好 人 難 做
hao3 ren2 nan2 zuo4

Being a good Samaritan is, of course, good. But beware if you are trying to be helpful in Lakeland, Florida where a man who tried to help a two-year-old girl find her parents in a park was mistaken as a kidnapper and beaten up by the father and a few others.

The father insisted that he did nothing wrong even if the police confirmed that the man was just trying to help.

A police officer described what happened: "They grabbed that child and took him (the good Samaritan) from behind and knocked him to the ground and started kicking and hitting him." A further police statement stated: "this incident truly involved a good Samaritan trying to assist a lost child finding their parents."

Despite this, townspeople posted picture of the man online and called him a sex predator. The man was so frightened that he fled the town. If the good Samaritan has to wrap up the awful experience with a Chinese expression, he would probably say: "好人難做" (*hao3 ren2 nan2 zuo4*).

"好人" (*hao3 ren2*) means "a nice guy," "a fine person," "a good fellow," "難" (*nan2*) "difficult," "hard" and "做" (*zuo4*) "to do," "to become." Literally, "好人難做" (*hao3 ren2 nan2 zuo4*) is "it is hard to be a nice guy."

The expression means "difficult to please everybody," "difficult to be a good person," "one always gets blame from somebody no matter how fair and just he tries to be."

To an ungrateful person, the only thing you can say is "好人難做" (*hao3 ren2 nan2 zuo4*).

Terms containing the character "難" (*nan2*) include:

難題 (*nan2 ti2*) – a difficult problem; a tough question

難關 (*nan2 guan1*) – a crisis; a difficult that is hard to overcome

難免 (*nan2 mian3*) – hard to avoid; unavoidable

難忘 (*nan2 wang4*) – unforgettable; memorable