

## 4-18-21 Hardest Worker in The Room

### Acts 11:1-19.

Any one like to work with lazy people?

When you think of a lazy person, what comes to mind? (slob, cheat, selfish)

When you think of a hardworking person, what comes to mind? (character, successful, disciplined)

I love being around hardworking people. It inspires, motivates me to push myself more.

The minute I started talking about lazy and hardworking people, different people you know popped up in your head. Today I want to focus on the "Hardest Worker in The Room."

The "Hardest Worker in the Room" is a mantra of Dwayne (the Rock) Johnson. His mantra/slogan is even on his clothing line in under armor. In his motivation speeches he talks about what it takes to succeed and how your failures can be places where you learn how to be successful. It's motivating. You don't have to be the best, just out work every other person in the room.

I know what some of you are thinking... "Oh great! A sermon about how we should work harder.... Blah, blah, blah... I guess I will be checking into the world of social media as you "inspire" me to DO MORE!"

I could do that, but if your heart isn't in it, it would be for nothing. That thought would preach! Especially in our consumer, have it my way, what have you done for me lately Americanized Church.

But that's not what the "Hardest Worker in the Room" message about. Today I am going to be bragging about and challenging us regarding THE real hardest worker in room... Jesus Christ! (God)

The limited news I read its not looking good, well good for our physical, comfort anyways. Makes me forget that the hardest worker in the room is still in charge and knows how it will end.

### Headlines:

Chaos in the Streets: Minn. rioters attack police, looters hit stores amid protest over Daunte Wright death; dozens arrested. (video's showing innocent people being targeted based on skin color)

US calls for a pause on Johnson & Johnson vaccine: CDC and FDA recommend US pause use of Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine over blood clot concerns.

More Colleges Require Students to Have COVID-19 Vaccines for Fall Semester.

CCP Virus Variant Affects Vaccinated People More Than Unvaccinated People: Study

Chinese warplanes enter Taiwan's air defense zone in challenge to U.S.

Iran says it will enrich uranium to 60 percent purity after Natanz attack. (Blames Israel)

Russia Faces 'Consequences' If It Acts Aggressively in Ukraine, US's Blinken Says.

Get ready for higher grocery bills for the rest of the year.

My anxiety was growing as I searched out headlines. To say that our world is a mess just doesn't do it any justice, does it? I can tell you this, there is lots of great things happening in the world today as well.

And my next statement is worthy of celebration, The Hardest worker in the room, God is still, actively, working, moving, blessing, challenging, correcting, convicting, and saving people each day. To contrast it if God were to throttle back by 50%, He would still vastly out work the world, Satan and the flesh combined.

### God Works Hard:

#### 1. KEEPING US FOCUSED ON WHAT MATTERS. (Acts 10:36-43; 11:1-3)

- Can't we get distracted? Sometimes we can drift away from God, don't we?
- It is crucial that we strive to keep focused on the things that matter in this life. This life is just a drop in the ocean of eternity.
- Think about what happened in **Acts 10**. God sent an angel to speak to a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. And starting in **Acts 10:4**, the angel said this to Cornelius: "**Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. 5. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.**"
- Just before those men got to the house where Peter was staying, God gave Peter a vision to help him understand that the Gospel was not just for the Jews. The Gospel is for all peoples! So, Peter went to Cornelius' house and preached the truth about Jesus to the people gathered there.
- **Acts 10:36-43.**
- The Gentiles there in Cornelius' house trusted in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as He did on the day of Pentecost. That was proof enough for Peter to recognize that they had been saved, and in **Acts 10:48** he commanded for them to be baptized.
- Peter had a miraculous testimony to share when he got back to Jerusalem. It was the story of God's amazing grace, not just for the Jews, but for everyone who would receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That's what mattered the most because that's what mattered to God!
- Unfortunately, there were some that weren't very receptive to Gentile dogs being welcomed into the family. (**Read Acts 11:1-3**)
- To say these believers weren't happy is an understatement. News travels fast! Caesarea is just shy of 50 miles from Jerusalem, but you would think in those days' news wouldn't travel too fast. Yet **verse 1** tells us they had heard the news before Peter even arrived.
- That word in **verse 2**, "contend, criticized" is from the Greek word "diakrino" (diah-kree-no) meaning, doubt, pass judgment on, to express disapproval, to separate.
- With that type of contempt they said, "**You went into uncircumcised men and ate with them!**" (**verse 3**)
- Breaking bread, eating with someone has been recognized as accepting of that person.

**1 Corinthians 5:11, But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.**

- Sometimes God's people get their priorities out of balance. The Christians in Jerusalem heard that the Gentiles had gotten saved. And that's great news! Nothing in this world is more important to God than that! And we know this is true because God paid the highest possible price for our salvation.
- So, when Peter got back to Jerusalem, was it: "Praise the Lord, those people got saved!?" -- No. At least some of those believers said, "Peter, what's the matter with you?!? We can't believe you went into a Gentile's house and ate with him. That's disgusting!"
- God's people had gotten their priorities out of balance, and sometimes we do the same thing. It's easy to see why. We live in a world that is upside down. Good is called evil, God's Word is under attack, Evil is called good.
- It's easy for Christians to get distressed by the tidal wave of bad news in our world. Like Peter trying to walk on the stormy sea, we can take our eyes off Jesus and begin to sink. But the Lord is reaching out His hand to us to lift us up again. We must be careful, we can get so lost in the weeds, daily filling our mind with life sucking news, even if it is to stay informed, it imprints and can stunt our (spiritual) growth, or blur on what matters.
- We can also be drawn away by the pleasures of the world. Our priorities can get out of balance. But God reminds us, works hard to pull us back to the things that matter. The Lord calls us back to the main things: Worshipping and witnessing, holiness and helping others, love for God and love for our neighbors.

God works hard to keep us focus on what matters... God works hard...

## 2. REASSURING OUR TRUST IN HIM. (verses 4-12)

- God wants to encourage us to trust in the Lord more every day. And this is one of the main reasons why the Lord sent that three-peat vision to Peter.
- **Read verses 4-12.**
- What is our part in trust in Him? The answers start in **verse 4**, **"Praying"** **Verse 6**, **"I observed intently and considered..."** Peter was praying and actively looking for what God was showing him.
- Peter said his peace, **"Not so, Lord!"** There is no way I am going to do that, it's unacceptable. God spoke, what I say is good and acceptable is just that. Then God repeated this object lesson 2 more times. Like Peter, many of us are slow learners, listeners. God will repeat Himself to us and when we trust Him, it adds to the rung of the ladder of our faith.
- **"Go with them, doubting nothing."** (Why shouldn't Peter doubt?) God said: "For I have sent them." (**Acts 10:20**) God wanted Peter to know that he could trust the leadership of the Lord in every situation. And God wants us to know that we can trust Him too!
- In unusual situations, in difficult situations, in unexpected situations, God wants us to know that we can always trust in Him. God is always working to build up our faith in Him. Most often, He builds up our faith through His miraculous Holy Word. As Paul said in **Romans 10:17**, **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."**

- Never forget that this Book is a miraculous gift from God! The Bible is the Word of God, with the amazing, miraculous power to save our souls!

**1 Peter 1:23-25, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the Lord endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."**

- God uses His Word to build our faith, He speaks to us through it.

God works hard to keep us focused on what matters, building our faith in Him, and...

### **3. PLEADING WITH US TO WITNESS OF HIM. (verses 12-15)**

- **Read verses 12-15.**
- There was a lot working against Peter witnessing to Cornelius that day. His religious background told him not even to go into Cornelius' house. But God overcame all of that.
- There is also much against us sharing the good news about Jesus Christ, like sinfulness: The sinfulness of others and our own sin. Even our schedules work against us witnessing. Most of us are extremely busy, and that hinders us. On top of that, you can be sure that Satan is doing everything he can to keep us from witnessing. But God works harder so that we will witness.
- Look at all the things God was actively using/working to put Peter in the place to witness/testify of what he knew to be true. Angels, hunger, a tanner, Jewish brethren, and a house full of Gentiles.
- The words Cornelius waited so eagerly to hear were words about Jesus Christ: How He love him and came into the world to die on the cross for his sins. How He rose again from the dead. And how He will save all who trust in Him.
- God provides opportunities for each of us to witness/testify of Him.

God works hard...

### **4. ESTABLISHING A LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. (verses 16-18)**

- God wants to change our lives in extraordinary ways.
- **Read verses 16-18.**
- What a change! Peter, who would have never gone into a Gentile's house, now says: "**Who was I that I could withstand God?**" From "**Not so, Lord!**" to whatever you say Lord!
- And the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who didn't have a clue about what really matters to God, now glorify God, saying, "**God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.**"
- And the greatest change of all came to Cornelius, and the people he invited to hear the good news: They were saved! They started that day on the way to hell. But now their sins were forgiven, and they were on their way to Heaven! Now they are saved forever, because they put

their faith in Jesus, and received Him as their Lord and Savior. God's Hand was at work to change lives.

## **Conclusion**

So here are the two great changes: **The first is salvation:**

We hear the Good News about Jesus Christ. We believe what the Bible says about our sin, about God's love, about the cross, about the resurrection. And believing, we turn to God and open our hearts to receive Jesus Christ.

The second great change **is submission.**

We begin to follow God. We learn to trust in His will and His ways, even when we don't understand what He is doing in our lives or why.

We learn to live a life more and more submitted to God. Again, as Peter said, "**Who was I that I could withstand God?**" This kind of obedient submission is extraordinary evidence, and perhaps the most reliable evidence of the Hand of God at work in our lives.

God is hardest worker in the room, every room, everywhere, and He is always at work...in your life. He is reaching out. He is moving in ways that we don't even recognize or know.

Will we surrender like Cornelius? Salvation?

How about Peter? Submission?