

Work is Inescapable

October 28, 2012 ~ "Christian Materialism #4" ~ Gen 4.16-22

Man's Poor View of Work

- ❖ "Work is Inescapable" was chosen carefully
 - ✧ Many people want to escape work ~ Christians included . . .
 - ◇ III: Escape ~ picture of hole dug into floor of cubicle
 - ✧ As a general rule we humans do not have a high regard for "work"
 - ✧ Two common bumper stickers come to mind:
 1. "The worst day fishing is better than the best day working"
 2. "I owe! I owe! So off to work I go!"
 - ✧ I found 5 more that I want to share
 1. "I'm a victim of cruel and unusual employment."
 2. "I hate coffee. It keeps me awake at work."
 3. "If work is so terrific, why do they have to pay you to do it?"
 4. For the ladies ~ "Housework is evil, it must be stopped."
 5. "I'd tell you to go to hell, but I work there and I don't want to have to see you every day."
- ❖ Attitudes toward work are generally poor . . .
 - ✧ Many still do decent work ~ some do just enough to get by . . .
 - ✧ So the question is ~ "What should our attitudes toward work be?"

Work is Integral to Man's Two-Fold Command

- ❖ First – know that – "Work is not a part of the curse . . ."
 - ✧ God worked ~ God modeled work for man ~ God made man to work
 - ◇ Work is meaningful ~ honorable ~ worthwhile
 - ✧ The "Dominion Mandate" necessitates work
 - ✧ We were commanded to 1) fill the earth, and 2) subdue it
- ❖ Both of these commands are being undermined by modern humanists
 1. Humans are too numerous (Malthus) ~ birth rates have declined
 - ◇ Fewer children also suits modern lifestyle choices
 2. Man's position as "lord" or "steward" of the earth has been challenged
 - ◇ All know we're the superior species ~ but doubt we're the most noble
 - ◇ Mankind has a poor image in the eyes of modern humanists

Xition: We're supposed to work ~ But what exactly is it . . . ?

Work is Not Always for Pay

- ❖ Work is not necessarily just what you do to earn a living
 - ✧ But that is what receives the most criticism
 - ✧ *III*: Foamers ~ People use vacation to work at railroads ~ Proviso
 - ✧ Just as “One person’s trash may be another person’s treasure”
 - ✧ “One person’s despised job – may be another person’s beloved hobby”
- ❖ Work is: “anything we do to take dominion over our little piece of Earth”
 - ✧ Some of our work we do for pay ~ some out of love, duty, sacrifice, etc...
 - ◆ *III*: Tabitha’s salary is \$1M per day
 - ✧ Sometimes when work is done for pay it is diminished . . .
 - ◆ *III*: Scott Vaughan changing tire for woman in rain ~ wad of bills

But Let’s Restrict Ourselves to Work that Must Get Done

- ❖ The work required of us to maintain our homes & livelihoods
 1. Working outside of the home for pay
 2. Working inside the house to maintain home (*caring, teaching, meals, cleaning*)
- ❖ The Hebrew word for work actually means to “serve”
 - ✧ The same word describes the priestly service in the tabernacle / temple
 - ✧ Serving is what “work” really boils down to . . .
 - ✧ When we “work” we are “servicing” others
 - ◆ Work inside the home primarily serves the family
 - ◆ Work outside the home may serve others on a massive worldwide scale
- ❖ Our piece of the work may be so small that we don’t see its effect

Our Work is Ultimately Done for God

- ❖ God owns everything ~ God is everyone’s ultimate employer
 - ✧ **Job 41.11** ~ “*Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.*”
 - ✧ **Psalm 50.12** ~ “*If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fullness.*”
 - ✧ All work is ultimately done to serve God or to spite God
 - ◆ *III*: Dr. John’s is not in business to glorify God ~ but to defy Him
- ❖ God has orchestrated development of the world economy
 - ✧ Peoples of the world have grown increasingly interdependent
 - ✧ Nations are held accountable to standards of integrity in trading
 - ✧ God is honored as nations must trade with honor

Xition: That God owns everything is just one principle . . .

Several Principles to Remember as God's Employee

- ❖ Book: “**The Christian Employee**” ~ by Robert Mattox
 - ✧ Read this in August 1984 ~ 23 year old employee at Hughes Aircraft Co.
 - 1. God controls kingdoms and companies
 - 2. Your circumstances are designed by God
 - 3. You are employed by Christ, not by your company
 - 4. Count your superiors worthy of honor in thought, word and deed
 - 5. You must trust the Lord to direct your career
 - 6. Your status symbol must be the cross, not the dollar

1. God Controls Kingdoms and Companies

- ❖ God said the cattle on a thousand hills are His . . .
 - ✧ This is another way of saying “**everything is mine**”
 - ✧ Nations and companies rise and fall ~ And God's hand directs it
 - ✧ God rewards nations and companies that do His will

2. Your Circumstances are Designed by God

- ❖ Circumstances at our work may lead us to become discontent
 - ✧ Discontentment can often lead to resentment
 - ✧ Resentment can often lead to bitterness ~ and many more troubles
- ❖ The key then is to head ourselves off on the road to discontent
 - ✧ In **Phil 4.11** Paul said, “**I have learned . . . to be content**”
 - ✧ Even for Paul this was something he learned ~ We're not born with this
 - ✧ We acquire it through experiences . . . that God puts us through . . .

3. You are Employed by Christ, not by your company (or husband)

- ❖ If your boss offends you perhaps you become embittered
 - ✧ You may “**punish him**” by slacking off in your work
 - ✧ Perhaps you can “**hurt him**” in some way ~ not remind him of something
- ❖ We must resist this urge to “**give up**” ~ “**not care**” ~ “**get even**”
 - ✧ We must continue to do our job with integrity ~ “**Why?**”
 - ✧ Because our boss's boss is Christ ~ and we owe Him this . . .
 - ✧ The owner of the company is Jesus . . .

Xition: The 4th principle is . . .

4. Count Your Superiors Worthy of Honor

- ❖ Perhaps you wouldn't undermine your boss . . .
- ❖ But will you do your best to help him / her succeed?
 - ✧ If you regard yourself as ultimately working for God – you will

5. You must Trust the Lord to Direct your Career

- ❖ How you handle failure & disappointment depends on your character
- ❖ How you handle failure & disappointment molds your character
- ❖ Can you work hard regardless of who gets the credit?
- ❖ Will you do your best even if the boss (*or your husband*) won't notice?
- ❖ Solomon wrote in **Prov 22.29** “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men.”
 - ✧ Always strive to do better ~ pursue improvement & perfection

6. Your Status Symbol Must be the Cross, not the Dollar

- ❖ Money, power and celebrity is how the world measures success
 - ✧ Too many Christians have also bought into these

God has Given Gifts to Men ~ And They're Not Distributed Evenly

- ❖ In **Gen 4.20-22** God gave gifts to Lamech's sons
 - ✧ Already farmers – added ranchers ~ musicians ~ metal craftsmen
 - ◇ “all those who play . . .” & “instructor of every craftsman . . .”
 - ✧ Lamech was a bad man . . . Yet God blessed his sons with skills
 - ◇ “How may Seth's godly seed have viewed this?”
 - ◇ “How can God give such talent to men that hate Him?”
- ❖ **III: Amadeus** (1984) – Salieri lacked talent / recognized it in Mozart
 - ✧ Salieri addressing a crucifix ~ “**From now on we are enemies, You and I. Because You choose for Your instrument a boastful, lustful, smutty, infantile boy and give me for reward only the ability to recognize the incarnation. Because You are unjust, unfair, unkind, I will block You, I swear it. I will hinder and harm Your creature on earth as far as I am able.**”

Xition: “Why would God bless unbelievers with great talent?”

Let's Review Where We Are . . .

- ❖ In the fall our ability to fulfill the “**Dominion Mandate**” was compromised
 - ✧ God punished us with greater effort & greater pain
 - ✧ But He also promised ultimate victory over the enemy
- ❖ Satan still has great power & influence on earth
 - ✧ But man still has the rule (*though we rule poorly at times*)
- ❖ Christ has won the victory ~ yet still rules through His people (the Church)
 - ✧ **Mt 28.18** ~ “**All authority has been given Me in heaven and on earth”**
 1. Jesus regained what Adam lost (**earth**)
 2. Jesus had restored to Him what His Father had held in trust (**heaven**)
 - ✧ Jesus rules ~ But He has allowed Satan limited time
 - ✧ **!!!**: Satan and his angels are on a work-release program from prison
 - ✧ They're all in orange jump suits picking up trash along the road
 - ✧ Soon enough they'll be hauled back to prison – never to be let out again

Dominion Mandate -AND- Great Commission

- ❖ To the “**Dominion Mandate**” has been added the “**Great Commission**”
 - ✧ Man will fulfill his earthly destiny with the Lord Jesus as our Champion
- ❖ We (God's images on the earth) have dual objectives now
 - ✧ We are to take dominion of the earth ~ that hasn't changed
 1. We are to serve God, live in unity with men, and rule over creation
 2. We're to save souls ~ “**make disciples .., baptizing them .., teaching them**”
- ❖ God gives gifts to unbelievers so His children must interact with them
 - ✧ We are to be “**in the world**” but not “**of the world**”
 - ✧ God has knit believers & unbelievers together in 3 obvious ways
 1. We often work together at various jobs (business or government)
 2. We often live together in the same neighborhoods
 3. We often participate in similar social activities (*shop, dance, TKD*)
- ❖ “**May we demonstrate a Christian work ethic to the unbelievers we know**”

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, Both now and forever.

Amen.