

CTW: Zechariah 9:9-13

Reading: Philippians 2:1-14

AGD: Most of us have had a job we didn't like. There was a popular TV show called "Dirty Jobs" that took a behind-the-scenes look at some professions that are difficult and dirty.

But a dirty job seems better than not having a job. One phrase that's become politically popular is "shovel ready jobs." It's a catchy phrase to imply that when the Federal Government spends money then people will have work to do. Now, how taxing people to then pay them to work is supposed to produce a net gain is not explained, but we like the idea of people being able to get a job.

I've never met a well off person who didn't work hard. I've also met some people who were poor even though they did work hard (and saw many of them not stay poor forever).

Work builds not just income but self-respect. Even jobs that no one wants like shoveling manure or cleaning toilets build skills and puts people in a place for better work.

In our text Paul is encouraging the Philippians to get to work. He wants them to work on getting along and get busy serving one another.

Effort. Strive to be of one accord (encouraged by Christ, comforted by love, empowered by the Spirit, with affection and sympathy—have the same mind, be loving and unified)

- Strive indicates effort
- How do delays and difficulties effect your productivity?
- Do you quit easy? Do you persevere? Do you not know when to reevaluate or quit?

Motivation. Don't be motivated by selfish ambition or conceit but think of/serve others

- Look out for the interests of others (assumed we look out for our own interests)

"Have this mind" (Christ's mindset)

- Did not hold onto His status, power or glory
- But emptied Himself (set aside all that was rightfully His)
- Accepted a position of service
- Obeyed God even though it was humbling
 - Even though it led to death
 - Death on a cross

Work leads to reward. Because of His humble obedience the Father raised Him far above all other human beings

- And will humble everyone before Christ
- Everyone will confess that Jesus is Lord (recognize what He gave up)
- Humility is reversed into exaltation

The Scripture links humility to service/work and no wonder. To build anything in the world takes effort. Political kingdoms, personal kingdoms and even the Kingdom of God require work and effort.

Even this simple church service requires lots of time and effort both before and during and after.

Somebody studied. Somebody practiced. Somebody turned on the lights that someone else sent a check to pay for. Somebody gave that money to pay the bill. Today, on our fellowship meal day, lots of people spent time and money to bring something to share with others. Somebody will clean up.

- We have Ministry Teams that work every week to provide services to people inside and outside the church. Most of you are involved and some of us could stand to be more involved.

As Christians we are expected to work in service to God

Does God have a shovel ready job for you? If so, it will begin and continue in humility

- Humility is Hard—like shoveling is hard work.
- Christ was humble—He washed feet, put others ahead of Himself, picked up the shovel Himself
- Humility is death—It is digging our own grave. It is dying to what we want to pursue what God wants. It's choosing others over our self-interest
- Humility is the means to spiritual strength/power. Shoveling makes you stronger.

Oh, and you might want to consider the shovel you use---a hand trowel or corn scoop---maybe a table spoon or a track hoe---because your shovel will be what God uses to measure back to you His blessings.

- We are all busy but service God is going to cost you time
- We all have limited amounts of money but God expects us to give some away
- We only have so much energy but God commands some of it to be devoted to building His Kingdom

Jesus gave every moment, every penny and all His strength away. Jesus gave His life in service like no one else and He has been exalted above everyone else. The text says, "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient (in His service) to the point of death" [vs 8)

- I guess you could say "death was the point of His life" for if He had not laid down His life on that cross of suffering and shame we would have no access to eternal life.
- At that point He carried our sin, paid our debt and served for our benefit.
- But His death was just a point. It was not the end but a point along the way to something better.

Jesus was not afraid to work. He was building a Kingdom that is worth the sacrifice. And there is plenty to do in and for the Kingdom of God. So in humility grab a shovel and get to work.