

Fulfilling Your Calling

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of diligently fulfilling God's calling and the serious consequences of negligence in His work.

Duration: 1:03:55

Scripture: Proverbs 18:9, Isaiah 6:3, Jeremiah 42:10, Jeremiah 48:10, Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not being lazy or slack in our work, especially when it comes to God's work. He references Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commands his disciples to go into the world and make disciples, teaching them to obey his teachings. The preacher highlights the need to recognize and understand the work that God has entrusted to us and to diligently carry it out with all our strength. He warns against being negligent in our work, as it is considered destructive and brings curses upon us, as mentioned in Proverbs 18:9 and Jeremiah 48:10.

Transcript

We'll read a well-known portion from Jeremiah, chapter 42, 48, chapter 48 in Jeremiah. Verse 10, Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently, and cursed be the one who restrains his sword from blood. I'd like us to take this verse word by word, like when you slaughter an ox, that you cut up the pieces and you put them all in one place.

Or all separately, look at each one separately. And as I said, it's a very well-known portion of scripture. And even though we may know it very well, it would be very wrong if we just take it lightly because we've got used to it.

For this is a word that is very sharp, it goes very deep. It's a serious warning. Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently or who is slack in doing the Lord's work.

And cursed be the one who restrains his sword from blood. I just want to remind you that if you read the Old Testament and you read a portion that refers to bloodshed, it's not to be taken in that literal sense, but in a spiritual sense. Now, the first portion, cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently.

Now, let's just try and bring it close to home. We who are here, how do we treat God's work? Now, remember, if you go out here and you're one who is slack in the Lord's work or you're negligent about the

Lord's work, you will receive a curse. Now, let's go to the very first word here, cursed.

Cursed. Now, in the Bible, when it speaks of someone who's cursed, it refers to someone whom God has judged in a very, very strict way. In other words, he is threatening a person and warning him that if he doesn't repent, he will take him to judgment where his wrongdoing will be judged very severely.

So, someone who is cursed is someone who has got to do with God himself. And God will pass his final judgment on that person and he'll come down on that person in his wrath. Cursed.

Now, today, I don't want to just preach at you, but I want to teach you. And I say that, of all things, that's the thing to be feared most and you need to run away from more than anything else, and that is the wrath of God and his curse. Some people are afraid of snakes.

They've run for their lives if there's a snake in front of them. But today I say, that should be nothing to you, to stand before a snake. Here's something you need to run away from with all your might.

That's the curse of God. Or maybe it's a roaring lion you fear most. One that stands in front of you, ready to devour you.

Now, here's something you need to fear 10,000 times more than that lion. Someone was once told, you should pray. He said, well, I can't pray.

Now, if you can't pray or don't know how to pray, then I'm going to say to you, today you should learn to pray, Lord, keep me, protect me from your curse. God's curse is the most terrible thing. Now, that is about the curse.

Now, cursed be the one who does the Lord's work, Jehovah's work. The Lord's work. What is the Lord's work? This work which you need to do so diligently.

In Hebrew, there's the word melaka. And it says, cursed is the one who does negligently melaka, referring to the Lord's work. The Lord's work, that which God has been given or given by God.

If you apply for a job, be it on a farm or any business, you will go and if you accept it, you will be given a job description. You will be told what is expected of you personally. And so, it is here.

The Lord's work is that work which the Lord has given you to do. We had the Matric Farewell here at DSS these days. And they were asked what they were planning to do in the following year.

And some said what they thought. Others said, well, they weren't sure. Others said they were still praying about it.

Now, you can say that and they can say that when it refers to the work of the hands. Just their normal job. But it would be terribly sad if they had to say the same concerning the work which God has entrusted to them.

About that which God has sent them to this earth for, which God has said, this is what I want you to do here on this earth. That they say, well, we don't really know what that is. Do we realize? Do we know what God has entrusted to us? What work He has given us to do in His vineyard? And how, because how can you ever do the work if you don't even know and you haven't even recognized what it is? But then when you know what it is that the Lord wants you to do, you need to do it diligently, with all your strength.

Not negligently. You're not allowed to be slack in it. You need to do it with all you have.

If you read in Proverbs 18, verse 9, He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys. He who is slack. He who is slack.

We dare not be slack in our work. And this refers even to our ordinary work. God says he who is slack, who is lazy in his work, is brother to the one who destroys.

No wonder a nation that is lazy and is not diligent, that it gets nowhere. God cannot and does not bless that. Now if you are slack in your own work and you are referred to as one who is brother to one who destroys, how much more if you are slack in God's work? Now there's much in the Bible which the Lord refers to us about where he says what he expects of us.

Just think of Matthew 28, verse 19. Just think of that word, that great commission where the Lord sent his disciples and sends them, says go into all the world, to the ends of the earth, making disciples of people, teaching them to keep all that I've taught you. So it's God's will that we should all be active in furthering his cause, his gospel.

Or if we read in Ezekiel 3, verse 18. When I say to the wicked, you shall surely die, and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way, that he may live. That wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand.

So if you find someone sinning, living in sin, and you don't warn him, he'll die in his sin, but you will be guilty if you did not warn him. I read an amazing word when I was overseas just recently. Pablo Sirrus said in German, If you protect the wicked people, you are hurting those that do good.

So if you side and protect, cover up for the wicked, you are hurting them. If you are wicked, then you are going against those that do good, and you will be as guilty as those that are doing that wickedness. If you gossip about someone that does good, the person listening to your gossip is as guilty as you are.

If you gossip about someone that does good, the person listening to your gossip is as guilty as you are. But you listening to gossip, and you don't check that person that's gossiping to you, you just let him talk. You don't warn him, you don't stop him.

You are as guilty as he is. So God says if I say to someone that he will die because of his wickedness, but you do not warn him, then you are guilty because you did not stop him from doing what he was doing. So I say to the matrix, alright, even if you don't know what you will be doing next year, but here's something that you should know what you should do.

If you see someone sinning, you should warn him. If someone comes to you and he starts gossiping, talking about someone else who is not present, you should stop him and say wait a moment, let's go to that person you are talking about and we can then discuss the matter in that person's presence. I can't understand why I tell you something and it seems as if you don't understand.

Why don't you understand? Is something wrong with you? Do you want to persist in getting that curse upon your life? The first word here, cursed. I wish we could have a service later on or this evening where I could test you all and ask you what cursed means, what the Lord's work means and then you could tell me and I'll know whether you've been listening or not. The third word, who does the Lord's work negligently.

To be negligent, in Hebrew it means to do it half-heartedly or just half. You do the Lord's work but you don't do it with all your heart. You do it negligently, just half-heartedly.

If you want to do something half-heartedly, it would be better that you'd be half-hearted about what you do at home, be it your cooking or cleaning your house or whatever other thing you are doing. That you can perhaps afford to do half-heartedly but when it comes to God's work, that which concerns you and God, that's one thing you cannot do negligently or half-heartedly. I remember a young man who was engaged, this was quite a few years ago, a white young man.

He said to me, I hear when you're preaching but when you preach, I don't know, I don't really understand. It's as if you're preaching about something that doesn't exist. Just last night, the students of the Cedar College, they had a play here.

And the main message in it was that the Lord Jesus should mean more to us than anything else, more even than our child, our husband or even our parent. Now this particular young man, he just had dreams about his fiancée. And he said, look, you preach the way you do because you're not engaged, you're not married, you don't know what it means to have a girl in your life.

And that's why you preach the way you do. I can tell you only one thing, if there's a girl in your life, you can't love the Lord Jesus more than you love that girl. And he said, well just last night, I dreamt about her.

And in my dream, she was here in my room. And he even went on to say that he tried to touch her in his dream. And they were sitting at the table and he stretched out his hand to touch her and then he woke up and then he noticed he was holding the leg of the table.

And he said, look, you just can't compare that love to a girl with anything else. You can't even love the Lord like that. And I said, well look, I don't know, we'll have to wait and see, but I won't stop preaching what I preach because even the Bible teaches us this.

It didn't take long and that girl left him, even though they were engaged to each other already. And I said to him, well what do you say now? He nearly went over his head. And I could just say, well, you have got what you deserved for having spoken in that way.

One could say in that blasphemous way. And God taught him a lesson because he didn't even get married to that girl. And whether you've got a dozen children or even if it's only one, Jesus must mean more to you than even that one child.

And he said, it's too difficult. You expect too much. The love to the Lord must be greater and far more than the love towards a parent or to a wife or to a child or to anybody.

And even towards that work which the Lord has entrusted to you. Judges. And there's another word which we find in judges.

Judges. Chapter five. Judges.

Verse twenty-three. Verse twenty-three. Curse Meroz said the angel of the Lord.

Utterly curse its inhabitants because they did not come to the help of the Lord. To the help of the Lord against the warriors. Meroz was a city near to the border of that land.

And the Lord commanded that they should be overcome. Those warriors should be subdued. But even though the Lord had commanded them to go out into battle, Meroz and its inhabitants were not prepared because those warriors had iron chariots.

They were afraid. There were others that were waging war against them already but these people were not prepared to go and assist them. And the angel came and said the inhabitants of the city must be utterly cursed because they did not come to the help of the Lord.

What a strange thing. That they were cursed twice, three times because they didn't come to help the Lord. Have you ever thought of that? That God expects you to assist Him.

God sends those preachers wherever it is. Even at school He sends the preachers. Some listen, others don't.

And then God says, I expected that you also would help and assist, but because you didn't, you will be cursed. Utterly cursed. Do you hear that? Also you men, God is expecting you to assist Him, to work together with Him.

For He does His work. He sends out His warnings. But He expects you to work together with Him, lest you be cursed.

Utterly cursed. He expects you to help and assist Him. That He will even say, thank you for assisting and helping.

If you address a crowd and you make a point and you get absolutely no reaction, no one supports you in what you say. That can be very difficult. Where are those today who are prepared to assist God? To work together with Him, to support Him in what He says and does.

That we say, surely this is what God has said and that we reinforce it and support it. And that you don't do it half-heartedly, negligently, but that you do it with all your heart, all your strength. Now let's move on from that word negligence, or negligently.

Now we go on to the next curse. Cursed is the one who restrains his sword from blood. What does that mean? Who holds back his sword from shedding blood.

When they wanted to arrest the Lord, Peter did not hold back his sword. He used it and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest. But the Lord said, Peter put back your sword in its place.

Because Peter was acting and fighting with flesh and blood. And our battle is not with flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities. Now Peter used that sword, but we need to use the sword of the Spirit.

In Hebrews 12 verse 4 it says, you have not resisted sin to the point of the shedding of blood. So it's not a battle against people, but against sin. So we We Christians, we don't fight against people and kill people and shed blood in that way.

Christianity is not like Islam, where their faith teaches them that they can kill someone who is a non-Christian. But the Lord taught us even to love our enemies. The Lord spoke to Saul, the king of Israel, he said, go out and destroy the Amalekites.

He said, go out, kill men, women, children, even little babies and the oxen and the camels and the sheep. Everything you must completely destroy. Now that word applies to us as well.

But not in the same sense that we must go out killing people. But it refers to sin. And maybe we categorize sin and can categorize sin in different ways in our own life.

One sin, you can say, well, that's a real father in our lives, or a mother. Or maybe we say it's just a small baby sin. But the Lord says, destroy everything.

That's why the Lord also says, If your right hand causes you to stumble and to sin, chop it off. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. Or your foot, rather, hit it off.

Then that should be a stumbling block to you, that it stands in your way as you serve the Lord. But Saul and the children of Israel did not obey God. When they captured the king of the Amalekites, he fell on his knees and he begged for mercy.

And he said, please spare my life. I will serve you all my life and do anything for you. And Saul spared his life.

We must take God at His word. In the book of Kings, chapter 22, chapter 20, chapter 20, first Kings 20 verse 42. You.

You. You. You.

You. life shall go for his life and your people for his people." They had gone into battle and had overcome the enemy and they came back with the enemy as a prisoner. So they had taken the enemy prisoner for they had to do that.

So the Lord had said if you take your enemy captive and you let him go you will need to give your life in his place. So the prisoner had to be guarded very closely and so that it the prisoner could not escape but the guard was not on his guard and the prisoner escaped. And then the Prophet came and said you let go that person who was the enemy who was cursed you let that person go.

Your life shall now go for his life. What would have happened to him and his people will now happen to you and your people. Now maybe someone visits you and maybe this person visiting you is is one of those who serves the Lord negligently half-heartedly but he comes to you the Lord gives him into your hands now you should be the one to speak to him to warn him to do what God expects you to do with him but you just let him go.

So that curse that was on his life now you inherit. What would have happened to him will now happen to you. So in a way God is sending him to you he's giving him into your hands but if you don't do what God

expects you to do you just he just gets away with it you let him go you haven't warned him you haven't helped him you haven't assisted in any way God could turn around and say look that what I actually meant for him you will now get.

And God says to you while he's there he says now you use your sword now you need to get to work but you don't because you've got you've got two good manners you've got all the reasons in the world not to do it what God is telling you and that person gets away untouched and God says those curses which were meant for him will now fall upon you. Jeremiah 48 verse 10. Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently and cursed be the one who restrains his sword from blood.

You heard of that city that was cursed three times. Of the Lord and his temple it was said holy holy holy but what if it says cursed cursed cursed what future is there for you if that curse is on your life? At the Matric farewell we heard of a certain story as something which happened in Germany a boy who had just passed Matric went to his uncle and said uncle you need to congratulate me I've just passed Matric. And the uncle got out 10 euros and said well congratulations and gave him the money.

And the uncle said to the boy well tell me what are you going to do now that you've passed Matric? He said well I'll study. And the uncle said yes and after that he said well I'll get my degree. Yes and after that the boy said well I'll go and get myself a job.

Yes and after that the boy said well then I'll look for a nice girl and get married and build a family. And the uncle said yes and after that and well eventually the boy said well look obviously eventually I'll die. And the uncle said yes and after that and the boy said I don't know.

The uncle said well my boy I've just met the biggest fool ever. Someone who's written Matric and he doesn't even know what will happen to him after death he says you are the biggest fool. One could say such a person hasn't even passed his first year in school.

Cursed be the one who does the Lord's work negligently who's slack in it. And who holds back his sword when things go wrong. Be it lies or deceit or lusts of the flesh.

You hold back your sword. And because you hold back your sword when evil is taking place for because you've withheld it that sword will now be used on you. Let's bow our heads.

Lord write your words into our hearts and minds. May these words be written indelibly into our hearts and minds. These words that cursed is the one who does the Lord's work negligently and cursed be the one who holds back his sword.

Amen. Remember the Bible refers to the Bible as the sword of the Lord. God's word is our sword.

You should use it.

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