

Working Faith

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[0 : 00] We're going to the Word of God to look at the subject of faith, but more so working faith, faith that works. So in a way I'm preaching works, but of course what matters is the faith that works, a faith that works.

And works tell us about activity, about labour, about employment, and our Lord urges us to good works. We see it's a theme right through the Word of God, this theme of works.

So as we read, for example, in Hebrews 10.24, Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

Every believer is called to active service for Christ. And the Bible records God's men and women, their lives of service, serving Him. God's call for all of us to the work.

And we're all His workmen. I know we lived at a time in Catherine and they had a Creole Bible that they translated for the Walpere people.

[1 : 06] And where it says disciples, they used the word working men. And we are God's disciples. We are Christ's disciples. We're Christ's working men. That's an interesting thought, isn't it, to translate it that way.

We are His workmen. We are His workwomen. And works are important. Because one day the Bible says that our works will be judged. We'll see those works. Of course, this is for the believers. Naturally, I want to just really state this up front. That our works do not save us in any fashion or form. Not at all. Not any works that we do save us. Once we are saved, works follow on.

And the judgment seat of Christ is where there's this assessment, this testing, this review. As we read 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10, it says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

So there's a sense where there'll be an assessment, an examination. And as we read elsewhere, of wood, hay, stubble, of gold, silver, precious stones.

[2 : 18] Of an assessment of the quality of the works. Not that the works save us, but that the works are that which we can offer unto him, as our life lived, as a believer.

And as believers, we live our lives with that prospect in view. Not for the rewards of earth, but to here one day, I trust our Lord's well done, our good and faithful servant.

And friends, the Bible speaks about this laborer's reward that is promised ahead. For example, in Revelation 14 verse 13, it says, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

So there's going to be something in eternity for that which we have done. There'll be some acknowledgement of it for God's glory. So I'm printing works.

I want to provoke you tonight in a good way. Some people are provocative in a bad way, but I want to be provocative in a good way unto love and to good works.

[3 : 23] And so let's start by looking at the opposite of works. What is the opposite of work? Idleness, inactivity, unemployment.

Now, there was a time when I labored in the field of labor, in the labor service, as Brother Peter was one of my colleagues down at Elizabeth Commonwealth Employment Service, down at the Job Centre.

And we were helping people get jobs. And the problem of unemployment has been a long-standing problem, hasn't it, Peter? In Elizabeth, in particular. Unfortunately, Peter and I didn't solve it. We just did what we could. Oh, yeah. I mean, Elizabeth is renowned for unemployment. And it's a problem.

It's a problem with unemployment. And look, there's people looking for jobs here tonight. I acknowledge that. There's people looking for jobs. I know close relatives of mine are looking for work, and they're finding quite hard going.

[4 : 27] But the point I'm trying to make here tonight is the opposite of works is unemployment. And the Bible actually talks about Christians not spiritually working, not occupied in the service of God.

But He wants us to be. We see, for example, a parable told in Matthew 20, verse 6. It tells about these laborers that they were standing in the marketplace, and it says they were standing idle. Idle. You could put that they were standing unemployed. It's another way of putting that word. Because it's actually the negative of work. It's, I think, forgive me if I get this wrong, because I'm not a Greek scholar, but one of the words to do with work in the Greek is ergon. Well, we get ergonomics. We get work to do with work. Ergo. And then this word is argo. It's like an-ergo. It's the opposite of work.

It's inactivity. And you could reflect from this verse here that our Lord pictures these ones who are workers, but they're standing idle.

[5 : 35] They're standing unemployed. They're standing around in the marketplace, kind of kicking a can down the road, not having work to do. And this man, the master, comes and he says, why stand you here all the day idle?

In other words, why are you standing all the day unemployed? They're the negative of work. They're standing there inactive. Not working. It's the sense.

And, friends, it's a problem I put to you today that there's many Christians who are inactive. It's an inactivity. And sometimes it could be reflecting slackness.

I'm not saying that those that have not a job at the moment are slack. But there's that sense in spiritually speaking, as Joshua addresses the people in Joshua 18, verse 3.

He says, how long are you slack? Go and possess the land. The picture there is these people, kind of not active, idle.

[6 : 38] He says, why are you standing here? How long are you going to be this way? Go and possess the land. Go and take the land. And we can all be guilty of idleness.

And what's the saying, go? The devil finds work for idle hands. Idle minds, idle hands. And inactivity can be a real problem.

As we know, as Peter and I could reflect, as working in the field of employment service, there's a whole lot of problems allied with unemployment. It leads to demotivation and boredom and all kinds of social problems.

If someone doesn't have income, they don't have employment, it can be a downward spiral. And likewise, the Bible speaks, it commands to us diligence in contrast to slothfulness, in contrast to laziness.

For example, there's many scriptures along this theme. In Proverbs, such as, go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. Seeing how the ants are always active.

[7 : 41] I could reflect as some can keep or have kept bees. They're busy bees. They're just, I know sometimes I go down, because I do keep some bees, and I go down to the hive.

In the middle of the night, and you open up the viewing screen, and you can see in the middle of the night, they just don't stop, do they, brother? They just don't stop. Bees just don't stop working.

And the ants are just like that too. They're just always on the go, always active. And we can learn from ants, can't we? Consider her ways and be wise. Another scripture telling of idleness in contrast to activity is in Ecclesiastes 10 verse 18, where the writer says, By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through the idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

Now I know I've got a leak in this room, one room over, the Sunday school room, and if I leave that leak unattended, that's just going to collapse. The roof's going to crash down.

Unless I fix that hole and plug it, the building will fall down. We see that, you see driving in the hills, and you see these old houses. It must have been, the roof was never fixed, and it just rotted and fell down, and you see these ruined houses all around us.

[8 : 59] What it's saying is if we're lazy and leave the building without attending to it, without putting activity to fix it, it will fall down. It will come into disrepair. We could think about that spiritually, can't we?

If we let our spiritual lives become a state of disrepair, if we don't attend, if we're lazy spiritually, then there'll be a result.

The Bible talks about not slothful in business, but rather the opposite, be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. He commands us to that, right through the Word of God. Now really, the first and essential work that we need, there is a work that saves us.

It's His. It's His work, isn't it? It's His finished work that saves us. It's that inward work that is salvation that saves us. This must happen first and foremost.

Now I'm speaking tonight about good works. No good works can help you or give you any favour before God if you're not saved. It's not going to be of benefit to you.

[10:07] The first and foremost work is to be saved. It's that inward work that He does. It's His work as He cleanses us from sin. He fills us with Himself. And He is, as we read in John 15, He's the true vine.

He's the vine. And we are the branches. And He says, Abide in Me, I in you, and bring forth much fruit. He says, For without Me you can do nothing.

Now think of that today, really. For anything that we can contemplate to do, in terms of Christian work, in terms of spiritual service, we can do nothing without our Lord.

Absolutely nothing. We can do nothing that's really of value without our Lord. We can achieve nothing. The power to serve, to live the Christian life, is all thanks to Him.

We see an account where Peter was about to, was undertaking some fishing, and our Lord says to go out again. And Simon Peter says to the Lord, Master, we've toiled all night and taken nothing.

[11:13] Nevertheless, if I were, I will let down the net. The picture here is of a man doing lots and lots of labour, working many hours, and nothing for it.

And we could reflect on that spiritually, our spiritual work, when we might do many things. We might get very busy in the Christian work.

But if it's without Christ, it will take nothing. We'll see nothing for it. We'll catch nothing. But in Christ, as happened, when they did lay down the net at His word, what happened?

The nets couldn't scarcely contain the catch of fish. And in Christ, our nets will almost break. It's whether what we do is in Christ, or not in Christ.

And friends, there's some well-meaning Christians going to be very busy, doing all manner of things, but missing the mark, because it's not in Christ. It's not doing it at His word.

[12:17] Without me, you can do nothing. And so, to be saved is the absolute, first and foremost work that we need. The work of the cross, the finished work, to save our soul, that inward work.

We read in Ephesians 2, and the context it talks about, for by grace you be saved through faith, that not of yourselves. It's not of works, it goes on to say here, lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we walk in them.

So when we are saved, we're given work to do. We're saved by grace, through faith, unto good works. We are His workmanship.

So there's a sense where, you're saved, all glory to God, it's His entire work that saves you. With a purpose there, there's a work to be done.

So my first point, and I've just got three short points here, is that working faith, this faith that is acting, is working faith that is about purpose.

[13:24] You have a purpose. Every believer has a purpose. Every believer has a calling, has a responsibility, has a spiritual work to be done. It's God's plan for man.

God's purpose for every believer, men and women, is that we serve Him. It's His designed us for that. As we see here, we are His workmanship.

We're created, in Christ Jesus, unto good works. Now as much as we don't, tend to emphasize good works, because we don't want to confuse, the issue about salvation, because salvation is not of good works, there is a real need, and importance to good works.

We should not neglect the good works. because it's God's purpose, that we are workers. We see right back from Genesis, the second chapter, Genesis 2 verse 15, when Adam was made, and God told him, what to do.

He put him in the garden, it says, to dress it, to cultivate it, to keep it. Adam gave, man, Adam, sorry, God gave man, Adam, a work to do, a job to do.

[14:36] As soon as God created man, He gave him a job to do. And God intends that we work.

There's a purpose for us. It tells of our salvation, of our Lord, who gave Himself for us, and He might redeem us from all iniquity, purify unto Himself, and be clearly people, zealous unto good works.

There's a critical point there, that it's making. But we should be a people, zealous of good works. We're saved to serve. We're saved to serve.

And it's our glad, joy to be such, His servants. We see, Paul addresses Timothy, 2 Timothy 2 verse 21, he says, if a man therefore, heard himself from these, talking of evil works, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet, fit, for the master's use, and prepared unto, good, every good work.

There's that word again, that term again. He's sanctified us, He's made us holy, He's made us a vessel, unto His honour, He's sanctified us, He's made us holy, and He's prepared us, He's made us meet, He's made us fit, for the master to use.

And He's prepared us unto, every good work. So friends, there's an important purpose, I'll put to you, that every believer has a purpose. Good works. What is God's will for my life, is the question. [16:04] What good works, does our Lord want me to do? What is His purpose for me, personally? How can I better serve? We think of how we can expand our lives.

There's a man, you'd know this man, Webster, was at Noah Webster, he worked 36 years, to produce the dictionary. The first edition of the dictionary, the Webster dictionary, 36 years of his life, he spent, to edit this dictionary, advance his name.

You know, pretty much all his life, really, isn't it? Do we so devote him, to the work of God, such that we'll devote ourselves, with purpose, to what matters, God's work, to His work.

So it's about purpose, number one. And working faith, is about priorities as well. You know this familiar scripture, our Lord says, seek ye first, the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things, shall be added unto you.

He says, seek this first. He says, make this a priority, the kingdom of God. What a joy, for you and me, to know God's call, His will, to be saved, for a star, that matters the most.

[17:16] And then, for His work, what does He want from me, as a saved man or woman? What does He want? What is His work for me to fulfill, for my life? And to be sensitive, to His leading.

And we can busy ourselves, as I say, in all manner of things, and, sometimes, we might miss the mark, because it's not, really, His leading. So, we want to prayerfully seek, and be sensitive, to His leading.

Ask yourself, is serving God, my priority? Consider the use of your time. Praise our time is limited, in which to work. Use it wisely.

You know, Brother Stuart and I, about the same age, as Brad, 58, bang, gone. His time to work is finished. How much time have we got?

Makes you question that, doesn't it? Makes you wonder, what will I use my time to do, while I've got life to live, to use that time wisely?

[18:17] Our Lord says, of Himself, I must work the works of Him, that sent me. While it is day, the night cometh, when no man can work. One day, the clock is going to, tick over into, night.

And, there'll be no more time, for us to work. Friends, our Lord sets that example, doesn't He? He was an earnest worker. Consider, brother and sister tonight, your use of your talents.

We are all stewards. We'll all have that time, when there'll be a reckoning, of our stewardship. And, it's easy to be neglectful. The Lord exhorts us, as Paul did Timothy, neglect not the gift, that is in there.

We've all got to give. Friends, I believe every Christian, has a gift. Or more, than one gift. God has given, each one of us, a responsibility.

He's given us, different abilities, different giftings. Use your spiritual gifts. You know, sometimes we might, receive a gift, and it doesn't look so nice, it's just wrapped, so beautifully.

[19:25] And, you don't want to tear the paper. And you might keep, an unwrapped gift, you might, yeah, that paper's too nice, to open the gift. And, and you keep it on the shelf.

And you never open a gift. What a shame it would be, to have an unwrapped gift, wouldn't it? If God's given you a gift, unwrap it. Tear that paper, and get it open, and see what God has given you, to be, to do, to employ your talents.

William Carey, before he's called, to the mission field, he used to go, from village to village, preaching, for his soul is filled, with the love of God. And one day, Frank came to Carey, William Carey, and he said, Mr. Carey, I want to speak to you, very seriously.

Well said, Mr. Carey, what is it? The friend replied, by your going about, preaching as you do, you're neglecting your business. If only you attended, to your business war, you would be alright, and would soon get on, and prosper.

But as it is, you're simply neglecting, your business. Neglecting my business, said Carey, looking at him steadily, my business, is to extend, the kingdom of God.

[20 : 34] I only cobble shoes, to pay expenses. Now he was a shoe cobbler, that was his little shop, where he would repair shoes, and make shoes, and Carey said, that's just, that just pays the bills.

My business, is the kingdom of God. That's my purpose, that's, that's what I'm here for. And so we see, working faith is about purpose, it's about priorities, what matters.

Not making shoes, making money, it's about the kingdom of God, that's what matters. And thirdly, we see, we see purpose, we see priorities, thirdly, working faith is about, practical Christianity.

Practical Christianity. It's applying your faith, in the day by day, where the rubber hits the road, when we're faced with the realities, of living a life, on this planet, that we're temporarily, on.

And friends, we are called to demonstrate faith, to live it out. As James reports, he says, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have, works.

[21 : 39] Show me thy faith, trying to get back here, show me thy faith, without thy works, and I will show thee my faith, by my works.

So James is saying, I'll show you my faith, by my works. And that's a good thing, to have faith, that is, demonstrated, isn't it?

That's practical, that's lived out. That we, will have that same mind, I want to show my faith, by my works. I want to live, for Christ, such this world, sees who I belong to, whose I am, and who I serve.

To look for those opportunities, to put our faith, into action. May our faith, not be in word only, but in deed, and in truth. I urge you tonight, believers here today, to thank God, for a burden.

A sense of a task, to complete. A responsibility, to fulfil. God might be burdened, in your heart, differently from mine, from others. There might be a need, that you see, I can meet that need, you might say.

[22 : 45] You might say, I can take that opportunity, that opportunity, that lies around us. Consider that, tonight. Think, dear brother, sister tonight, how can I put my faith, into action, into practice, in showing love, and care, in using what, abilities, insignificant, as I might feel they are.

You know, we had someone, volunteer to be the bus driver. Amen. That's a menial job. Who wouldn't want, to be the bus driver? Especially with these, rowdy bus riders. You know, the trouble they cause.

No, but being a bus driver, is a ministry, isn't it? It's like the, the youth group. Look, there's need for youth workers. We still have needs. I'm sure there's needs, in every department, of this church.

How can I, can, how can I do something? How can I do something? It could be in praying more, in practical kindness. The Bible speaks about, diversities, of operations.

We don't all do the same. There's diversities, of operations. And that's a good diversity. That's a good diversity. We should be diverse, in the operations, so that everything, is operating, that's efficiently, coordinating, working, active.

[24 : 05] And so, in other words, there's a job for everyone, to do. Diversities, of operations.

Everyone has a part, to play. So be willing, be a volunteer. And you might say, I'm already doing enough.

That's okay. I'm not putting any, burdens on anyone, here tonight. But just prayerfully, to seek God. You might say, I've only got so much scope, I've only got so much ability, I can't do this, I can't do that.

But, think of what you can do. Think of what you can do. See a need, and feel the need. Take on responsibility. Say, I'm willing to help. I can see, there's a need here.

I can fill this gap. I can stand in the gap. And also, don't wait for feeling. Some people think, oh, I've got to have some goosebumps, or have a, a little warm and fuzzy feeling, as if it's some spiritual, uh, thing that, that I've got to wait for, just something to, kind of, move me.

Don't wait for feeling. Go by faith. Go by faith. You might actually think, well, I don't really want to do that. I don't really feel to do that, but I know it needs to be done, and I know that I can do it.

[25 : 14] You might go against your feelings, to do, what needs to be done. So, pray about it. What has God called you to do? That's what matters. And, you might say, well, I'm not able, pastor, I don't know how to do that.

If you need, seek training. Retraining. You might say, I've got skills here, but I see a need here. Well, get retrained. That's what they do in the workforce, isn't it?

You get redeployed. There's a sense where, yeah, that work's done, and you can't do any more of that, but there's actually a need here, to get retrained, to learn how to do it.

There's some people training, training here, in this, this highly skilled department, of the church right here, isn't there? That's a, that's an area of training, an area that needs a lot of training, and learning, to get it, so that you know what you're doing.

Don't use the excuse, that, you don't know how to do it. Learn, how to do it. And that's not to say, you want to be a square peg, in a round hole.

[26 : 24] You want to find where, where your giftings be. Where, where you, where God's moving you, and leading you to do something, and if you feel inadequate, learn to do it, under God.

And we can, we can all seek training, can't we? You know, I'm sure there's some people here, with lots of certificates on the wall. They're highly trained. What about training for, what is it that I can do for God?

Maybe I need to train, in that department. Amen. So, I just want to urge you, in that sense, because, we've all got opportunities, is, the world trains people, doesn't it?

Why can't we train? There's some good Bible schools. We've got some, information on the board.

Now, I'm thinking about doing, some further training. To learn more. So, how can I serve God?

How can I be more trained? How can I be more able? How can I be more, more, studied, in what I need to know, to help others? So, think, how can I share the load?

[27 : 21] How can I make a contribution? What can I do? Be involved. Be employed. It's God laying something on your heart, and, press on, press through. Seek God to, to deliver that.

You know, there's no retirement, in God's plan, in God's economy. We've all got, something to do. And, I'd like to die with my boots on. I keep, joking with my dad.

You know, there's no way he's going to hang his boots up. We're going to die with our boots on, don't we? We want to, we want to be axed, as long, as far, as much as we can, for the glory of God.

And, yep, yep, you get refired, not retired. It says, that the faith that we have, works by love.

So, this, this working, is faith, works by love. It's, it's God's love, isn't it? It's the love of God. We love him, we want to serve.

[28 : 18] It talks further in 1 Thessalonians 1, 3, your work of faith, your labour of love. The work of faith, the labour of love. They go hand in hand. I know there's people here who love people.

They go out of their way to visit people. They go out of their way to show their care. It's the work of faith, it's the labour of love, isn't it? What's a beautiful match, isn't it?

We love Jesus, we want to love people. And minister. Are we living out our faith in practical ways?

The Bible says, God, it's not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love.

That's the thing again, the labour of love, which you show to his name, and you minister to the saints. Friends, everyone has opportunities. Think of it, even the cup of cold water.

Someone thought to give the pastor a cup of cold water. Even the cup of cold water given in Jesus' name, in the master's name. He says he will remember that. We see there's great and effectual doors that are opened.

[29 : 19] Paul says, as he saw the opportunities of harvest, of outreach, he saw the open doors, and he said, I'm going to answer them, no matter the adversaries, no matter the challenges.

You might see some things, I can do something, but there's adversaries, there's some opposition. Take the opportunity while the door is open. Brother, sister, think, you younger ones, here tonight, if you're under 58, you're one of the younger ones.

If you're a younger one here tonight, then think of what, what an opportunity you have, to say, I'm going to think about what I can do, what I can train to do, what opportunities present for me, and I'm going to take those open doors while I can.

And friends, we see there, the working faith, I'm talking about, this faith that's alive, it's acting, it's harnessed, in his harness, we see this working faith, we talked about purpose, talked about priorities, practical Christianity, and lastly, profit, and prosperity.

Productivity, you could say. Because when you're a Christian servant, there's a profit, there's a productivity here. What am I talking about?

[30 : 36] Paul tells Titus, he says, this is a faithful saying, he says, that thou affirmest constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.

These things are good and profitable unto men. If you maintain good works, it's good and profitable for you. In other words, be busy, maintain good works, busy yourself constantly, apply yourself, and

it says, there's going to be a benefit.

Now, of course, we're not meaning, necessarily, some material benefit, but the investing of ourselves in spiritual tree, and labor, there'll be a benefit.

It's going to be profitable. There's going to be something, there's going to be a harvest to reap.

There's going to be a benefit. Your labors in the gospel, think, they can bring an eternal benefit, and make an eternal difference.

You know, we can think back, on our life lived, of opportunities, of wins, once we've witnessed to, and reaps, there's an eternal benefit there.

[31 : 44] In God's work, there'll always be something we can do. And there's a great gain, in your life now, in that sense that you're, investing your life, in Him, in Christ, and that there'll be some eternal result.

But, you're planting seeds that are eternal, in their effect. In pleasing God, there's great benefit. In being a workman approved unto God.

Serving the Lord is the most important thing we can do. It's the most encouraging and joyful work we can have. And I'm not saying, give up your job and become a full-time minister and such.

I'm saying, do what you can, where you are. Bloom where you're planted. It says that we, might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.

This is Colossians 1, verse 10. Walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. In God's will, as we labour, there will be fruit.

[32 : 48] And we might not see it. I know, sometimes as we go, the witnessing team, we might get many knockbacks. And we might just put a tract in the letterbox, when we've been rejected.

But who knows, whether those words, will not return unto him void. The word of God. Because that's what matters. And, you hear stories of some, throwing tracts away, and someone else has picked them up, and they got saved.

You know, you hear those that have been challenged, and they can't rest. Because the gospel words. I like how Peter says, can I leave you with a scripture? Even these ones are saying, not interested, can I leave you with a scripture?

And just planting that one scripture, that one verse, that might convict them, it might torment them, until they get peace with God. And that matters, doesn't it? The Bible, the word of God, has power, beyond what we can imagine.

And Peter says, in the context, he's talking about adding to your faith, adding to your faith. He says, if these things be in you and bound, you'll neither be barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[33 : 53] That word barren, is the same word, idle, or unemployed. Now, if you're adding to your faith, if your faith is flourishing, it's growing, it's snowballing, you're adding, adding, adding to your faith, all the good things, that God wants for you, it says, you're not going to be unemployed.

You're not going to be idle. You're not going to be ineffective. You're not going to be unfruitful. The fruit will come. It takes commitment.

You might say, preacher, look, I'm past my use-by date. I can only do so much. Look, you can get some tracts and put them in letterboxes. Thank God, I know that brother in South City Baptist Church, with the walking frame, wasn't he?

And he was going faithfully down the street, putting leaflets in letterboxes, wasn't he, brother?

Here's a man, what, 18, 85 years old, you know, a very frail, incapacitated man, you could say.

You know, some would say, well, it's about time, he hangs up his, his hat, and just lies in the rest home, and, and calls it quits, you know, and just says, I've done enough.

[35 : 00] But no, he got out of the nursing home, down the street, on his walker, hobbling along, putting gospel tracks, in letterboxes. Bless him. Amen. He's with the Lord now.

He's resting from his labours now. That's when we rest, when we're with our Lord. Now friends, what a testimony that is. You might say, preacher, there's nothing I can do, I can't even leave my home.

There's some of you, who might even be watching this here, look, you can write letters. You can make calls. You can reach out. Everybody can do something. I think of another brother, my dad knows, Alan, Alex rather, and he was, he was like your, your brother, again, labouring through his dying day.

He was, he was photocopying gospel tracks, that he made of himself, and he reproduced them, and he didn't stop, until, God said, it's time to stop.

Think of that missionary giant, David Livingstone, as a younger man, he worked in a factory, from 6am, to 8pm, and then he went home, and did night school, for two hours, to study far into the night, until his mother, took his books away from him.

[36 : 12] David Livingstone, this man, the fruit of his labours, transformed the continent, of Africa, and saw thousands, come into the kingdom of God. He worked in a factory, from 6am, to 8pm, then he went to night school, for two hours, far into the night, to study, to become a doctor, of medicine.

His aim was to be a missionary, and we see the fruit, of his labours here today, don't we? Working faith, surely, they'll be a prophet, they'll be, they'll be something to see, they'll be something, they'll be some productivity, from your labours, in the gospel.

And so, Paul testified, to, in 1 Corinthians, I'll just get to that one, bear with me, I've lost my, train here, I don't want to go over time, because I was, selling some other person's, keeps it on, I can't find it there, but it says, this one very familiar to me, he talks about, therefore my beloved brethren, be ye, therefore always, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding, in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that, your labour is not in vain, in the Lord.

It's not in vain, you might think, well I've done this, I've done that, I've done the other, and I can't see much for it, you know, you see some labouring, in small country towns, where it seems, there's little to show for it, it's the kingdom of God, in that place, you're his agent, labour on, your labour is not in vain, in the Lord, and it matters whether, our labour, our working is in the Lord, that's what matters, again, making labour, in all kinds of endeavours, if it's not in the Lord, it's vain, but if it's in the Lord, it is not in vain, and of course we do see, the Bible does refer to, dead works, dead works, so we want to make sure, our good works, are not dead works, that they're not, wood, hay and stubble, that they're done, with the right motive, and so we see, friends, Ephesians 3, 20 it says, now unto him, that he's able to, do exceeding, abundantly above, all that we ask, or think, according to the power, that worketh in us, we can know, his working in us, and there's no greater privilege, to be his labourer, to be labourers, together with God, it talks about, and notice, it's God working in us, and that work, he will finish, it says,

God worketh in you, but do will, and to do, of his good pleasure, notice, who's at work, God, God is at work, and again, Paul talks about him, I lay, the striving, according to his working, which worketh in me mightily, that missionary, great Hudson Taylor, said, I used to ask God, to help me, then I asked God, that I might help him, I ended up, by asking him, to do his work, through me, I'll say that again, used to ask God, to help me, then I asked, that I might help him, then, I ended up, asking him, to do his work, through me, friends, God wants a church, that is working, active, Paul says, that you stand fast, in one spirit, with one mind, striving together, striving together, not striving against each other, but striving together, for the faith, of the gospel, it's got the sense, of contending, like a team of athletes, the Lord wants his church, to be a going concern, a going concern, now I was reading, something lately,

[39 : 52] God doesn't command, the lost, to go to church, he commands the church, to go to the lost, we need to be a going concern, don't we, to go, to go, keep on going, to go forth, to go to the lost, to be a going concern, so may we be such, as fellow laborers together, one team, partners, with his yoke, yoke fellows, under his yoke, that our heart, would be to serve him, you see the people, in Nehemiah's day, it says, as they, completed that work, it says, we built the wall, because, why, because the people, had a mind to work, so the people, in Nehemiah's day, they had a heart for it, and let's likewise, have a work, as we look, for a work to do for God, and do it heartily, well, no matter how, insignificant, it might seem to be, to do it, with a mind to work, with a heart, that's committed to it, to work, nearly, at the close here, we just think,

Paul's address, to the theses, he says, that, God's called people, he's called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, not that they do the work, but they are, for the perfecting, or the, the maturing of the saints, the skilling up of the saints, for the saints, to do the work, of the ministry, that the saints, are to be prepared, and, and sent, to do the work, of the service, of the ministry, so, every one of us, as this church, we have, opportunity, now, someone has said this, the trouble is, some people, remind us of blisters, they don't show up, till the work is done, now, let's not wait, till the work, to be done, let's do it together, amen, be, spend, and be spent, be diligent, Paul talked about, labors, more abundant, may we be, men and women, of action, be about, your father's business, there's a time, where the Lord, talked of a parable, and he talked about, a, a call to, to

labor, and, the, the father came, to the son, and he said, go work, today, in my vineyard, and so, it's reflected here, the son, speaks of divine relationship, so first, you've got to be saved, you've got to be a son, a daughter, a child of God, and it's that divine relationship, get saved, number one, that's the first word, and then there's a call, he says, go work, hear that call, what is he calling me to work, what is he calling me to do, he says, go work, and then he says, today, in other words, there's an opportunity, there's a time frame, go work, today, the opportunity, sees the opportunity, in that time frame, that is today, and then, in my vineyard, what is the sphere of his work, so that we see the relationship, child of God, the father says to you, child of God, he says, go work, so there's a call, he says, today, there's an opportunity, it's time limited, we've only got so much time, some of you are going to live longer than me, now, there's no telling, is there, who's going to live longer, but, use your today, right, that opportunity, it's time limited, and that sphere, he says in my vineyard, he's going to show you, where to work, he's going to point out, where the work is, and he'll take you, to take on that work, so answer the call,

Revelation 2, verse 2, the Lord knows your works, and your labour, he sees your labour, when you labour, and friends, any Christian, every Christian, can labour, in whatever capacity, all of us can labour, because there's many, many vacancies to fill, but the time for service, will soon be over, you know, I think, you know, of my dear friend Brad, and I think, wow, I thought he would have had, a lot more time, friends, the time for service, will be over, and there's no telling, for any of us, how much time we have, there was a sculpt, just carving a statue, one day, and someone observed, him, carving the statue, not that I would, commence carving any statues, or making any statues, but just for the sake, of the illustration, he was carving a statue, and he was spending, much time and labour, on the hair of the statue, and someone from below, was saying, well, why bother with all that, no one's going to see, the hair of the statue, that's just too, high up there, but he says, I'm doing my work, for the spectators above, there's a sense, where, when friends, he might be labouring, and people think, what a waste of time, you know, why do you bother, why do you bother, with these people, why do you care, why do you, put your time, and your effort, into such and such, or this and that, it's a waste of time, you know, people would say that, about people, we're doing it, because of the spectators above, aren't we, we're doing it, because Jesus is watching, he sees what we do, the eye of the Lord, is upon us, and we ought to do, what is acceptable, in his sight, so friends, the time for service, is limited, and the call for duty, is today, and what does he say, even in the light, of his second coming, he says, occupy, till, I, come, friends, whether we're there, or here, or in between, when he comes, he says, occupy, till,

I, come, that's the point, that's what we need, to be concentrating on, friends, and he says, as he looks, on the harvest fields, and he says, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that you'll send forth labourers, into his harvest, the Lord of the harvest, is looking for workers, you know, we hear of, some fruit pickers needed, at the moment, out there, isn't there, I heard, I was on the phone, to someone, he said, they're looking for pickers, they're desperate, there's a desperate need, for pickers, for the pruning work, there's farms out there, crying, for people to go out, into the harvest fields, friends, spiritually so, the Lord of the harvest, the master of the harvest, the one who is the owner, of the harvest field, that is the world, he wants some workers, there's vacancies, now, and he wants people willing, to serve, so the question is, will we have, that kind of, working faith, excuse me, will we have, that kind of faith, that works, and again,

[47 : 01] I'm not saying, the faith, I'm not saying, it's faith plus works, that saves you, only faith, saves you, but that faith, it moves us, doesn't it, when we believe, our Lord, when we truly believe him, it moves us, to want to, serve him, and what a joy it is, each one, you can serve him, you can serve him, I'd just love to, to kind of, hone it down here tonight, to think, as you might prayerfully think, for yourself, how can I, work, for God, and, many of you are, most of you are, in many capacities, you know, got a homework club, down the road here, there's ministry to people, in, in, in a very practical way, there's, there's the children's workers here, there's the youth club, there's the bus driver, we've got, a pastor here, and, a faithful pastor's wife, and, and, and,

Sunday school workers, I know, there's people working, in all manners, in fields of endeavor, and, keep on doing that, and keep your eyes peeled, for other ways, other things, what God puts on your heart, to do, and, be willing, to, step out, of the comfort zone, be willing to say, actually, I can do something more, there's something else, that I can do, maybe I'm going to need, some retraining, ask for help, ask for training, we can point you, in the right direction, opportunities, are all, all around

us, maybe there's opportunities, you know, even, elsewhere, in other countries, God might be, putting on your heart, even, such a thing as that, and don't limit God, what he wants, you to do, amen, let's pray,

Lord of the harvest, we come to you, our master, you say, go work, today, in my vineyard, Lord we pray, help us to take that call, and learn, where it is he sent us, what, what the sphere of, of your call, is for us, what, what the opportunity, that is for us, help us Lord, to hear, that urgency, it's today, we must make a decision, Lord, burden us, with a, new, vision, a fresh, sense of, your calling, of what, what you want, us to do, because we know, our labour must be, in the Lord, otherwise it is vain, but if it is in you Lord, it is not vain, that will be, a wonderful, fruit, and Lord we pray, for each one, here tonight, especially, and others listening, at other times Lord, of, what it is, you're calling us to, that will have that sensitivity, to your Holy Spirit, we pray, that each one, might know, most importantly, that first and foremost, work, of salvation, that only you can do, in that heart, that trusts in you, as we, by faith, know you, trust you, call on you, receive that gift, Lord, for each believer, that will be, stirred, in a good way, to be, willing to, willing to, jump, into something, new even, into something, challenging, where there's an open door, even if there's many adversaries, even if there's, obstacles, and, challenges we face, that will see the open door, and will walk through it, Lord, by faith, in Jesus name, Amen.