

Theme: Get to Work

Text: Philippians 2:13 (EHV)

¹³ In fact, it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work, for the sake of his good pleasure.

Have you ever had days or times in which you needed some motivation to do your work? Maybe it's a particular task that you're dreading. Maybe you just don't like your job. Maybe you're just feeling lazy. Maybe your alarm clock goes off in the morning and you just really don't feel like getting up to do anything, much less work. Whatever the reason, there are times in all of our lives, aren't there, where we really need someone or something to push us, to motivate us to **Get to Work!**

As you know, a very special part of our worship service today is the installation of our new lower grade teacher, Isaac Schmitt. Isaac, I'm guessing that as you look ahead to your first day and first week of school you probably aren't in need of someone or something to motivate you or tell you, **Get to Work!** No, after a very eventful summer, and after all the preparations, you're probably more than ready to finally **Get to Work** and do what you've been called to do: teach! But even for you, a brand new teacher, there are going to be days and times where you're just not gonna feel like it, just not gonna want to do it, or maybe even dread it—or at least dread certain parts of your work and your calling. Again, it happens to all of us.

When we have those days and those moments do we remember what a blessing it is that we **Get to Work?** Whatever that work may be, God intends for it to be a blessing for us and for our families. Do we always remember to recognize and realize the importance of **work** in our lives and in our world? **Work** is a gift from God! It really is!

God gave Adam and Eve the job of cultivating the Garden of Eden and exercising dominion over the world even *before* sin entered the world (**Genesis 2:15**). Obviously, since the fall into sin, like everything in this fallen world, **work** is no longer the perfect gift God intended it to be—far from it! It is not always the fulfilling, beneficial, joyful service that God desires it to be. **Work** can be tedious, it can be stressful, it can be mundane—it can be downright awful at times! Yes, even for pastors and teachers; called workers in God's kingdom. But let's keep in mind that our **work**—no matter what our vocation (our “calling”) is—really is a blessing from God!

Think about it, God most often works through regular, physical means, and therefore He most often gives His earthly gifts by means of human **work**. Whenever someone does something for you—makes you a meal, cleans your house, teaches your children, preaches a sermon, or develops software for your computer to work properly so that you can, in fact **Get to Work**—be grateful for the people God uses to bless you through their **work!**

When you think about it, our **work** (and where we work) is actually one of the major means by which God gives us opportunities to show our love for Him and our neighbor, as He commands us. Martin Luther once wrote about the connection between our **work** and our love for God and our neighbor. He wrote,

- “A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and the neighbor. He lives in Christ through faith, and in his neighbor through love.”
- And, (as only Luther could put it), “Good works are not to be done for God. Rather, they must be done for one's neighbor. God does not need our good works, but our neighbor does. (Martin Luther)

It's also important to remember that **God** is at work in and through us while we are working. He really is. If we think of the **work** we do each day—whether it's at home, at school, in an office, or on an assembly line—as the “ministry” God has given us, won't that change the way we look at our work? The word “ministry” means *service*. In a very real sense, our work is the “ministry” (“service”) God has given us.

“Ministry” as defined in the New Testament ministry is any service performed by a Christian that is motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit that benefits people and brings glory to God. That is why the Apostle Paul could write, **“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).**

How can we bring **“glory to God”** through our **work**? Scripture consistently teaches that whatever our work—whether it’s saving souls through the teaching and preaching of His Gospel, or cleaning toilets—we should work with diligence, excellence, and self-sacrifice that honors Him and serves others. Jesus once said, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).** Think of how brightly Christ’s light shines in our life to the world around us when we do our work with:

- ✚ Integrity
- ✚ Diligence
- ✚ Excellence and skill
- ✚ Thankfulness
- ✚ and Love! (**“Let all that you do be done with love.” – 1 Corinthians 16:14**)

Our work becomes “service,” and in fact, “worship” to God when we dedicate it to Him and perform it to His glory and with an awareness that He is at work with us and through us.

Now, it wouldn’t really even be possible or even desirable for us to **Get to Work** if it weren’t for the fact that God has already “gotten to work” in us, and for us! Remember the words of our sermon text: **“In fact, it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work, for the sake of his good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13).**

It is God who gives you the motivation (the “want to”), and the ability to carry out the **work** He has given you today. May that be a comfort and a source of strength to all of us, and especially to you today, Isaac, as you approach the overwhelming responsibility—yet blessed privilege—of teaching Jesus’ little lambs in our school! **“It is God who is working in you, both to will and to work, for the sake of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).** Doesn’t that take the pressure off of you? He places that responsibility on Himself to give you the desire and ability to carry out His work and His purpose!

That is part of His grace! That is the most important part of His **work** for us! It has nothing to do with our work, but with Jesus’ **work**! **“Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9 EHV).** His perfect **work**, His perfect life, His innocent death on the cross to pay for our sins, His glorious resurrection from the grave—that **work** is what earned us forgiveness, God’s unending love, and eternal life with Him in heaven! In fact, God now counts our **work**—as flawed and as tainted as it is—as **“righteous;”** perfect in His sight! As the Apostle Paul once put it, **“And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness” (Romans 4:5 ESV).**

When we are struggling to find the motivation to **Get to Work**, or when our boss, or our teacher, or our parents have to tell us, **“Get to Work!”** may we always remember what a blessing and a privilege from God it is that we **Get to Work!** And so, it is My prayer for you, Isaac, and all of us, as we go about our **work** is the prayer that the Apostle Paul prayed for the Philippian Christians in the chapter that comes right before our sermon text:

“I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:3-6 NKJV). Amen.