked in Bible school are exhausted. But I've not talked to one of them that said, man, I wish I hadn't done it.

Because they got blessed. They got to see Jesus move and work. Two young men got saved at Bible school, people.

Yes.

I've talked to so many of them. I looked at them. I watched them.

They were smiling. They were laughing. They were excited.

They brought their friends. Usually by Thursday, the numbers kind of dwindled down because ours went up. Why is that?"

"Because people were willing to put forth the effort in those kids, and they know it. What if we did it every Sunday all year long? God will change things, and God will move things, folks, because God honors effort.

You show me a miracle in the Bible, and it didn't take effort to make it happen. You can't find it. Everything takes effort, ever.

There's a story in the Old Testament. God told them to go out and dig ditches in the middle of a drought. The dumbest thing I've ever heard, dig a ditch in drought.

But God said it will rain. But you gotta dig ditches first. You gotta put forth the effort first.

And when they put forth the effort, God blessed it. Filled all the ditches, poured out the rain. But God is thankful.

Are we? Are we? Now, I laid it out earlier.

I told you you had to come all the way up here and get one of these prayer requests. Are you willing to put forth the effort? But then from where you're at, you're all back there in them back fusing."

"Man, I wish we were that close of a day.

Whatever you do, I'm blundered. Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord, and not unto man. I saw this Friday night, and I sat back there with tears in my eyes, saying, thank you, Jesus.

Churches would love to have something to look like that in their sanctuary. And we have it. And we have it.

Well, creature, I don't know those kids. Samaritan didn't know that Jewish man either, but it didn't matter. It didn't matter.

Young people need to know they matter. Every day, all day. Stand with me this morning Are we willing to put forth the effort?"