

This sermon is based on chapter six of the “Someone Like You” book (pg. 77)

This message is focused on how work can become worship as we bless those around us and use our gifts to restore brokenness. Also, that we can use business to build for Kingdom impact.

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Introduction

Well good morning! We're in a series called Someone Like You. And that means that all of us who feel unqualified, we serve a God who qualifies each and every one of us, who calls us to do what we're designed to do. To make a difference in the world, and help people experience the grace of God.

And today, I just want to begin by asking a simple question: how many of you find yourself going to work? Each and every week? You go to work probably five days a week, right? Many of us spend somewhere around a third of our time at work during the week.

I was talking to somebody in sales. They said, “Oh, man, it's real easy. I work half days – 12 hours.” Ha! And I thought, “Wow, that's a lot of time,” right? And really the thing is, we spend an enormous amount of our time and our energy working. Whether we're selling goods, creating products, or working for industries in the area of serving or teaching, really doing all the things that help meet needs of people in our community.

And the big idea today that we want to focus on is this: **your work can become your worship**. Your work can become your worship, the way we work and how we interact with people in the marketplace can be our example and our light in the darkness.

And so today, to highlight that, I want to show you a video of a man named Stephen Freed, sharing his story with us about how he got started with a company called Dignity Made.

Now, unlike the other organizations we've talked about, Dignity Made is a for-profit business but it truly has the heart of a nonprofit.

Their main product is raw coconut oil, which is produced in a processing plant located in a remote area of the Philippines. Through the work of this company, Stephen Freed and his son-in-law Erik Olson have been able to fight human trafficking, provide jobs, establish fair trade, and bring transformation to an entire community. And that's been their mission all along.

We're going to get a sense of how ministry in this business works, and some of the challenges they faced trying to build a factory out in this remote area. Let's take a look at the video.



Show the week six sermon video here, available for streaming or download by following this QR code.
Length: 4 minutes 45 seconds

What an incredible story. What it teaches us, without a doubt, is that **when faith drives business, business transforms lives.**

If you think about it, Jesus was a rabbi. He was a teacher. But he was also a carpenter. He had a trade. So just like us, at one time in his life, Jesus was involved in a business.

And when our faith drives business, business transforms lives. And Dignity Made is a perfect example of how that can happen. Now, I know that some of you might say, "Well, I don't know how to start a business or go to another country." But the truth is, we can all be a part of ministry in the marketplace, because if we're able to work, whether we work for someone else or we sell products or we provide a service like teaching or counseling or fixing things or whatever the job may be, our work can be a place of worship as well.

By the way, if you're a stay-at-home parent, your work is on your family. Your work has worth and your work can definitely be worship as well. And so today I want to talk to you about three ways to live out your faith in the marketplace, out in the world where we do business. Even Jesus said, "I am about my father's business." We want people to know that when it comes to the gospel, business is good. And so today I want to walk us through this.

Point Number One: Work Like You're Working For the Lord

As we go into our various workplaces, if we're going to make a difference, **we need to work like we're working for the Lord.**

A lot of times we think we go to work to go earn or get something to meet a need. But what if your work, the job you've been **blessed with**, is an opportunity for you and I to be a light in the darkness, to be Christians in the marketplace, and to make a difference?

What if instead of a job with a paycheck, it's an assignment with a purpose that can transform people's lives? It changes everything. In fact, look at what it says in Colossians chapter three. This is written by Paul, the apostle Paul, who was also a tent maker, who would have had an agreement with the Roman Empire as they were expanding, to build tents.

So he was a tent maker. He was a worker. He was in the marketplace. And so he knows what it means to be on mission, even in the marketplace. Here's what he says. "Whatever you do," like **whatever** you do, "work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward."

When we change our thinking about our job as something we **have** to do into an **opportunity** that we **get** to do, it changes everything. We may not love the actual tasks that we're doing, but think of all of the people and all the chances you have to interact with people with at least a third of your day, maybe more.

And when we're loving people, let's love them as though we're loving the Lord. Because Jesus says, "whatever you do for the least of these, you're doing it for me." And so when you think about that, think about your job. Think about what you're doing. I think about a barista, somebody who makes coffee and they see a customer and they may think, "Oh, I'm just giving them coffee."

No, no, no, we're giving them hope. We're giving them encouragement. We can ask them how they're doing, check on them, remember their names. And that becomes a ministry disguised as customer service. The ordinary literally becomes sacred in the moment that we take it to that next level. And so whatever we're doing, let's do it for the Lord.

If you think of the Old Testament, do you remember Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel? They were believers during a time when the government was extremely antagonistic toward God, yet they followed the one true God. And they were excellent at what they did. So they found favor with the leadership. And in their witness, their model of ministry in the form of work transformed over generations the culture that they were in.

You and I have the ability to influence the culture of every business and every job and every environment that we're in. And you may be there because **you** are the only example of Jesus that people are ever going to see.

Share a story of someone in your congregation who shows the love of Christ, prays with people, or shares their faith at their place of work.

They knew that they couldn't push it on anybody, but they would just mention church and the other person would say, "Oh, you go to church?" "Yeah, I go to church. I go to church every Sunday. If you ever want to go, I'm happy to take you. And then I'll take you to lunch afterwards." And they created a bridge instead of an obstacle.

Point Number Two: Use Your Gifts to Restore Brokenness

Use your gifts to restore brokenness. How many of you know the world's broken? Yeah. You don't have to look hard, man. There's cracks and brokenness. We watch the news, we see all sorts of things. But listen, the gifts that God gives us are used to restore brokenness.

The story of Dignity Made demonstrates this. They witnessed a cycle where people would fall on hard times and then get into debt and never get out of it. And they saw that cycle as an opportunity to use their gifts to bring about restoration. Look at what it says in First Peter chapter four, verse ten.

"Each of you," so this is an assignment for everybody in the room, he's talking to everybody, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." So here's the point: God gives us things not so we can selfishly hang on to them, but he gives us gifts so that we can use them to serve people.

Because, listen, we're not here for a paycheck. We're here for a purpose, and we have an opportunity to make a difference as we make a living.

And God has gifted us in a way to do that. So I want to give you a couple of examples. How many of you are teachers in the room or work in the education field?

Yeah. Like, listen, you provide a service in the marketplace of education in a way that is huge. When you take time with your students to care for them beyond the curriculum that you're teaching, you're healing their souls.

Also, I know for a fact that there are counselors in our church that volunteer their time and services. Maybe people have gone through some very traumatic things and they couldn't afford to get the help that they need. They're using their gifts and their expertise to make a difference.

I know people that have been good with finances that are now using their gifts to help coach people, like with Financial Peace University, so that they can get out of debt and break the cycle that maybe they grew up with. And I know of people that work in retail and they see somebody like a single mom who can't quite make ends meet. And they give them a break or a discount or a way that they can have dignity in the moment and meet the needs of their families.

The point that I'm making is that **your calling creates healing**. Sometimes we incorrectly believe that the word "calling" only applies to pastors. And that's not true. Everyone in this room, and everyone who's watching online, and everyone who has ever been brought into this world and draws breath, has a calling on their life that God has provided. He has a divine plan to use each and every one of us in this incredible way to impact the world.

Listen, if I'm lucky, people will come spend one hour, 40 days out of a year here listening to the Word of God. So 40 hours total here in church. Do you realize that you have eight or more hours a day in a work week, 40 hours every **week**, that you're working alongside someone? And you have more opportunity to draw them in and to help them experience God's grace than I'm ever going to have standing on this platform.

You are the ministry heroes of our church. You are! This is just a huddle. And then we go out of here. We run the play, and so your calling makes a huge impact and your calling creates healing in our community. That's one of the ways that people can experience grace.

And that leads me to number three.

Point Number Three: Build for Kingdom Impact

We want to **build for Kingdom impact**. Listen, the story in the video that stood out to me was that they didn't have the resources that they needed, so they had to transport the concrete over the river, handing bags across a river! And they had to make these concrete blocks. Now, listen, if you take concrete or you take rocks or you take anything, you can use those and throw them at people, or you can use them to build something.

And we need to build for Kingdom impact now. What we learned about today is something that is impacting an entire region. Like when you see the flyover and you see all these coconut trees and you see all these farms, you're like, "Man, that's big."

Share a story of missionaries or people in your church that are making an impact, large or small, through kingdom building in a community.

In Matthew 5:16, look at what it says. *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* We don't do it to draw attention to us. We're doing it to draw attention to Jesus. Why on earth would you do this? Why would you start a company, or a nonprofit? Why would you start Dignity Made?

Because it's a platform for us to tell people about Jesus. And Jesus meets very real needs. And for some people, they need that good news. Some people, they need a cup of coffee, some people need coconut products. Some people they need work. They need a job. They need a way to break the cycle.

And there are ways that we can do that. But you know what? If you have a job, you know what people need. Most people in your job, 80% of the people you work with probably don't know Jesus, and they can work and then can have a killer 401K, they can have a retirement plan and still miss it. Never meet Jesus and suffer and be separated from God.

So listen, when you go to your job, it's not just a grind. When you go to work, you're on a mission to love people and find those that don't know Jesus yet. Because what we have to offer is not a paycheck. What we have to offer is purpose in life and eternity, and it makes all the difference in the world.

Today, I want us to think about that. Chick-Fil-A is a perfect example. They got Christian chicken right? They're not open on Sunday and everybody knows why. But their business model works and they use that as an opportunity to care for people, to minister to people.

Every one of us has an opportunity to do that. And the point I'm making is **good business is a gospel witness**. When you conduct yourself in an ethical, biblical way, it is so different. We have an opportunity to show that it can be done in a good and godly way.

So the question for us today is, what are your next steps to live your faith at work? Because you might say, "I don't know how to start a business, but what can I do?" It's Sunday, but Monday is coming and the ministry field is all around us and we have this incredible opportunity.

I want to walk you through an acrostic that's going to work no matter where you work. Okay? And this is going to work even if you don't work. So when you get a job, you have an opportunity to do this.

It spells "bless," and it begins with the letter **B, begin with prayer**. Begin with prayer. Listen, nobody can stop you from praying. You may not pray out loud for people, but nobody can stop you from praying. And so I would encourage you, pray each morning before work. **"Lord, help me to see my workplace as your mission field. Give me eyes to see opportunities and courage to act."**

Share a story of how you prayed for, evangelized, or ministered to people in a previous job.

If we begin with prayer, ask God to bless your coworkers, your clients and your customers by name. Everybody in here can do that. And it creates this list of people we're praying for.

Okay, next, the letter **L is listen, listen with care**. I just did an exercise with our staff on this and I found out, man. I'm not good at listening at all. I got two ears and one mouth, but I got a big mouth. And listening matters. You know, listening to people is so close to loving them that most people can't tell the difference. Dignity Made would not be nearly as effective as it is today if they had not listened to the people who live there in the Philippines.

And so what do we do with that? Well, **take time this week to really listen to your coworkers, boss, or customers.** It can change everything. Ask thoughtful questions, pay attention to their struggles, notice where they need encouragement or hope. It can be a divine appointment.

The **E** in bless, love this one. **Eat together.** That's something you can easily commit to. I mean, we already do it three times a day. And some of you, you're the Taco Bell crew. You get that fourth meal. You know what I'm talking about.

Jesus did some of his best work around a table. So listen, if you have a work break or an opportunity to eat lunch, don't let people go off to their cubicle by themselves. Invite them to eat with you, like, this is your uninterrupted opportunity to really get to know them. Listen, you may have been praying for them. They don't know that, invite them in and eat with them.

Invite a colleague to lunch, coffee, or even a quick snack break. It's amazing the difference that we can make when we use that time not to pitch or preach, but to build trust and show genuine interest in their life. Why? Because nobody cares how much you know... until they know how much you care. And eating with people makes a huge difference.

The first letter **S** is **serve with love.** You've got to serve somebody. Remember, you've been given gifts in order to help people. So **look for tangible ways to serve someone at work or in your industry.** It could be as simple as staying late to help a teammate finish a project. Listen, I know we all dread this moment whenever your friend says, "Hey, I've got to move this weekend out of my apartment," and you're like, "What floor?"

Third floor. No elevator. Right? But it matters. It matters when you serve people, when you help them, when they're running behind. Listen, there is no greater hand than the one that extends help in a time of need. Maybe it's mentoring the next generation. I don't know what it is, but serve. Because, listen, Jesus came not to **be** served, but to serve.

And then the last one, the second **S.** And this is important. The first four letters set this one up. **Share your story.** Share your story. You say, "I'm not good at standing up and preaching." Nobody asked you to. Or "I don't have a wild, crazy story about how God showed up and changed my life." God didn't give you a crazy story. Maybe he did, I don't know.

But do you know that there are people who are living in such chaos, that the **idea** of growing up in a stable, loving, Christian home is the most attractive thing imaginable? That God could break the crazy cycle in my life, and my kids don't have to go through everything I went through. So don't think your story is small. Your story is your story, and it's genuine.

And by the way, there's lots of people who can relate with that story better than somebody like me that, you know, went off the hinges and God brought me back. We all have a story to share. And so **when the time is right, share your story of how your faith shapes the way you work.**

Maybe somebody comes back and talks to you later about that, so you're dripping it before you drop it. And the point is, be ready with a simple story of how God has worked in your life.

There have been countless people that have been baptized in this church because they had a conversation with somebody in the workplace. They had a conversation with a neighbor. The mission field is vast. And so today I'm going to ask that we pray that God would use our gifts and God would use us to transform the world.

And we're going to do that through this "bless" process. So I want you to see it one more time. On the screen, **B** is **begin with prayer**. **L** **listen with care**. **E** is **eat together**, **S**, **serve with love**. And the second **S** is **share your story**. And I think everyone in this room can do at least one, maybe a few of these things with somebody at work this week, whether you're at school or you're working a job or you're in retail or the service industry or a medical profession, all of us can do this.

And so I'm going to ask that we would all pray about the one thing that we can do to bless somebody. And then I'm going to invite anyone who's never put their faith in Jesus, just like in the Bible study that's happening in the morning before they start work at Dignity Made, that you can join with God in this great partnership and ministry that brings light to darkness and hope to those who need help.

Let's pray.

(Close with prayer.)