

Heigh Ho! Heigh Ho! It's Off To Work We Go!

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First United Methodist Church

They are miners. They work in their mine, all day long, finding jewels of great beauty. And they sing a song, "We dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, in our mine the whole day through, to dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig is what we like to do!" When they start each day, they sing, "Heigh ho! Heigh ho! It's off to work we go!" and while they work they sing, "Just whistle while you work!" They are the seven dwarfs: Sleepy, Doc, Dopey, Happy, Grumpy, Sneezzy and Bashful.

Even though they are cartoons, these little guys seem to have it all together when it comes to work! They are doing something they enjoy, something they believe is important, and they get pleasure out of work, not just a paycheck. "We dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, dig, in our mine the whole day through!" Would that we could all derive as much pleasure and satisfaction from our work as do the seven dwarfs. Would that we all could share their attitude about our labors!

We all know some people who say, "I go to work every morning and I endure it. I am just there for the paycheck." Perhaps you are one of them. When I hear things like that, I think about how fortunate that I am. I feel called to my work. If truth be known, I would probably do it even if I were not being paid. But even still, there are days when I don't want to come to work. There are days when I'd rather be anywhere else.

Some days, even the pastor doesn't want to get up and go to work because work can be hard, and work can be frustrating, and working can be tiring. One of the real issues we face in the church is believer's burn-out, also known as compassion fatigue.

Sometimes, especially when we are tired and frustrated, we let the values of the world dilute our Christian values. It almost seems like Jesus about to let that happen in the way he treated the woman in Matthew 15:26. Jesus told her, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

But then Jesus looked into her eyes, and He listened to her words with His heart, and even though He was tired and wanted desperately to rest, He reached out with His love and touched her, and her life was changed. That's what our Christian work is about – touching one another with God's love and changing lives in the process.

Look around and think of those who surround you. We are farmers and school teachers, sales people and mechanics, doctors and police officers, retired people and students; and we come with differing levels of satisfaction in what we do for a living. I think our faith tells us that although no job is perfect, there are ways to get more meaning and joy out of our work. Probably the most obvious way is to realize that our work, no matter what it is we do, touches someone somewhere. In one of its best understandings, work is about relationships. Work can also be about making life better for someone beside us. This aspect of work may be hard to see in some jobs, but I believe it is there nonetheless. Our work takes on new meaning when we see it as touching others. And if as Christians we add a little bit of faith to what we do for a living, we may discover our work bringing us more joy and less stress, more satisfaction and less fatigue. We may even find ourselves singing, "Heigh ho! Heigh Ho! It's off to work we go!"