

Sermon: Living Your New Life in Your Work (Part 2)

IN Opportunities to connect and pray as a group

1. Who is/was the longest living member in your family? What do you think is/was the secret to their long life?
2. Research apparently shows that two out of three people say they would change jobs if they could. What attitudes do people you know have about their work situations? Knowing this, what has been your experience in the work world?

UP Time that is devoted to the Word of God

2. "The results of surveys on how one's faith impacts one's work show there is very little behavioral difference between Christians and non-Christians on the job."
(Pastor Henry) What are some reasons for this? What impact does this have in other environments of work (student, volunteer, intern, practicum, homemaker, retired etc)?
3. The following chart describes Pastor Henry's outline:

Sin negatively impacted work by:	Jesus Christ brought meaning back by:
1. Making it a struggle (Gen 3:17)	Replacing with His eternal perspective (Col 3:23)
2. Making work feel futile (Gen 3:19; Ecc 2:11)	a) Replacing with His call (vocation and occupation) b) Replacing with opportunity to point people to Him Rom 12:2; Col 3:22; 4:1; Eph 2:10; 1 Tim 4:15,16
3. Making work an idol (last week)	Making Him the centre of our lives, relationships and work

What phrases in the verses identify Paul's definition of 'vocation'?
How does knowing about 'vocation' transform the work ethic of the Christ-follower?
Identify some practical suggestions of what this means in the workplace?

4. Pastor Henry pointed out that each of us is made for a purpose.
Why is it important to acknowledge His gift of work to each of us?
How does Gal 3:26-28 indicate that all work is equally valuable?

OUT Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community

1. What is a 'take away' for you from the sermons about 'work'?
2. Why is it important to remember that God makes no mistakes?
How is this an encouragement for you in your work place environment?
3. What changes do you need to make this week in your 'work'?
How can the group pray for you?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Colossians 3:22-4:1

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. . . Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Genesis 3:17,19

To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. . . By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Ecclesiastes 2:11

Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Galatians 3:26-28

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1 Timothy 4:15,16

Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

Sermon Study Summary

Today's sermon is a continuation of last week's message taken from Paul's words in Colossians 3:22 – 4:1 which show what **BEING IN CHRIST** looks like in our work. In today's message, the question was posed – **'What is the secret to long life???'** Some of the expected responses are: the ability to forgive, exercise, eating right, honoring our parents, having a happy wife. The number one answer is in fact **work satisfaction** – enjoying or being content with our work. The sad thing is that two out of three people would change their jobs if they could – a majority of people are not satisfied with their work. Note the use of the word 'work' – even though all employment is work, not all work is employment. For instance, the homemaker managing the home and family; the student studying; the volunteer performing an unpaid task – all are working.

God intended work to be a good thing: God himself worked (Gen 1). He created the universe and the earth for our enjoyment. God continues to work sustaining & holding the universe together (Col 1:17). God designed us with abilities, skills and intelligent & creative minds so that we could be co-workers with Him in taking care of his creation and bless other people He created. God intended work to be a gift, a source of immense blessing and fulfillment in our lives.

God's plan for work was broken by sin: In Genesis we read when Adam & Eve decided to go against God's intended purpose for their lives, their relationship with God and one another was fractured. God's original plan and intention for His creation was broken including His plan for work. Sin negatively impacted work in at least 3 ways, it made work a struggle, it made work futile and it made work an idol.

Jesus brought meaning back to work.

By His death on the cross, Jesus provided a way for us to live eternally with God, and for Him to become the centre of our lives, our relationships and our work. Jesus replaces the futility of work with His call. Vocation (a calling) means 'to call'. We, as Christ's followers, are called to be His representatives to the world – His missionaries. We are to represent Christ through our lives and our work (Romans 12:2 - Kingdom of God mindset), and **all work is equally valuable to God**. We are to be diligent in our work (1 Tim 4:15). We must keep our word and do what we have been asked to do to the best of our ability. We must have humble servant hearts. We must not be workaholics with the aim of pleasing others. We should always seek to treat others the way that we want to be treated.

The mindset of the kingdom of this world is that our value comes from having the most valuable job (CEO). To Christ we are all equal – all one – regardless of our jobs. We have the same Vocation (calling). We are to work to the best of our ability in the hope of directing people to Jesus. We are to do our work as if working for the Lord (Col 3:23) – Doing good work and having a Christ-like attitude in our work directs people to Jesus. Unfortunately, often very little difference can be seen between Christians and Non-Christians on the job. While we are worshiping God through our work, He is working **IN US**, transforming us into the image of his son Jesus. Reflect Christ's attitude in your work by genuinely respecting and cooperating with those you work with, with those you work for and those who work for you.

God makes no mistakes. You are where you are at this point of time for a reason. We are all called to be 'salt and light.' We are where we are to point people to Jesus. Nothing we do in Jesus' name is in vain. You might be the only Bible those in your sphere of influence ever read. We were made for a purpose. We will never know true joy and satisfaction until we embrace Christ and His call for our lives.