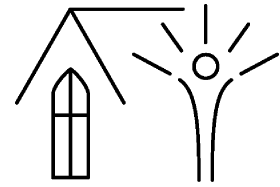




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*Our Mission Statement:*  
*“To Know Christ,  
To Grow in Christ,  
To Show Others Christ”*

February 5, 2006

## Sermon

# “Three Kinds of People: Whatever, Whatever It Takes, and Prayers”

1 Corinthians 9:16-23, Mark 1:29-39

Reverend Thomas Kim

Do you like math? Let us have fun time together. Can you see a light green insert paper in your bulletin? “Think on This...” The rule goes like this. A=1, B=2, C=3... and Z=26. So when I say “abc,” it means 1+2+3=6.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Now I ask you what the most important element of your life is.

Knowledge (11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5) is 96 points.

Hard work (8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11) is 98 points.

Courage (3+15+21+18+7+5) is 70 points.

Power (16+15+23+5+18) is 77 points.

Money (13+15+14+5+25) is 72 points.

Love (12+15+22+5) is only 54 points.

However, **Attitude (1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5) is 100 points.**

How are you going to raise your kids? With what? I would like to tell you to focus on your children’s attitude. Have you heard of PMA? Positive Mental Attitude is PMA.

Paul from today’s Epistle lesson is a man of PMA. He says, “*For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law... I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.*” (1 Corinthians 9:19, 22b, and 23) Could you hear his zeal, willingness and PMA in the reading?

A motivational speaker once said there are two kinds of people in this world: those who say “**whatever**” and those who say, “**Whatever it takes.**”

He’s right! How many of you have heard your teenager saying, “Whatever.” Have you ever asked a person to do something that you think is important and have them shrug their shoulders and respond, “Whatever?”

Some people are like that with regard to their faith. In fact, let's turn this into a responsive reading. I'm going to make some statements. After each statement I want you to answer with a shrug, "Whatever." Say it with a loud sigh. "WHATEVER." OK?

**Pastor:** Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER."

**Pastor:** Jesus said to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER."

**Pastor:** Jesus said there is more rejoicing over one sinner who is found than the 99 that stayed within the fold.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER."

**Pastor:** Jesus said to welcome the least and the strangers.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER."

Now, let's change our response from whatever to "WHATEVER IT TAKES." OK?

**Pastor:** Let's try it. Jesus said to go and make disciples of all nations.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER IT TAKES !"

**Pastor:** Jesus said to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER IT TAKES !"

**Pastor:** Jesus said there is more rejoicing over one sinner who is found than the 99 that stayed within the fold.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER IT TAKES !"

**Pastor:** Jesus said to welcome the least and the strangers.

**Congregation:** "WHATEVER IT TAKES !"

Are you and I, like the Apostle Paul, willing to do whatever it takes to win the world to Christ? What is your attitude toward sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What group do you belong to? "Whatever" or "Whatever it takes" ?

How long did it take for the 9/11 news to reach the end of the world? How long did it take for the Hurricane Katrina? How long do you think it took for the news of the assassination of JFK to get to the world? A year or a week? Or a day? How long has it taken for the Gospel of Jesus to reach the world? What is your attitude toward sharing the gospel of Jesus?

At the end of World War II, Robert Woodruff, president of the Coca-Cola company from 1923 to 1955, had a mission. "*In my generation,*" he declared, "*it is my desire that everyone in the world have a taste of Coca-Cola.*" With vision and dedication rarely matched in corporate American culture, Woodruff and his colleagues spanned the globe with their soft drink. What an attitude he had!

*A sales trainer asked his audience if they liked strawberries. Yes, they all said, delicious. Then he suggested that they go fishing and use strawberries as bait.*

*"But fish don't like strawberries," said one of the trainees.*

*"But you do," replied the trainer.*

*"But I want to catch fish," said the trainee.*

*"What do fish like, then?" asked the trainer.*

*"Worms," the trainee replied.*

*"Do you like worms?" asked the trainer.*

*"No," replied the trainee.*

*"Then," said the trainer, "don't sell what you like, SELL WHAT THEY LIKE."*

(Geoff Burch, *THE ART AND SCIENCE OF BUSINESS PERSUASION*, 1994)

How often do we, as the church, go fishing with strawberries in order to win souls to Christ? Do we say, "Whatever?" Or do we say, "Whatever It Takes?"

Jesus says, "What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for? (Matthew 16:26, *The Message*) Jesus says nothing is more important than a soul.

What kinds of attitude do you have toward sharing the gospel of Jesus? Would you do whatever it takes to win souls to Christ?

However, doing “Whatever It Takes” is not the final words. If we focus on the attitude of “Whatever It Takes,” only half of the job is done.

Maybe that’s good enough for the world standard. That’s what the world says to us. Have a positive attitude. That’s practical advice because it is a 100-point-score. However, we have to move on from “Whatever” to “Whatever It Takes,” and from “Whatever It Takes” to “Prayer.”

To have a good attitude is very important like to sharpen an axe before cutting a tree, however, we need more than that because we know that even though we do our best, the result is not always the best. I believe you experienced it as you raise your children. There are areas you can’t do much. That’s why we have to pray for them. That’s why we have to pray especially to win the world to Jesus Christ.

Gordon McDonald says in his *Ordering Your Private World*, says prayer was such a priority to Christ that there are more than 20 words in the New Testament to describe his prayer life. Even Jesus prayed!

For many, Mark 1:35 is the most wonderful verse in this reading. *“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”*

I pray before I read the Bible lesson to prepare a sermon to open my eyes, mind, and spirit. It makes difference. This practice of beginning the day with prayer can be a wellspring of strength throughout the day.

J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) was an English missionary to China who founded the China Inland Mission. He began every day with prayer and once said, *“Do not have your concert first and tune your instruments afterward. Begin the day with God.”*

I pray before I read the Bible lesson to prepare my sermon. I ask God to open my eyes, thoughts, mind, and spirit so that I can read and hear I missed before. I strongly believe it makes different. If we spend time with God before we start the activity of our day, we will be better prepared for what might come our way.

Prayer is not just a time to recharge your spiritual batteries. It is rather a time to upgrade your ability and power. It brings you to a different dimension.

When I cut a tree, I need to sharpen a saw, skills, and strength. It is like the attitude of your life. However, if you use a chainsaw like this one, you do not have to use your own muscle strength to cut this log of wood. The power of a chainsaw is from its engine. Prayer is like an engine of your life. What you have to do is to direct and put the blade of the saw on an area to cut. Yet it is more powerful than yours. It is same to our life. We need PMA, Positive Mental Attitude, knowledge, courage, hard work and more. But we can not forget one more thing. That’s prayer.

Why do we fail in the ministry of saving souls? Because we do not pray. That’s what Jesus said to his disciples. We need a good attitude like “Whatever It Takes” to win the world to the Lord, however, we have to pray to use the power from heaven.

What kind of people are you? Whatever? Whatever It Takes? Do you do your best to win the world to Christ? Remember when Paul said, *“I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some,”* he prayed ceaselessly as Jesus did as well.