

Repentance for Work Sins

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Luke 3, we'll read the first 18 verses. Please stand together with me for this reading from the Word of God. He went into all the country around the Jordan preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, a voice of one calling in the desert, Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low.

The crooked road shall become straight, the rough ways smooth, and all mankind will see God's salvation. John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by Him, You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. What should we do then? The crowd asked.

[1:32] John answered, The man with two tunics should share with him who has none. And the one who has food should do the same. Tax collectors also came to be baptized. Teacher, they asked, What should we do?

Don't collect any more than you are required to, he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, And what should we do? He replied, Don't extort money, and don't accuse people falsely.

Be content with your pay. The people were waiting expectantly, and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, I baptize you with water, but one more powerful than I will come.

The thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the weed into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And with many other words, John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. Well, did you experience the thorns and thistles in your workplace this week?

[2:40] All that makes work frustrating and toilsome labor under the sun. It was not this way from the beginning. Last Labor Day weekend, we began a study on God's view of work.

And we saw that from creation, God made us to work, and then he assigned us our job, get to work. He put us in a work environment in the garden. This is our God-ordered reason for living, purpose for life.

We've been put here to work. And we do that more than we do anything else in this life. And so work is to be one of the chief ways that we glorify and enjoy God and reflect his character.

He is a working God, and we work and reflect God in our work. What a high calling that is. Now, through man's fall into sin, God cursed the ground that Adam was called to work.

And that brought not labor into Adam's life. He always labored. It brought toilsome labor. It brought sweat that he'd never experienced before. Frustration.

[4:04] Meaninglessness. Into the workplace. But God in Christ is redeeming the creation and the people to himself.

And when God redeems a sinner from his sin, he also redeems work for that person. And he restores the great purpose for working.

To glorify God and to enjoy him in our work. To reflect him in our work. And he gives grace to deal with the remaining curse that is still attached to our work until Christ returns and creates a new heaven and a new earth.

In Christ, there is grace for thorny work. Now, I invite you to turn with me to Luke chapter 3, the portion that was read for us. We're in the desert of Judah.

Judea. Around 26 AD. The eternal Son of God is coming to present himself to Israel.

[5:15] To proclaim the gospel. To heal many and then to die. That is why he came. And so, he's about to come on the scene. The stage of Israel. But before he steps onto the stage, God sends a forerunner to announce his coming.

It is none other than John the Baptist. And you notice in verse 3, the word of God came to John. For some 400 years, there's been silence since the Old Testament scriptures.

When God's word came to his people through the prophets. And now, 400 years of silence. And now, the word of God comes to John to announce to his people.

And what is that word? Well, it's a word directly from heaven, as Luke tells us. The word of God came to John. And he comes as a one-man excavation crew, preparing the way for the Lord.

As was prophesied, valleys are being filled in. Mountains and hills are being lowered. The crooked roads are being straightened. And rough places are being made smooth.

[6:24] Like a bulldozer that rearranges the moral landscape. So, John comes. And he comes with the word of God. What is the bulldozer that's changing the landscape?

It's the call to repent of your sins. Verse 4, He came preaching, verse 3, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Repent from all your law-breaking, from all your transgressing of God's ways. Turn from your ways, your evil ways. Did you know that your sins are your biggest problems?

It is your biggest problem. And because of these, the Bible says the wrath of God is coming. In this very passage, verse 17, we see that Christ is coming, as we sang.

He is coming. And He's coming with His winnowing fork in His hand to clear His threshing floor. And to gather the wheat into His barn.

[7:31] But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Chaff does not do well in fire. And John says, neither do sinners in the fire of Christ's judgment.

The Lord is coming. He's coming to punish sins. So repent of your sins. Turn away from them if you would be forgiven of them.

Sin is like a hand grenade and the pin is already pulled. The punishment's coming. Get away. Toss it from you. Run from it. That's John's message of repentance.

And it was having a leveling effect throughout Israel. And so the crowds are pouring out into the desert to be baptized. Here they come.

We want to be baptized. After all, no one wants to suffer the eternal wrath of God for sin. But John must have shocked them that day. These were so used to doing religious things.

[8:33] Do we need to be baptized? Then let's go get baptized. And John says, hold it. Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Repentance is not a religious game you play, people. It's not an act that you put on.

It's not a ritual that you perform. Repentance is an actual forsaking of sins in your lifestyle. So produce the fruits of repentance.

Repentance. Prove your repentance is real by turning away from the actual sins, the actual breaking of God's commandments by having your crooked ways become straight again.

And so hearing the call to repent, the crowd then asked him, well, what should we do? What then shall we do? They knew that repentance means doing something.

[9:34] But exactly what, John? And so John gets down to specifics. The man with two tunics should share with him who has none. And the one who has food should do the same.

That's what repentance will look like. You'll forsake your selfish greed, your preoccupation with me and mine, and you'll start sharing and loving your neighbor as yourself.

And then a most interesting thing begins to happen in the crowd. Different groups who have gathered want to know what will it mean for us, John, to repent.

And John spells out what repentance means for those specific people themselves. And so the local labor union of tax collectors came out that day to be baptized.

And they say, what shall we do? These tax collectors. And John says, don't collect any more than you are required to.

[10:37] And over here is a group of soldiers. Perhaps they're for crowd control. And they ask, and what should we do? We soldiers. And John says, don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely and be content with your pay.

Isn't it interesting that John defines repentance for these groups in specific, in terms of specific sins of their workplace?

What does it mean to repent? It means to turn from the sins that are common at your work. Well, they didn't ask about work.

But John goes directly there to spell out what repentance looks like. For where people spend most of their time is often where they do most of their sinning.

So what must they do to repent of specific work sins? Well, indeed, if your repentance is genuine and saving repentance, then it must be seen in putting to death the sins that are common in your workplace.

[11:55] Well, what are these work sins? John's answer surely indicates that each occupation has its own occupational hazards and sins that are unique to that job.

But we can't help but see also that there are certain common sins of the workplace that most all workers will face whatever their job is. It includes wrong thoughts, wrong attitudes, wrong motivations, wrong behaviors.

And so we're going to consider some of these common work sins this morning. Let's start where John starts with stealing. Number one, stealing.

Repentance for you tax collectors will mean don't collect any more than you are required to. Now, the Jews in Palestine were under the rule of the Roman Empire and therefore they owed taxes to Caesar.

Well, Caesar hired Jews to collect the tax from their own countrymen and to hand it over to Caesar. And it was a well-known fact that most of these tax collectors were charging people far more than the taxes that they really owed and then they were pocketing the difference for themselves.

[13:10] Growing rich on the back of their own countrymen. No wonder they were hated and despised a lot. That's probably why they're standing over here by themselves. Birds of a feather flock together and they're hated.

When Jesus is going into the chief tax collector's home, Zacchaeus, the people all muttered he's going to be the guest of a sinner. And that's a word they say for prostitutes and other immoral people.

Yes, charging more taxes than what we really do is stealing. And so when they asked John the Baptist what should we do to repent, he doesn't tell them get a different job.

But rather do your job God's way. Do your job God's way. Do it in obedience to his moral law. I mean, this is just basic ABC stuff. The eighth command, you shall not steal. And John simply applying it to the workplace of the tax collector.

[14:18] Don't collect any more than you require to. That is the fulfilling of the law. That is what loving your neighbor as yourself means, men. That's what it means to treat others as you would be treated.

Don't collect any more than what you have coming. Well, tax collectors were not the only ones stealing on the job. soldiers, what should we do, John, to repent?

The very first words, don't extort money. Don't extort money. That is to get money unlawfully by threat or force or coercion.

You see, the Roman soldiers often accompanied the tax collectors on their house visits. And they used their position and power as Roman soldiers to intimidate the people and to force them to pay whatever was being asked.

And if some were reluctant to pay, they'd just rattle their swords a bit or rattle the keys to the jail. Pay up or else was the intended meaning.

[15:30] Extortion. And John blows their cover when he says, don't extort money. It's stealing. So I'm not going to baptize you men unless you're willing to forsake your stealing ways.

That's what repentance means for you, both tax collectors and soldiers. Repent of this work sin. In the same way, there's hardly a job today that does not have opportunities to make more money if only the person is willing to steal.

Think of the temptations that are peculiar to your job site and to your work. How could you steal at your job? Countless ways to rob from your employer, your employees, your customers, Uncle Sam.

When you don't pay your employees their due, do, you steal from them. We saw that in James chapter five. When you don't pay your bills on time as a business, you're stealing the use of that other person's money.

Price gouging, overcharging customers, you're taking more than you have a right to take. Not providing all that you agree to, not doing all you said you do in that agreement of work.

[16:50] embezzling money from the company accounts with just cooking of the books or falsifying expense account claims, fraudulent disability and workman's comp claims, insurance fraud.

It costs our country hundreds of billions of dollars every day and is sending premiums of insurance through the roof. Evidently, a California auto shop owner and his girlfriend got to thinking one day, how can we make more money at this work?

And they thought, well, let's claim that your car, girlfriend, was stolen and I'll just hide it here in my shop and nobody will know.

And we'll get money from the insurance company and we'll get to keep our car. That's better than the cash for conquer's deal. You get the money and keep the car as well.

But it's stealing, isn't it? That insurance money isn't yours. You're robbing from everybody else who's paying their premiums every month.

[18:06] Well, a few months later, the shop owner had a minor break-in at his shop. And what do you do when you have a break-in? Well, you call the police because nobody likes to be stolen from.

But these were the same ones that had received the stolen car report. And they showed up and there sat the car.

They were busted. Yes, there's many ways to steal in our workplace. You can take company supplies and products for your own personal use.

You can do personal business on company time. You can fiddle around on the computer. You can not give a full day's work to an employer who's paying you for the whole day.

You can show up late and take breaks early and quit early. You can be lazy and half-hearted in your work and so on. And true repentance means for you forsaking all such forms of stealing at work.

[19:15] Young people, as we said last week, most of your work right now is school work, right? When you cheat on a test, you're stealing answers that don't belong to you.

You look over and see somebody else's answer and put it on your paper. You just stole that. That wasn't yours. And as many of you know, there are dozens of ways to do that, to steal answers that are not yours.

True repentance is a forsaking of all forms of stealing. Remember Zacchaeus' repentance? He was the chief tax collector.

He did a lot of thieving. And Jesus of Nazareth stopped him, called him down from his perch in the tree, went home with him and saved him. And Zacchaeus stood and said, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.

If I took a hundred dollars more tax money from you than I should, I'll pay you back four hundred dollars. And so now he's out knocking on doors. And this time there's no soldiers accompanying him.

[20:35] And the husband and wife are huddled inside the door. They say, who's that? It's him. That old thieving tax collector, Zacchaeus. What's he doing here?

It's not even tax time. I don't know. They open the door. What do you want? Well, I'd like to say that I'm sorry for having cheated you out of your money.

And here, here's four times the amount that I stole. There was joy in a lot of households in that tax district that day. as they received their repentance rebate and as they were kicking themselves, saying, oh, why didn't Zac steal more from me than I would receive four times my amount?

What got into old Zac went from a thieving, grasping old man to a man who's humbly acknowledging his thieving, stealing ways and giving back fourfold.

Jesus has met this man. Salvation has come to this man's heart. Glory came to Jesus because of the repentance of one sinner.

[21:51] The second works in, well, I've told you before, just in concluding and illustrating once more that point, when a revival broke out, a revival of true religion came to a city in the British Isles over a hundred years ago, converted workers brought back so many stolen tools that the factory had to build new barns or new warehouses just to house the stolen goods returned over the many

years of those workers because real repentance brings forth fruit in the workplace.

Now, another common sin in the workplace is lying. Notice chapter 3 and verse 14. When he said to the soldiers, don't extort money, he didn't stop talking to the soldiers.

He went on and said, don't accuse people falsely. You see, it wasn't beneath these soldiers to falsely accuse people to get money unlawfully from them.

We had your donkey clocked at 20 miles per hour in a 10 mile hour zone, so pay up. In some way, they could lie about them, falsely accuse them, put pressure on them, will drag you into court. Whether what they said was true or not, they were willing to lie in order to gain money. Isn't it something how lying and stealing often go together?

[23:18] That's what we see from these men. Don't extort money and don't give false testimony. Don't steal and don't lie. You know, those two are found together in the Ten Commandments, aren't they?

Eight and nine. And they're often found together in this world. Tax collectors steal. How? By lying. You owe me, let's see, it says \$900, I'm going to tell them \$950.

You owe me \$950. They lied in order to steal. In order to make that fraudulent insurance claim, that lady had to fill out a form in which she lied.

She said, my car was stolen. She sought to steal by lying. Perhaps in order to steal money that was not yours, you had to lie on your time card, your mileage logs, your reports, your schedules, your forms of many kinds.

Kids in your school work, when you put your name on the top of the paper, you know what you're saying? You're not just saying that's what my mommy called me. You're saying all the work below this name is mine.

[24:27] It's mine. So if you got that paper or wholesale paragraphs off the internet and just plugged it in and put your name at the top, you're lying.

That isn't your work. That's plagiarism. It's one of the biggest problems universities have today because people are willing to lie at their school work in order to get a better grade.

You can call in sick when you're not really sick. What's that? Well, everybody does it. Just a way to get another day off.

No, it's lying, isn't it? It's lying. You can lie on your job applications. You can lie to get off the hook. It wasn't me.

when it was you. I did it when you really didn't do it. You can lie for your boss as well as to him and cover up for him in forums or on the phone.

[25:40] You can lie to customers claiming more for your product and services than is true. You can misrepresent a competitor or his product. though there are many things that are so common in the business world that sometimes people are called shrewd and business wise who are able to do these things.

God calls these things lying. They're sins that must be repented of because the wrath of God is coming for sin. Now, there's a curious passage in Proverbs 11 and verse 1.

You have it on your outline. It says, the Lord abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight. When the Bible says God abhors something, I sit up because it means it's using the strongest term to tell us what God hates.

What does he hate with a passion? What does he despise? And I'm all ears and it's dishonesty at work. It's lying on the job.

Lying scales, dishonest scales. As the vendor sells his flour, he's got a one pound weight over here. You want a one pound of flour. And so he puts his weight on one side of the balance and he starts piling flour on here until it's even.

[27:09] Only what you don't know is that that weight only weighs 15 ounces. And so every pound he sells you, he is stealing from you because he's lied to you.

It was a lying scale and the Lord hates it with a passion. He abhors it. What delights the Lord of glory?

I'm all ears again. Imagine there he is in all his glory. We heard of the Lord Jesus in his ascended glory with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect singing their hallelujahs to him.

Oh, he delights in the praises of his people. What else does this great God of glory delight in?

Accurate weights, truth telling at the job, honest business dealings.

It's his delight. This is the way it was supposed to be. This is in line with my moral character. This is reflecting my moral nature, my moral law.

[28 : 21] You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. That's loving one another as he sees the accurate weights. That's loving one another. That's treating another as you want to be treated.

God smiles and takes great delight. Now I don't want to shatter the image that these little lies at work are not really that important to God.

Sixteen ounces to the pound is important to God. Do you mean he will hate and damn a man for one ounce less?

Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He who speaks the truth from his heart, who keeps his oath even when it hurts.

Yes, telling the truth may mean less money for you, may mean more of a headache for you at your job. Your boss may be mad that you won't lie for him. But your God will be delighted.

[29 : 25] Your God will be delighted. And John the Baptist says don't even bother being baptized if you don't tell the truth at work. Don't claim to be a follower of Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Don't claim to be a follower of the truth if you're not repenting of your lying. A third common sin of the! is discontent.

Because John's not done with these soldier boys yet, is he? What should we do to repent? Don't extort money, don't falsely accuse others, and be content with your pay.

Ouch! He had to say that in front of all these people, didn't he? This is why they bullied and lied and extorted money.

They weren't content with what they were paid. They wanted more. And by hook and by crook they were going to get it. How did John know that they sat around back at the barracks complaining about their wages?

[30 : 35] I don't believe it was special revelation given to John on his feet. John simply knows that the human heart without grace from God always wants more. John had a heart that was once without perhaps and remembered and sought in others.

Be content with your pay. He goes right to the quick with these men. It's part of what the ongoing life of repentance is all about.

Now that doesn't mean that it's wrong to seek a job that pays more. It doesn't mean that it's wrong to take a job that pays more. It doesn't mean that it's wrong to speak up for wages that are right and fair as the opportunity is given to you to do so.

Perhaps through contract negotiations at your job you're given an opportunity to voice your opinion on what a right and just and fair wage should be.

Do so and carry yourself carefully in that context. Beware of a covetousness and greed that causes discontent.

[31 : 45] And as Matthew Henry comments while you are paid what you agreed on do not murmur that it is no more. To sign the contract then shut your mouth be content with your pay till the next contract negotiation when you can lobby and give your voice if you think that you're being treated wrongly.

Remember though final payday is still coming. There's a boss in heaven who rewards those who have been cheated on earth. And you know Paul is able to tell these slaves who weren't paid what they were worth.

You know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he has done. You just go on doing good at your job. He will reward you. So how much do you need to be content?

Well Paul can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing we will be content with that.

In fact Paul could be content with less than food and clothing. There were times that he didn't have sufficient food. And he says I have learned to be content even without proper food.

[33 : 07] Wow. Why are some not satisfied with what God in his providence has provided for them at work. First Timothy 6 9 and 10 people want to get rich.

That's why. And people who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires. We've seen some this morning like lying and stealing on the job to get more. Foolish harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction for the love of the root of all kinds of evil work evils. Some people eager for money have wandered from the faith and pierced

themselves with many griefs.

They've seen the faith of Jesus Christ. They've seen the faith of the apostles that Christ announced to his people. And part of that faith is repent of your work sins and be content with your pay.

And they've been willing to wander from the faith because they're not willing to walk by such a rule. Think and Grow is a popular business motivational book, or it was, by Napoleon Hill.

[34 : 18] And he says in that book, you can never have riches and great quantities unless you can work yourself into a white heat of desire for money and actually believe you will possess it.

Yes, this is being taught as a virtue to businessmen and women to work yourself into a white heat of desire for money and the love of money, Paul says, is a formula for discontent, disaster, and destruction.

So keep yourself free from the love of money and be content with what you have because God has said, never will I leave you, never will I forsake you. You see, if you're a Christian this morning, you have all the more reason to be content.

You may not have as much money as the next guy in his job, but you have something perhaps that he doesn't have if he doesn't have the to be content.

Be content. God says that. God says, be content for I have said, I will never leave you or forsake you. We have God as our portion.

[35 : 34] God is saying, you'll always have me. Am I not enough for you? All these things search us. Is his smile enough of a reward?

Yes, we have to feed the family. Yes, we have to pay bills, but oh, be careful brethren. I find in my Bible this call to repentance includes forsaking discontentment over the pay scale.

Now, John's putting his finger on work-related sins. He's not meaning to be exhaustive here. This isn't all the work sins, obviously. He's rather being suggestive.

We didn't hear everybody asking the question. We just heard these couple groups weigh in. But what we do learn this morning is that temptations to sin at work are real.

And we learn that this matter is of utmost importance to God. Indeed, there is no forgiveness of sins where there is no repentance from work sins.

[36 : 36] sin. There are many other sins at the workplace. I simply want to mention one other. It's not in our text, but it's so common to all the different occupations.

It is mentioned many, many places in Scripture. And it's laziness. Laziness. You ever seen that at work? Lazy, half-hearted efforts at work are condemned by God as sin because it's a form of stealing.

many Christians who would never think of breaking into the office after hours and stealing \$50 from the cash drawer.

Think nothing of every week stealing \$50 from their employer just by half-hearted efforts at work.

Lazy. Stealing time is no less stealing than stealing money because in business time is money.

Laziness is not only a form of stealing, it's also a form of wastefulness. Proverbs 18.9 says one who is slack in his work is brother to the one who destroys.

[37 : 41] We got two brothers up here. This guy's name is slack. Lazy. He's a slacker. You've heard that term? Here he is, slacker. You know who his brother is?

Destroyer. What's the connection? What's the connection between slacker and destroyer? Well, by being slack at your job, you are being a destroyer at your job.

You're destroying the attitudes of others around you, but you're destroying the potential that you owe to your employer.

And once destroyed, once you've wasted that time by lazy efforts, you can't recover it. You've destroyed it. Laziness is a form of stealing, it's a form of wastefulness, and it's a form of wickedness.

You say, boy, isn't that a strong word for laziness, John? Well, it's the word our Savior selected out of the dictionary. Remember the parable he told of the three workers, the three servants, and the master was going away into a far country, and he left his talents, his money, with his servants.

[38 : 52] And to one servant he gave five talents of money, and to another three talents of money, and to one servant he gave one talent of money. And the man who had received the five talents of money put it to work and earned five more, and so on.

The man with three did the same, earned three more, or was it two? Two talents of money, earned two more. But the man who had received the one talent didn't put his money to work, he just went

and dug a hole and buried it.

And now the master's returned, and he's calling on the men to give an account for their work assignments. And the servants with five and two present five more and two more, and receive the well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy, the happiness of your master. What about the one guy who just went and buried it? Jesus didn't commend him.

He didn't say, boy, I'm sure glad that you're so careful and didn't want to see my money stolen, and you protected it. No, he said, you wicked, lazy servant.

[40:01] Wicked was the word he chose for this man, who did not put work into what the Lord had left him to.

You wicked, lazy servant, cast him out into darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Now, according to Jesus, then laziness is wickedness.

Man was made to work, and laziness is rebellion against God's original command to man. He put man in the garden and said, work, and laziness says, I don't want to work.

And we have all sorts of ways of saying that. Look at Colossians chapter 3. Again, that passage that we saw last week is so important to us here in the New Testament revelation about work where a word is given directly to slaves.

These were household workers, but not just household workers, slaves, on the lowest of the totem pole. And they're told in Colossians 3.

[41:05] 22 and following, Obey your earthly masters in everything and do it not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for men. You know, I bet these slaves did some pretty dirty things.

They did what nobody else in the house wanted to do. And the word from heaven is whatever you do. In other words, it includes that slave, that disgusting job that nobody wants to, whatever you do, do it with all your heart.

As work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord and not for men since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

It is the Lord Christ you are serving. You ever witnessed any of these characteristics listed in this passage? He only works hard when the boss is watching.

[42:06] Boss comes around, boy, everything's hip hop, done according to the way the boss wants it done, and then he leaves and it's back to business as usual. Half-hearted efforts, sloppy work, that's not new.

Slaves were doing it in Colossae 2,000 years ago, and this passage condemns such. It condemns all half-hearted, lazy work.

It says you got the wrong aim in work. Your aim is purely manward. You're looking on the outward appearance. You're just looking at when the boss comes. And that's why you're only concerned to win the favor of your boss.

No, you're working for the wrong audience. You're working for the wrong boss. Christian, the first principle of the biblical work ethic is that we work for God.

We work for God. So whether my earthly boss comes within 10 miles of my workplace, it shouldn't make a difference in the work that I am producing, right? Because my heavenly boss is always watching.

[43:12] And being aware that he's always watching is reverence for the Lord. It's the fear of the Lord. Heard that concept? It's throughout the scripture. What is it?

It's the pressing awareness that I'm always under the eye of God and every thought and word and deed committed or omitted is known by him and will be judged by him.

And so I am to work with reverence for the Lord. Oh, I'm to work for this boss. Well, then I'm checked in till check out. I'm busy and I'm working with all my heart as to the Lord and not to men. Some of you say, well, I'm self-employed so I can slack off as much as I want. No, you can't. Maybe with the IRS you're considered as self-employed, but with G-O-D you're an employee of God. You're his employee. You work for the Lord, not for men, not even yourself. And therefore we should have an eye to God. In all we do in our workplace, that will keep us from lying, it will keep us from stealing, it will keep us content, and it will keep us from lazy work efforts.

[44:23] Well, we need to know that. We need that help, don't we? When work gets hard, when the conditions at work are poor and lousy, and the pay is not that good, and times are tough and we're even asked to take less pay, we need to remember we have a boss in heaven.

And live unto him and work unto him. Young people, when your work is schoolwork, give yourself fully to your work. Some of you know how to give yourself fully to your athletic events.

That's encouraging to see. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might. Don't be half-hearted on the ball field. If it's not worth doing with all your might, then don't do it.

But when that same hand picks up the textbook, do it with all your might. God's given you the mind. Honor him with it. Wholehearted unto him.

There's a lazy streak in the back of every one of us, and our work will only glorify God as we mortify that part of us. That part of us that's allergic to hard work, that craves ease and rest.

[45:39] Laziness either is mortified or it rains. May the Lord help us. When we get weary, we look over to Jesus. You see, he's in the yoke with us, Christian, and we're learning from him, and we see he's no slacker.

Can you imagine him being half-hearted in the carpentry shop? No, I can't. That's sin. That's wickedness. He wouldn't have anything of it. He's working all out.

And when we see him in the Gospels, isn't that what we see when he's doing that work for our redemption? He's all out. He doesn't stop. He doesn't go half-heartedly. He works with all of his heart until he can cry in victory, it is finished.

I finished the work my father has given me to do. Look to him for grace. Look to him for mercy.

You see, what John the Baptist was saying to the crowd that day and what God is saying to us this day is that your sins, your work sins, are so offensive to God that you will suffer his eternal wrath for them if you are not repenting and forsaking them.

[46:53] That's why I put a question at the bottom of your worksheet. Do you mean to tell me that these little piccadilly work sins that we've talked about today are so serious that God will send people to hell forever because of them?

That's what John the Baptist is saying. The wrath of God is coming, so repent for the forgiveness of your sins. You see, if you think that these things aren't serious enough, you know what it shows? It shows that you don't understand the dynamics of any sin, which is man rebelling against his maker.

It's not just that work sins are big, diet sins are big. Oh, you've really gone to picking now. Wasn't that the first sin that sunk us all into damnation? When Eve and Adam then took the forbidden what?

Food. The forbidden fruit. It wasn't on the diet. They could eat from everything but that. Well, that's just a little thing. Oh, was it?

[47:58] In the day you eat it, you will surely die. And condemnation has come upon all men because in that one man Adam we all sinned. And it was just over a matter of which food was to be eaten.

This food but not that food. And so now we're in a different arena. We're in the work arena. And the issue is what kind of behavior is acceptable to God? This kind and not that kind.

Now we're in the dating relationship. What do we do with our bodies? This is acceptable and this is not acceptable. And now we're in the realm of entertainments and this is acceptable and this is not acceptable.

God has spoken in his word and you see at any point of these commands where we say no to his way and yes to our way we are rebelling against God.

That's why any sin deserves the wrath of God forever. God has so please don't just brush this stuff aside. Oh that's just that's little stuff.

[49:04] John the Baptist didn't come with a word from God to tell us it's little stuff. He came to tell us it's so big that Christ is coming with his winnowing fork and when he comes part of the account you're going to have to give man is for what you did those 40 hours every week.

Part of the accounting you're going to have to give young man and young ladies is what you did in the classroom in your school work in those jobs that were given to you by your parents.

This is serious business because God is holy. God is good. We dare not thumb him. We dare not offend this God. John is coming and saying that but you know what that's not all John's saying.

Isn't it a wonderful thing that at the end of that passage we had read for us it says and with these and many other words. John exhorted the people and preached the good news to them. Yes there's bad news it's your sin. It must go. Do you know what the good news is and John was a great preacher of it. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[50:12] There's one who takes away sin. There's one who takes away work sins. There's one who takes away all sins. Who is he? He is the eternal son of God.

Come as the Lamb of God. The sacrificial Lamb. The substitutionary Lamb. We sang of him our surety. Our sacrificial Lamb. The one who died in our place.

You see he didn't have any work sins. So he didn't have to die for his work sins. But we deserve to die for our work sins. We deserve damnation for ours. And the Lamb of God has come as a sacrifice to step in for his people.

And to take what we had coming. That we might go free. How is it that he takes away the sin of the world? Takes it away by becoming sin for us.

By becoming sin for us and being punished as the sin bearer. Have you trusted in this Savior? Is he your hope? If not, you're still standing under the wrath of God.

[51:19] And one day you will be judged for all your work sins and all your other sins. The Bible says the wages of sin is death. But there is a second death for all outside of Christ that is the lake of fire.

So what's the message? The message is get into Christ. Because when you get into Christ, it's not just God and his wrath standing over you, the sinner, it is now God and this substitute Jesus who has hung on the cross and died in your place, taking that wrath and so turning it away from you so that now you stand under grace.

You stand forgiven. You stand clean. Indeed, all of his work habits in the carpentry shop and in the streets of Galilee where he ministered, all of his perfect work habits are credited to your account in heaven and you have a righteousness that puts you in good stand with God forever.

That's what. You need to get into Christ this morning. Come to him. Don't try to work harder. You'll only offend God more if you turn from his son, the only way of salvation.

Own your sin. Come to him. And then as a Christian, as a forgiven sinner, you'll say, Lord, I know you don't need my work, but I want to show how much I love you and I want to work with all my heart, not for men, but for you, you who deserve it.

[53:04] Let's sing as our response to his word number 494, Jesus master, whose I am. Can you say that? Is Jesus your master?

Have you bowed to him? Have you trusted in him? If so, you can sing this from the bottom of your heart. If not, cry out to him right in where you're standing.

Own your sin and trust in him as the sin bearer. Let's pray. Lord, Father, we stand before the word that you sent so many years ago.

we stand as the thieves. We stand as the liars. We stand as the discontents. It is the lazy, the wicked, the destroyers.

And we confess our sins. It's us. We are the sinners. We also confess gladly and rejoice in the gospel that you sent your sacrificial lamb, your one and only son, he who never spoke anything but the truth.

[54:16] He worked for everything that was rightfully received. He was never discontent and always full out.

Oh, receive us for Jesus' sake. Look on him and pardon us. Has he not purchased our forgiveness? forgiveness. That is our hope.

That is our only plea. And has he not purchased grace for us? Even yet in this time of difficulty in our jobs and in our schoolwork, is there not grace for us to work pleasingly unto you here and now?

Oh, give us that grace, the grace to help us in our time of need. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.