

Sermon: September 4, 2011

"Our job"

I think a lot of labor and work ... the jobs we do ... how it kind-of "defines" who we are. I remember my days on the school board ... and the first time I was involved in contract negotiations with the teachers' union. There had been a strike a few years before I got elected to the board. This made relations between the teachers and the board rather rocky.

I remember sitting at the table.

The "union guy" made it clear ----- we want a 17% increase to make up for all the years we've been under-paid. (I said --- I'd like 17 percent, too!@!!)

Our school board was no help. They were still bitter ... so, they were offering a measly 2 percent.

I was embarrassed. So, I got up and kind-of "fussed and fumed."

Look ---- we are supposed to be on the same page. It's about our kids ... respecting them, and the teachers who instruct them. We know it's not going to be 17% ... we know it's not going to be 2% ... let's be honest and simply be fair. We know it will be somewhere around 5-6% ... so, LET'S GET REAL!!

We settled for 5.5 percent.

Work is about respect. Life is about respect.

In so many ways ... we are defined by the "work" we do.

Our job. The way we walk. How we spend our time. The kind-of employee we are.

The kind of boss we are. The way we treat others. How we handle it when someone makes a mistake how we handle it when we are the ones who mess-up.

LOOK AT THE LOVE BUCKET TODAY.

Two physically challenged adults live with spina bifida. They have trouble finding a job. So, what do they do? *They start their own company. And they open up opportunities for other physically challenged adults to have meaningful and productive work.*

How about Frankie Frech? Her long battle with cancer makes her unable to "work" a traditional job.

But in her world ... she has a job ----- namely, INSPIRING US!!

She needs a ride to her daily radiation treatments. Pity party? ... no way. She says: WHAT A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE FROM CHURCH!@!!

Frankie makes people feel so important and welcome ... the other day, she and her ride drove a mile past where she has her treatments, because they were too busy talking and visiting!@!!

It's hard today.

Yes ---- every person deserves the opportunity to get up and go to a meaningful job.

Every person deserves the chance to work and make a difference.

Each us needs a sense of fulfillment in our lives.

But you know what it's like. You invest 1000's of dollars in an education ... and you keep hearing the word "no" when you try to get a job in your field. You want to teach ... no job. You are a union electrician ... but you are way down on the list. You need to feed your family ... but your minimum-wage job doesn't cut it.

Let us remember.

Every job has dignity.

Every job has a place in "God's kingdom."

Each person ... yes, we have a soul, craving to be fulfilled.

Our calling ... each day ... is to build each other up.
In the words of the 2nd lesson today ----- the only thing we owe in life is TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.
We need to lay aside “works of darkness” ... and put on the ARMOR OF LIGHT.

Why don't we do this?

Many of you know from experience living in a negative environment just wears us down.
When you work in a place ... where you have to be afraid of making a mistake ...
When you live in a family ... where you are defined by what you've done wrong ...
When you play on a team ... and you know you'll be “yanked” if you make an error ...
It's not good. We lose the freedom to be ourselves.

As tired as I am of negativity and jealousy and anger ... I'm equally excited about the power of Jesus' spirit.
It's more real than ever.
His gentleness and love are always in the air.

Tuesday night our gym will be full.
150 developmentally disabled adults will be here ----- to bring us dinner ... and to say “thanks” for a
wonderful summer of fun-fests. What is it about our relationship with St. Coletta's????
It's Everett walking into church late ... waving his hand ----- “Hey, Pastor Don,
are we having Communion today???”
They come here on Tuesdays ... they come back on Sundays ----- why?
Because here they are not disabled. They are us ... and we are them.
Same spirit.
Same Lord.

Yes ---- lay aside “works of darkness” ... put on “the armor of light.”
Together ----- we can make the world a better place.

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