

No Shortage Of Work

Jeremy Richards

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It's good to be here. Last night, we finished a hay field, and one of my favorite scriptures is, when the hay is removed and the tender grass shows itself, then the lambs will provide your clothing and the goats the price of a field. And it's such a beautiful thing that when the hay is cut and removed from the field and that new grass starts coming up, it's just such a beautiful thing. It's near to my heart. And so we've been cutting hay and a lot of hay, and we have different people involved in it, and it's just such a beautiful thing to see everyone working together in that.

It's a glorious thing. But after haying last night, we had one more job that I wanted to see done. We have inherited or have the use of a farm out in hump tulips. And the previous owner left a stack of these white marshmallow bales, right? It must have been, I don't know, hundreds of them, it seems like.

And Isaiah went through there and had to cut open all these bales, get the hay out, bring all the hay to a compost pile, but he left some there, and he left some piles of plastic there. And then Jeshurun went with the brush hog, right? And he went over the top of all that plastic and cut it into pieces and scattered it all over the field. And so, after haying last night, Micaiah and obed and I felt, we need to do this and get this done. And so we were picking up plastic, but we were also emptying all the last bales that are left, probably 1520 bales left of this rotten hay.

And so we had to cut open these. These rotten bales of hay. And so we were doing it. And it's hard physical work. It's difficult.

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We have to cut them open. We have to pull. Pull them together and get the hay out. And on top of that, there's snakes in the hay, right? And so as we're pulling these, there's multiple.

Sometimes in bales, there's multiple snakes in the hay, you know? And I am so grateful. I'm so thankful. I've been cleaning up people's messes the whole time I've been serving God. I spent five years of my life in Los Angeles cleaning up a mess, horrid mess.

And now here I am cleaning up other people's messes on a farm. And I am so thankful. I am so absolutely grateful that God has given me an opportunity to be involved in his work. And if that's what it is, I am so grateful he calls us into his service one way or another. And I was looking at that mess and just recognizing how much more there is to do in the fields that I have.

The thistles and the blackberries are growing up. They're spreading, and they're covering areas, and I recognize I don't have enough time to deal with all that God has given me. There is an absolute need for people to join in to this harvest. I'm not talking about the land, even though it's a good picture spiritually, God is wanting to do a work in your life and around you, and he is interested in bringing people to join with him, to yoke with him in his service. Wherever he is called you.

There is so much work to be done in your life and in the area that he's given you the opportunity to serve. Don't be discouraged when it feels like it's just ugly, difficult work. It's such a beautiful thing to put your hand to the plow and serve with Christ. And before we start, I just want to encourage you. There is no shortage of work when you walk with Jesus, and when you do, it is such a blessing to be a part of it.

The difficulties are minimized when the fruit that we see comes out of it. And so my encouragement for you would be to put your hand to the plow where God has called you to serve and do it faithfully. But we're going to be in two corinthians, and we're finishing this book, and Paul has dealt with an area very strongly and extensively regarding spiritual authority. And now he is going towards the conclusion of this book,

and he's wanting to leave individuals with a certain experience or feeling. He is wanting to leave a taste in their mouth of what.

Of what the christian gospel is, of what they should be experiencing. Even though he's dealt with something that has been difficult to talk about, to deal with, he's wanting them to leave them in a certain way. So we're going to start in chapter 13 of verse eleven.

In chapter 13 of two corinthians, verse eleven. Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort. Be of one mind.

Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. So let's just pray together. O father.

Lord, we do thank you, Lord. We appreciate that opportunity to serve with you, Lord. But we also recognize, Lord, the tremendous opportunities that there are around us, and just asking you to open our eyes to see them, Lord, to encounter them Lord, aggressively, Lord. And I pray to see the fruit that comes from walking with you, Lord. We're just grateful.

In Jesus name, amen. Okay, so Paul has come to the end of this encouragement, and he says in verse eleven, finally, finally. And in some ways it feels like. It feels like finally to me, it taken him a good chapter, a good few chapters to deal with this issue. But he's coming to his farewell.

This is the way he wants to leave his impression on this group of people, that after having dealt with something so important and maybe even so difficult, he wants to leave them in a certain way and just want to recognize, and as we go through this, that your encounters with people, your effect, the effect of your life upon them, is leaving them with an impression. Your life, every encounter, the situations that you deal with, the difficulties, the problems, you're going to leave an impression on people. Your life is going to affect them some way. And Paul is saying, hey, look, I want my life to affect a group of people in a certain way. We see this in the words in verse eleven, it says farewell in English.

He is wanting his life to leave their life with a blessing. We see this, and I like the word goodbye. Goodbye in the old English means God be with you. That even in our farewell address to someone, it should be the desire of us as individuals to leave the impression of God's nature upon the people we come encounter with. When we say goodbye, it's not just say, I'm seeing you later.

We want to leave them with something. We want to bring them to a position greater than they had before they had an encounter with us. I'm sure someone has had an encounter with somebody before where you were not encouraged. I don't know if anyone's been there that you felt violated or discouraged or disheartened or ugly in some way. Right?

We've all had those kind of things. Paul is wanting to leave these people, even though it's just a letter, with a feeling that they have come in contact with an individual who cares for them. Right? And before starting, I would just like to say that you and I encounter people every single day. It should always be our desire to see them lifted up in some way.

Right? I'm sure it might even be this week that you had an encounter with somebody and recognized that your selfishness got in the way of lifting a person up to where you could have if it weren't for whatever sin that was plaguing your heart. Amen. That there is left instead of a blessing, a burden. Right, a curse instead of something fruitful.

And I think that should grieve our hearts in some way, that they are left hurting in some way when instead they could have been left healed. All right, well, in order to do this, Paul is wanting. There's some things that he is going to encourage them to be in order for them to be lifted up. And I think that this should also be our goal when we have encounters with other people. Right.

This is what he wants to see in them in order for this blessing to come upon them. The end goal is in the end of this verse eleven, it says, and the God of love and peace be with you. He wants to leave people with the experience of God's love and peace on

their lives. I believe that your heart along with mine would say, you know, that's what I want in my life. So let's look at this in verse eleven, this farewell.

It says, in verse eleven, it says, become complete. The first one we're gonna look at, it says, become complete. In order for this blessing to really have an impact, he encourages people to become complete. That is an area of saying that you and I are not necessarily complete. There is a work that Paul is encouraging and God wants to do in the life of every individual.

He is encouraging people to become complete. There is a work that needs to be done. There is something that has to become accomplished in order for us to fulfill that plan which God has for our lives. It says, become complete now. It is definitely God who works in us to do and to will his good pleasure.

It is ultimately that work of God which he is doing in us which causes us to become complete. But is we have an active part in that work. It's not right just to necessarily say, well, it doesn't seem to be that God is doing anything in my life, so I'm just going to sit and waste my time, right? If he were wanting to do a work in me, then he would be doing it. But in the meantime, I'm going to do whatever I do while I wait for him to do the work, right?

No, he's saying, hey, there is a work that in us that's happening, and we are an active part in it. So how do we know if God is doing that work at us? We see this work in a couple different places. One is in two. Peter and I would just like to think about signs that God is doing a work in our life.

What are they? One of this, before we go there, but one of this kind of this list of the work that we're encouraged to be involved in is in two Peter, chapter one, verse five, it says, but also for this very reason, giving all diligence. Add to your faith, virtue to virtue, knowledge to knowledge, self control to self control, perseverance to perseverance, godliness to godliness, brotherly kindness to brotherly kindness, love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is an idea that there is an active, real work

happening in the lives of each of us.

That if you have come to experience the grace of Jesus Christ, that he is absolutely at work in your life. It is my experience that he is much more active in that work than you are.

That that work which he, which God the Father is wanting to elevate you to that fullness of the experience of the Holy Spirit in our lives. That he is much more an active participant in that work than you are. When I look at the farming work and how much has to be done, I feel that the Lord is that great gardener, absolutely interested in seeing his harvest come to pass, and he is looking for laborers in that harvest with him. That work we are called to is to add to these things. When we see that there is a lack in any of these areas, it is our calling to become engaged in seeing this thing come to pass.

It says, for this very reason, giving all diligence. Add to your faith, virtue to virtue. Knowledge to knowledge. Self control. The signal that God is doing a work in this area of our life is when we see a lack in these areas.

You don't have to wait for a sign from heaven when you see you're lacking virtue, when you see that you don't have any self control, when you hear yourself cursing, when you feel yourself responding in a negative way, when you see the sinful aspect of your character come to the surface, it's a sign from God that this is an area that he's working on. Right? So many times we're discouraged when we sin or when you see a sinful nature come to light. No, that is God's signpost indicating that this is an area that he's working at. He is graciously bringing that area to light and is calling us to engage with him in that area.

Another area that this is pointed out is in Romans.

In Romans, chapter five, verse three, it says not only that, but we also glory in tribulations. Knowing that tribulations produces perseverance. Perseverance, character, character, hope. A hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us. Here we see

another list of an area in which we are encouraged to become complete in.

And that completion brings a fullness of the experience of the walk with God through the Holy Spirit here. And it is an area that starts with persecution. When we feel ourselves being undermined or being opposed by those around us. It should be seen as an opportunity which God is giving us in order that we might become complete. How many people oftentimes are discouraged when they're persecuted?

Discouraged when we've been given an opportunity to walk alongside Christ in the path that leads to our completeness? If only we view these opportunities in the way that God did, I believe that you and I would be further along the path towards completeness. This has become complete in verse eleven. Go back to second corinthians. The next thing we're going to look at, it says, be of good comfort.

Be of good comfort. We as Americans are people who know all about comfort, right? But the astonishing thing is that whenever we hear and Jesh came back from Uganda, right? And the astonishing thing that I hear oftentimes is the story. It goes, seems like every time the same way, a short term mission person goes out and they encounter a situation that is extraordinarily difficult.

And Jess was talking about these young Mendez whose parents had been killed. There's been horrible atrocities happened to their relatives. They've been yanked out of the country, of their birth and displaced into Uganda, living in a refugee camp with no opportunities, the same food day after day, not much opportunities for schooling or any type of comfort. And the thing is, they say the same thing, you know, they have so little and do you know what the next word is? But what do they say?

They're so happy. We Americas are so appealingly comfortable physically, but so uncomfortable spiritually. We are, it seems to be emotionally, a more needy people than people who are astonishingly needy. Because it may be that our comfort is not built on the right thing. We see in John, chapter 15, in Jesus prayer in the garden, John 14, we see, what should our comfort be built on?

Right? Comfort. We love comfort, but there is a thing that is actually real comfort that leads to this love of God making an effective work in our life. What is the comfort that we're to be given? In chapter 14, verse 25 of John, it says these things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things. And to bring your remembrance. All things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.

Not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid. You have heard me say to you, I am going away and coming back to you. If you love me, you would rejoice because I said, I am going to the Father, for my father is greater than I. Here we see the source of the Christian's comfort.

It is based entirely on one thing. The comforter that Jesus would send, that we should be grateful that he is going to send. He is going to lead us into the truth of all things. But he's also going to give us comfort that Jesus is going to come back again. Right?

Your comfort, ultimately, if we're to be comforted in a way that encourages us, is dependent upon the promise that Jesus is coming back again. I would just like to say that there's a few things that you can depend on, right? That we want in our life that we look forward to. And I'm not going to say that all of them are bad, but we can look about Jesus promises and his claim that he is going to come back, that he is going to return. A lot of things can be endured if our eyes are kept focused.

The finality of Jesus promises. A lot of difficult situations can be cheerfully handled, a lot of grievous maladies can be endured, a lot of work can be accomplished, and physical energy seem to be expended as long as our eyes are focused on a prize. This says that Jesus would come back. Be of good comfort. Don't let the cares and the weights of this world drag you down.

Don't be discouraged by all the negative things that are surrounding you. The bad news, be of good comfort. Jesus promises to come back. If you want to see that work of God in our lives to become complete, we have to focus and make sure our comfort

is based on Jesus coming back. Amen.

We'll go back to second corinthians and keep going through this. Be of good comfort. It says, be of one mind. Be of one mind. This is not necessarily saying that you and I have to all think the same way.

There's various different persuasions and stuff, but it does mean that we are to follow along the same road. One of the beautiful scriptures, it says, blessed are they. When brethren dwell together in unity, there is a beautifulness. When we are all in one mind focused on the same thing. It says, it's like the precious oil upon the head coming down and dripping down off the head onto the, to the garments of Aaron.

There is a priestly blessing that comes when God's people are motivated in the same direction. I don't know if you have anybody has ever been part of a group before where everyone was working together for the same cause when no one was trying to shirk work or get out of thing or backbite. There's such a blessing when people dwell together in unity. One of the things that attacks that it says, live in peace, live in peace. And one of the things that attacks that unity is contentions with each other.

Right? And we are all in the situations of encountering these contentions. And we're encouraged here to live in peace. When we're have an experience with someone, we're given biblical admonition to deal with those in a good way, and we're given some instruction on that. We're going to close with the last of this.

And it says, the God of love and peace will be with you in our fellowship here in the meeting together with people that we have from different backgrounds. It's my prayer that you want the God and love of peace to be with you, to be with you. When God's people are walking with him. We see such a beautiful thing happen. And that's my encouragement for us today.

In Paul's conclusion, farewell, God be with you. The last two things just to look at, and I'm so grateful for in verse twelve and 13, there is a physical aspect to this unity. It says, greet one another with a holy kiss. Now, I am an individual who not necessarily extremely physical. Right before I met Stacy, I probably didn't like to give anyone a

hug, right?

But recognizing in a body of believers, there is an appropriate physical response to the journey we are sharing together. There is a communion between people of different background where it is right to express a physical affection towards each other. Paul says, I think to Timothy that sisters are to be treated with all purity. There is an appropriate physical affection that we demonstrate towards other people who are sharing this journey together. And it is different for how and who you're relating to.

But to know there is a beautiful physical affection that we are. And I do so much appreciate being challenged in that way to show some physical and appropriate physical affection towards others. It says, greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. I'm just going to close there.

And my encouragement to everyone here is encourage a desire in your life and in our fellowship for the God of love and peace to be with you, to be expressed through you and to encourage those around you. All the saints greet you. Let's pray.

O holy father. Lord, we do come to you, Lord. And first of all, I want to thank you, Lord, for the journey that you're calling each one of us on. The Lord we appreciate your involvement in our life. We thank you for it.

We thank you for calling us out of darkness into the kingdom of your beloved son. Lord we appreciate it, Lord. In this desire to leave other people, Lord, in a place that's better than when we encountered them. I pray you would just encourage us in our dealings with people, Lord. That we would always be.

Lord. Seasoned with salt. Lord. A light shining. Lord.

And we ask forgiveness for the times and the encounters we had when we didn't display that. Lord, we thank you in Jesus name.