

“Called to Work”
By Director of Fellowships Rod Williams
Sunday, February 28th, 2016

Amen. You may be seated. What a mighty time of worship this morning. I know God definitely moved, and is still moving.

Let's have a word of prayer. Lord, God, as we come into this portion of your service, God, we ask You to lead, guide, direct. Lord, to feed us with that You would have us to be fed with, God. And, Lord, that we take what You have, and go ahead and use it; go forth and declare Your Gospel message. Lord, that we would go out and share with confidence and boldness, through the Holy Ghost, to see souls saved. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. So, how's everybody doing this morning? Fantastic, right? Okay. That gave us a little time to sit down, but I would like, right now, for everybody to stand up, and if we could get John 15, if everybody would read with me, verses nine through fifteen together. Is everybody ready to go? Hold up, hold up. Is everybody ready to go? One more time: Is everybody ready to go? Okay, because I was just getting ready to walk out the door. Get it? Out the door? But, let's read these Scriptures, in all seriousness.

John 15:9-15 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

Amen. You may be seated.

You know, Jesus was talking to His disciples about love. You know, He had chosen the twelve, He taught the twelve, He loved the twelve, and, when he died, the commission was given to them to carry the Gospel message throughout the world. We are those disciples, today. We are those disciples, and we should count it all joy that we do what we do, you know? And, the title of this message, it's called, "Called to Work." I know your theme has been, "Receive Ye the Holy Ghost," right? Okay. Oh, and, by the way, so everybody can feel comfortable and unfold their arms, I believe in talking to one another. I believe in us working together, and participating, because we all have something to offer. Okay? Now, I was sitting there thinking as you guys were singing, another person that had a great impact in my life, coming up in ministry, Brother Kirk Orelup. I was stationed down in Charlotte, and we had a fellowship down there, and, my constant communication was Brother Kirk. He shared with me, in fact, at that time, remember the old welcome book, Kirk? So, we was going through that, and making communication and so forth, and he and another brother came down to visit me, and, I guess, right now, I'm doing the job you used to do, Kirk, is that true? Kirk says that's true.

So, this call to work principle—I'm not going to be behind the odium, I'm going to be moving all about, so—we're talking about being called to work. God called us to so a work, right? Okay, all right, relax, I'm out here. I don't have a lot of experience with the pulpit; I like to talk. But know this, right here, He called us to work, for what purpose? For His glory, right? You go to work on your job to do what? Get a paycheck. To do what? Pay the mortgage, come on, food, car payment, what else? To live life; what else? Recreation; what else? So many different things, right, that you go to earn that paycheck for? So, for all these things that we have, that we go to work to pay for, who goes to work, and says, "You know

what, boss? Today, I'm going to sit around my office and my desk and do nothing," anybody? What would happen? Get fired; get canned. What else? No paycheck, no house, no car, no food, no everything, right? So, we'd lose all that, okay? Now we can relate that right there, let's look at the spiritual aspect of it. We're called to work, and when the Holy Ghost come, and says, "Hey, you know what, Rod? I need you to go pray with somebody." "Not today, God, I'm still tired. I just flew in, okay?" "Go have fellowship with that brother." "Not today, I want to go paintballing." I've got to say stuff that I know y'all don't do so don't offend nobody. "Hey, Rod, get up and study." "Not today, God; not today." "Hey, go do this." "Not today," right? We may not verbally come out and say it, but, in our actions, what are we saying? Right? Now, all those things are vital to ministry, right? The prayer, study, the fellowship? So, outside of everybody but me, how many, every time the Holy Ghost has spoken to you, you got up and did what It told you to do? Anybody? So, I'm the only who does that. Good.

But, there is a serious thing to listening to the Holy Ghost. Very serious. I'm going to share something with you that I hadn't shared but maybe to a few people. I remember when I was in the Navy, I was a second class at the time, E-5, and I was going to a school, and my instructor was a first class, and God was dealing with me about inviting him out to church. Invite him out to church. So, I'm looking at— this is how my mind worked— I'm an E-5, he's a first class, so that intimidation kind of crept in there, all right? So God was constantly dealing with me, He was on me, but I didn't do it. So, Monday morning came up, and, all the students are in the class, and we looked around, and I said, "Hey, where's our instructor?" They said, "He's in jail, because he murdered somebody." And, I felt so bad, even to this day, it sticks to me that God was asking me to go invite this person out to church; that might have prevented him from killing somebody and being locked up. True story. True story. And I look at it, today, as that blood is on my hands, because I didn't listen to the Holy Ghost.

Now, let's look at Matthew twenty, verse one through sixteen.

Matthew 20:1-5 *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.*

Okay, we're going to stop right there. Now, we've got this situation: it says, for the Kingdom of Heaven is what? Or, Heaven is like unto who? The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early to hire laborers to work in his vineyard. So, we've got this man, the householder; he has a vineyard. And he calls people to his vineyard, and they agree to work in his vineyard for a penny. Back in that time, it would have been a Dinero, which, today, is about twenty cents. So, he went out again, and got some people, about the third hour, he saw them standing idle in the marketplace, and then he found some in the sixth and the ninth, and then he said, "Hey, whatever is right, I will give that to you." Right? Now, let's look at it like this right here. Let's say, Christ, God called us, right? And He said, "Hey! I've got a work for you to do. I want you to come into my vineyard." And that vineyard being the souls that are around us. Right? We're working that vineyard. Some of us have been here for quite a while, in the ministry; you've carried a lot of the burden, you know? You've done a lot of work, you've been faithful throughout the years. And the next generation has come along and benefitted from the fruits of your labor, and so forth, the next generation. As we did earlier, when everybody stood up with thirty years, twenty, ten, and so forth like that, you know? We're all called to work for God. Anybody disagree? Anybody disagree? Okay. Now, in your job you have what? A 401 what? 401K? I've got a 401H, because I don't have anything. But the reward that we'll get now, in our retirement is what? We're striving for Heaven, right? For the Kingdom? Okay. Everybody's kind of like, "I don't know if I'm following this right, here."

Matthew 20:6-10 *And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.*

Okay, so we've got that eleventh hour crowd, right? "Lord, I've been toiling, and I've been doing it. I've been going on and on and on, and, here I am. What's in it for me? What's my toll? What am I going to get from you?" Right? But we know that these laborers, the first group, agreed for one penny. Then the other group, he spoke with them, "Whatever is," what? Whatever is right. Because we can't look at it and say, "Because I've been in ministry for so long," or, "Because I'm so young," right? We can't look at that, you know, because God gives us our different gifts, our callings—right?—to be used for His glory, to be used in His vineyard, in this world, to see people come to Christ. So, now, it's tie for the reckoning, to come together, and, here you have it where the group that carried the burden, see this group here, "Hey, they're getting a penny, they're getting a penny, they're getting a penny, so we know we're going to get more than what they got. We was here longest, you know, so we're going to get more." And I often think about this story, and I was just being humorous with myself, and I said, "What if they were the first ones, and they saw other groups coming in, and they said, "You know, we can slack off, kind of, because we've been here a little bit, and kind of wait it out." And the eleventh hour, "Hey, we've got to hustle, because, you know, guess what? We haven't had a job in so long, we've got to do what we can; we might lose this." And, so, I got to thinking about that, how are we when it comes to our walk with God? It is serious? Is it lackadaisical? Is it, "Hey, I'm riding off my merits, of what I've done for God throughout the years?" But, every day, we've got to be doing something for God. Every day, we've got to be digging in. Every day. You know?

Matthew 20:11-16 *And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*

But many be called, and few are chosen. "Hey, wait a minute! I'm supposed to get more! I've been around more! I'm saved! What's up with these new people getting all these things? God, don't I deserve more?" Jesus tells us what? His ways are not our ways, right? (Isaiah 55:8) So, think about this right here: Does God owe us anything? No. Same thing, right? Does anybody else owe you anything? But we do have that what? That entitlement mentality. "I want my respect; I want my due! Why is such-and-such doing this, and I'm not doing this?" Why is this person...? Come on, now. I'm talking—I go through the same things. You know? "Why are they able to do this, and I'm not able to?" Right? But we already went over what the Bible tells us, what? We should love one another, right? (John 13:34) And, what? We're one body, yet many members? (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) Everybody has their part and place, you know? The eye can't look at the ear or the nose and so on. I've got the Scriptures to back me up, but I just want to let everybody know I'm in this together with you, right? How many people here every get angry? Frustrated? Sad? Cry? Laugh? Love? Hate? All of us, right? Good; I'm with the right people, now. I don't have to talk so much; I'm with the right people.

We had a message, a while back, in Norfolk, and it was quite humorous. I did it like this right here, I said, "What if—" we got that marquee, "Christian Fellowship" with the church times and all that, like what we used to have at 621—I said, "What if, just, what if, we had a sign out there that said, 'Sinner's Anonymous Meeting Wednesday at 7:30, Sunday at 10?'" And I thought about it, I said, "Man, wouldn't the approach be different?" Like, now, we come to church, we wear a suit and tie, we walk in all straight-forward, like, "Hey, we're all good," right? Now, if you go into that meeting—you know, you want everybody to see you going to church, you know, but, if you go into that meeting, you're probably looking around, like, "Oh, man, are any of my friends driving by to see me walking to this right here?" It would be a different approach, right? Let's be realistic. I know I'd be looking... Think about your friends, "Hey, didn't I see you the other night going to that Sinner's Anonymous meeting?" You know, and, now I've got to contemplate how I want to answer this, right? "Um, you may have. You may have." But, we are glad to let people see that we are going to church, but, how about allowing people to see that we are living for God? There's a difference. There's a difference. It's like, when you see that sign, "Sinner's Anonymous," you say, "Hey, I got a problem, and I'm trying to get it solved." It's like we come to church. We all got problems. This is the hospital for the sick; the hospital for our souls. So, I said to myself, "If my friend was to see me, and I met him at work, and he asked me that question, I would say, "You know what? Yes, you did see me. I have an issue. I have sin in my life, and I know that this is a place where there are people that had the same issue that I did, and they can relate to me, and help me overcome." Right? So, church, don't be ashamed to live for God. Don't be ashamed to hold that banner up that says, "I'm a Christian." I ain't saying the sign that says, "I'm a Christian," but the banner. Issues in the heart and mind. People should see us and know that Christ is living in us.

Now, of those five groups, there's only one group that felt like they got slighted. But, then the householder said, "Look, I did thee no wrong. Did we not agree for this?" Right? When we got saved, who did we make our commitment to? Jesus, right? So, what else matters, you know? We're going to get our reward. Some on this side, and some on the other side. But let's look at this as it relates to ministry today. Let's look at the different groups that we have in ministry. Okay, I'm going to call a few groups that we have in ministry, and please stand when you hear it. We have Bible Study teachers in the ministry. Bible Study teachers, stand up. Look around, church, this is one group that we have in the ministry. We have Children's Church. If you work in Children's Church—they're probably in Children's Church, right? Or have ever worked in Children's Church, okay? We have any teens in here? Any teens? Teenagers, teenagers, all right. Wow. It's been so long, I forgot how to be a teenager. It's been a while. So, anyway, thank y'all for being in service, and, amen. All right. People that work the sound equipment. Media Arts. Seniors. Amen, amen, amen. Y'all are the ones that provide us with that wisdom and experience and, you know, that like, I look at them and say, "If they can do it, I can do it, too." Ken, I like that suit you have on, can I borrow it? Music ministry. Whether you're in the band playing music, singing songs, there's another group we have. Men's ministry. All right, quit you like men; get up. All right. Women's ministry; men, sit down. All right; all right. Women's ministry. Okay. Military ministry. Okay. All right, have a seat. Do y'all have an altar team? Do you have people working with advanced education, the new Cornerstone course that we have in the ministry now? Okay. Ushers, stand up. Y'all are probably like, "Woo!" Anyway, ushers assist the leadership. Visitation; you that go out and visit people. Nursing homes, hospitals, so forth. All right. People who provide people with rides to come to church. Okay. Thank you. Do we have any fathers out here? Fathers? All right. Sit down. Got any mothers? All right, mothers. Thank you. Sit down. Got any sons and daughters? All right, all right, all right. Thank you very much, you can have a seat. I just wanted to make sure I didn't miss nobody; that's my failsafe. But, we have all this that God has given to us to work together. Right? To work together. We shouldn't have to feel like we're in this alone. But there will be times when we feel alone. Look around you. We've got people who are doing different things in the ministry, but, yet, we're one body, we're brothers and sisters, and we're called to do that work. Right? Anybody ever—let me try to put this the right way—has anybody

ever worked beside somebody you don't like? Anybody? Me? I'm going to put up two hands. It's good, it's all good, right? So—hey, I'm going to tie it in right now—how does it feel to work beside somebody you don't like? Come on, be honest. Terrible, miserable, right? What else? Agitating, frustrating. What else? Challenging. What else? Restless. What else? Character-building. I like that. What else? What's that, Matthew? You've got to be overly cautious. So, it's not a comfortable thing; it's uncomfortable, right? But, as you continue to work with that person, and come to find out how they think, and what they're about, because, now, I'm reversing it, because we're Christians, right? So, we're supposed to be able to find a way to work together. So, as you get to working with them a little bit ore, and being patient, and praying, and learning about them, you come to find out, "Wow! We're pretty much the same!" Anybody ever done that? "We're pretty much the same. It's just that I didn't know them." You know? I remember, when I was in the Navy, I had a friend of mine—we became friends; in the beginning we couldn't stand each other—but, he taught me a very valuable lesson, and his lesson was this: He said, "No matter how good you think you are, you're only as good as the weakest person." And, that stuck with me today, because I know what God was using him for; God was using him to help me with my arrogance. And, I stick to that, today; I still remember it plain as day. I think about that sometimes in ministry; I think about how sometimes we can let our spiritual arrogancy to get in the way of the ministry that God has called us to do. You know, we have to realize that we're in this together, and that, guess what? The weak are needed. In fact, the weak have what? More honor. Because Paul talked about, "When I am weak, that's when I'm—" what? Strong (2 Corinthians 12:10). That's when I'm strong. Okay. Y'all got quiet as a mouse right now; what's the deal? Good gracious! (Pulling a pen out of his pocket and dropping it on the floor) Okay, I heard it drop.

All right, church? Do you know we have to share the Gospel in our homes? We have to share the Gospel on our jobs? We have to share the Gospel at our schools? We have to share the Gospel in our community? We have to share the Gospel on military bases? Military ships, boats, regular sailors? On airplanes? In foreign countries? At restaurants? At Avalon? Oh, okay; everybody's, "What?" While we're shopping? Everywhere we are, we take the Holy Ghost with us. We should seek those opportunities, not only to live the Gospel, but to share the Gospel. Everybody still with me? Are we called to work? All right.

Now, there are going to be some times that God is really going to challenge us. He's got to put us in situations in front of people who just don't like us. Okay? One of my favorite examples of this is Ananias, when God told him to go share with who? Go share with Paul, right? And what was Ananias' big beef, what he was trying to put before God? What did he say? "This guy *kills* people! Haven't you heard? This guy kills people! And you want *me* to go!" "Yeah, I want you to go. I want you to tell him that he's going to suffer for—" what? "—for My name's sake." For His name, right? So, I got to thinking about this: Here it is, this man who's killing the church, going in and causing havoc. Right? "And you want me to share with this guy?" I'm going to get real serious about this now, so that it has weight. "You want me to share with this guy who killed my wife, killed my children, killed my uncle, killed my aunt, killed my mother, and You want me to share with this guy?" That's an impact. That's, you know, rusting in God. Okay? And, then, when he goes on to share with him—right?—now, what do we have today? We've got the New Testament, which Paul pretty much wrote what? The majority of the New Testament. So that person that you may be irritated, you may be fearful about, that God, the Holy Ghost is leading you to talk to them, do it. Do it. We've got examples in the Scriptures for it. There will be obstacles in the way. There will be obstacles. There will be some trials and tribulations that we have to deal with. There will be some persecutions. There will be some misunderstandings. There will be some sickness. There will be some disappointments. There will be depression. There will be some anger. So what? That's life. Because—what?—greater is He that is in me than he that is—what?—in the world (1 John 4:4), okay? Like I said, we're just talking to each other this morning. You know, I'm in the same boat. But, knowing that, through the Holy Ghost, He can help us overcome all things. Through the Holy Ghost, He can help us overcome all things.

Church, why do we live for God? To do what? “Uh, to go to Heaven.” Come on, now. Church, I guarantee you, right now, I could go to a gym right now, and I’m not talking like an NBA Sports team gym, a regular, high school, elementary gym, and you ask them what they’re there for, “(excitedly) Hey, I’m ready to play some ball, how about y’all?” And we come to church, “(robotically) Heaven. Yes, I’m living for God today. Um, where is my suit and tie? Oh, we got to stand up and pray. Oh, we got to sing. The worship team is going to tell me to raise my arms.” Come on, now. Does that sound like I want to be a part of that? Ain’t no way in the world. If I were to hear that, you know what? I’d probably say, “You know what? Here’s my dollar; holler at me when you get done.” But, church, people need to know that we’re excited about the Gospel. We need to know—just think about this right here: You have the most important gift there is in life, and you got it from the Creator. Why not be excited about it? I guarantee you, if I catch you watching a basketball game, football game, baseball, Rachel Ray, come on, women, give me some more things, One Life to Live, General Hospital, huh? All My Children... Everybody’s so quiet now. “You’re not supposed to be talking about that. You’re supposed to be in the Bible, giving us Scriptures and stuff.” Hey, we’re just talking this morning. We’re family, right? So, if you get all excited about those things, how much more should we be excited about living for God? You know?

How many people in this room have had somebody come up to them and say, “You’re a Christian, aren’t you?” Okay. How did it make you feel? Very humbling, right? Sometimes, great, like, “Thanks, God, I needed that right there. How many of you have ever, maybe you’ve been in an accident somewhere, or, someplace you weren’t supposed to be, and somebody came up to you and said, “Hey, I thought you were supposed to be a Christian!” Anybody? Come on. Come on, come on. Right? So, you’ve got one that was exuberant, and the other was, “Oh, my goodness! My testimony! Lord, forgive me please; let me make this right.” Because we fall down, right? Right? But if you go to God, repent, make it right, say, “Okay, God, let’s move forward.” Okay? Now, this reward that we’re waiting for, it’s going to be a good reward. It’s going to be a good reward. It’s going to be something where—guess what?—no more sickness, no more crying, no more trials or tribulations, no more disappointments, no more having to go to work. Oh, man, wow! But, on thing we’ve got to realize: In order to get this reward, we can’t get weary in the race. We’ve got to keep going. We’ve got to keep pressing forward, okay? Because, church, I’m looking forward to that day when we all come together in that beautiful place where we rejoice together. We won’t be separated by miles, countries, continents, or anything of that nature. You know, we’ll be with our Maker; we’ll be with our Father. So, I want to encourage everybody that, each and every day, when you get up, Thank God for, that day, allowing you to get up. And you ask God, “What would You have me to do today?” You ask God, “Hey, God, keep the goal on my mind, of making it to Heaven; why I do what I do.” Because, if each one of us do this, and we see it—guess what?—it’s going to cause more people to want to be a partner.

I just want to say thank you, church, for your time and patience. I love you all, and this is great. I’m telling you, this is great. We serve a great God, right? Let’s give the Lord a praise.