

The Gospel and Our Work

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[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to Colossians chapter 1. We'll read the first 23 verses of Colossians chapter 1.!

When we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints, the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you.

All over the world, this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf and who also told us of your love in the spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

[1 : 29] And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience and joyfully giving thanks to the father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son. He loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.

All things were created by him and for him. He is before all things and in him, all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church.

[2 : 42] He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. So that in everything, he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you wholly in his sight without blemish and free from accusation.

If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel.

That, however, is not why I'm here today. In some ways it is. We're here today to wrap up the CTA conference.

[4 : 14] If you're part of CTA, either one of the attendees or one of the people that work. If you just raise your hand, most of them are up here. But I think there's a few. Yep, see, they're scattered.

They're around different places. All right, so mostly over there and a few over that direction. I think, if I'm not mistaken, Grace Fellowship Church has sponsored or put on CTA for five years now.

This is the fifth year. And I think this is the first merging of Grace Fellowship Church and the conference goers. Maybe with a service project earlier, but this is the first time you've all worshiped together. So as you all have prayed for CTA and worked and given towards it, this is the fruit of your labor.

Now, five years' worth of people as well. Some of them aren't here today. But I think it's good that we can worship together today and see what God has done and appreciate what he's done for these young people through the labors of this church.

So thank you all for putting it on, for welcoming all of us conference goers today. We're glad to be here. Now, that merging of conference goers plus Grace Fellowship Church makes for an interesting message this morning.

[5 : 28] Over the last two days, about 30 or so of the people here have heard three messages on the subject of work. We've tried to lay a foundation of God's pattern and design for work.

We've talked about the fall in work and how the fall in our sin affects both the work that we do and us as workers. And then last night we dug into the subject of how God calls us to our work.

He assigns us our lot in life. He gifts us for the work that we have to do. And he uses us to accomplish his purposes in the world through our work.

And so there's a lot that I'm assuming this morning because we've gone over it the last couple of days over in North Webster at the conference center.

The rest of you beyond those 30 or so have not heard those messages. So you don't have that foundation that some are working from. But I hope that this message will be profitable for you in thinking about your work regardless of whether or not you heard the original or the first three messages.

[6 : 29] I hope we'll be able to bring the truth of God's word to you in such a way that it will be beneficial for everyone that is here this morning. This morning, so we've done God's design for work, the fall and work, gifting, calling, vocation.

And this morning I want to talk about the gospel and our work. The fall has unquestionably affected our work and us as workers. We sin in our work, which makes it harder for us and for the people around us and to accomplish our work.

So how do we deal with the realities of the fall and our sin when it comes to work? The reality that our work is harder and more frustrating because of the fall. The reality that our sinful attitudes and words and actions make our work far more difficult, even though work itself is good.

We need to say this at least from some of the things we looked at over the weekend, that God designed work as part of his original plan for the world.

There was work before the fall. Before man ever fell into sin, God put Adam in the garden to work it and to keep it. Work is good. If you're here today thinking that work is inherently evil, it's drudgery, we've tried to undo some of those notions and conceptions that some people have.

[7 : 45] The work itself is good. The work, though, now is harder because of sin and because of sinners like us. So just as the answer generally to the fall and sin is the gospel of Jesus Christ, so the answer specifically to the fall and sin in our work is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And so to apply the gospel to our fall affected work and workers, I want to dip briefly this morning into Paul's letter to the Colossians, the saints at Colossians.

And I want to talk about first about the gospel pretty generally, truths that you know, but I hope you'll be encouraged to remember them and be refreshed in them. And then the gospel specifically for your work.

What does that mean for the way that you work? So let's start with the gospel. Paul has some really important exhortations for the Colossians. And as he so often does, he roots those exhortations in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He lays a theological foundation for his practical and ethical directions to the Colossian church. God, we see in chapter one that we've just read, is full of grace and peace.

[8 : 57] He's delivered us. Think about it. Don't just let these roll off. Think about them. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son. And it is in his son, Christ, that you, child of God, those of you who are trusting Christ this morning in Christ as children of God, you have redemption.

The forgiveness of sins. Now, maybe we sometimes think about that as objective fact, but think about it this morning as personal truth. Not just that God redeemed sinners, but that God saved me in Christ.

Remarkably, I, and we could say that the chief of sinners as Paul did, if we understand ourselves rightly. I have been the gift or the recipient of the gift of forgiveness of sins and have been redeemed.

It's not just abstract truth. It's personal. You have been transferred from darkness to light. You have redemption. The forgiveness of sins. The father's grace and peace are for you.

With all of those great blessings come great responsibility. That means that you personally, not Christians generically and generally, and yes, Christians should do this.

[10 : 10] You particularly, child of God, are expected then to live as a follower of Christ. There are some commands, again, not generic, personal for you.

And this letter has some in particular about work that we want to come to in a few moments. Some really helpful commands for you. But I want us to understand that they're rooted in the reality of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has come to you.

And so if you're a child of God this morning, trusting in Christ, what Paul writes of the Colossians in Christ is true of you in Christ. So look with me again through chapter one. We'll just sort of fly through it quickly in verses two through six.

You are saints and faithful brothers because the gospel, that's verse two, because verse five and six, the gospel has come to you and you, verse four, have put your faith in Christ Jesus.

And verse five, faith in Christ means that you have hope laid up in heaven because verse six of the grace of God. Again, when you read these things, that's what Paul said to the Colossians. That's what God set down in scripture to say to you, not just them.

[11 : 17] The saints at Colossians, those things are yours. But why is faith in Christ the ticket to these marvelous blessings of grace and peace? Well, simply Christ is the one in whom we have reconciliation instead of enmity.

You all know what it is to be enmity, to be enemies of one another, to be enemies with another person. Your odds, there's no peace. There's no strife to be an enmity with God, though, is far worse.

You have a you have a spat with somebody at work that can be worked out. We can deal with that. You're at enmity with God. You can't just sort of work it out. Say, hey, God, can we kind of work this through and I'll try to do a little bit better and you maybe give me a break and and we'll work out this enmity.

You all know better to be at enmity to God is to be under his wrath, under judgment, unholy in the presence of the Holy One, awaiting his wrath to fall on you.

But to be reconciled to someone, you know, the joy of a relationship that had been broken and then reconciled. That's a sweet thing. It's a blessing, even more so when that reconciliation is with the Holy God, that you are no longer under his wrath because of sin.

[12 : 32] How does that reconciliation happen? Well, we need a mediator. It happens through Christ, our Savior. And that's what he talks about in verses 11 through 13. You read that and this is this marvelous description of who Christ is, the image of the firstborn God, the preeminent one, the firstborn of all creation.

It's it should make you want to worship when you read that you should go praise the Lord for our Savior Christ when you read that. But some of the things we learn in there are remarkable.

It should make us worship because that was us. Verse 13 in the domain of darkness. Verse 21 alienated. There's an enmity hostile in mind doing evil deeds, including relevant to our subject here this morning.

The sins related to our work. All of that working against us. Our sins of idolatry and idleness and our work. And that sin meant we were under God's wrath and enmity with him.

But Christ, Christ, who is the preeminent one and is God himself, reconciles us to himself through his blood. Verse 22, he reconciles us to himself through his blood shed on the cross in him.

[13 : 44] Verse 14 in him, we have redemption and forgiveness. And so we have peace with God instead of enmity. How does that happen? Well, God at the cross punished his son for the sins of his people instead of pouring out that punishment on us.

That's the only way we can be reconciled. That sin can't be swept under the rug. It can't be ignored. It can't be disregarded. It must be dealt with. And God did that at the cross. And so Jesus took the punishment we deserve.

And we receive his reward. And so we are reconciled to God. That's good news, brothers and sisters. Amen. That's the best news. Listen to how he puts it over in chapter 3.

Turn over there with me for a moment to Colossians 3. He said that's good news. That's what the word gospel means. You know, the gospel is good news for sinners like us.

So he says in chapter 3, verses 1 through 4, We are united.

[15 : 05] As those now at peace with God, we are united to Christ. That's the only way we can be at peace with God. If we are joined to Christ, you come into the presence of God without the Lord Jesus Christ and his righteousness.

You don't stand a chance. But we're not alone. We're united to Christ. We're joined to him. We're in union with him. And he is our life. And we will be with him in glory. All through his work of reconciliation because of God's great grace which we receive by faith.

Gospel is rich, isn't it? So before we really even say anything about work today, I hope that you're excited this morning to remember the reality that is yours, child of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if that is not true of you today, if you are here and you're an unbeliever, you're not trusting in Christ, these remarkable, really earth-shattering truths that I think are sometimes so familiar to us that we don't appreciate them, this really good news can be yours.

And the bigger thing for you today is not to figure out what your work should look like. The bigger thing for you today is to figure out what your eternity will look like.

[16 : 19] Because if you are not reconciled to God, you'll spend an eternity suffering. And so you need to know Jesus. You need this reconciliation. And if you get that figured out, which you can only do through Christ, come to Him.

Then come and talk to me and talk about work. Or get this message and the recording of it and listen to it later. And figure out the part about your work. Because if you're not a believer today, that's your most important priority.

Is that you would come to Christ and come to know and love and trust Him. So that you can enjoy this forgiveness of sins, this freedom, this reconciliation that we have. You come and trust in Jesus today.

We are great sinners. And Christ is the great Savior of sinners. Delivered by Him from death to life. Now that sounds pretty radical, doesn't it? Death to life.

It sounds like some things should change when we undergo that radical reconciliation. And things do change. And we're not left wondering what the implications of our faith and new life in Christ are.

[17 : 20] How things are to change. Paul begins spelling them out for us. Listen to some of the connections that he makes. Since we are reconciled by Christ through faith. Back in chapter 1 now. Look at verses 9 and 10 again.

He says, And so from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you. Asking that it may be filled with knowledge of His will and all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So as to...

All of this good news, all of this gospel is for a purpose. So as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. Fully pleasing to Him. Bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

If we have faith, if we have trusted in Christ, we should walk in a manner worthy of the One in whom we have put our faith. Bearing fruit in good works. Our life should not look the same before coming to Christ and after coming to Christ.

We should... Before we walked according to the ways of the world. We walked the way we wanted. Now we walk in a way that is worthy of Christ who called us. And Christ is holy. And so our walk must be a walk of holiness.

[18 : 24] Following Him. Bearing fruit. Producing good fruit. Not stagnant. Not just hanging out here. No, we change because the gospel has changed us. Chapter 2 and verse 6.

Jump over there with me for a moment. Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith just as you were taught abounding in thanksgiving.

It's not as you receive Christ, just keep on going. No. So walk in Him. Live in Him. And he goes on to explain then in the next section how they don't need to be captive to men's traditions in their Christian walk.

We just looked at chapter 3 and verse 1. If we've been raised with Christ, then we'll seek heavenly things. Not earthly things. We'll be heavenly minded. Not earthly minded.

And increasingly so. If we have been changed by Christ, we'll be Christ-like in the way that we think. And so, chapter 3 and verse 12.

[19 : 28] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Since this is true. Since the gospel is true, behave this way.

And listen to what he says. Yeah. Hold on. Before you look at that. There are some passages in the Bible that I think that if Christians would take them to heart and seek to live them out in their place of work, in their marriages, in their parenting, in their church life, then things would be much smoother than they are.

If we were to live out some of these directions in this passage that I'm about to read, I think that that we might be able to flip on its head some of the bad things that we do in our relationships, work, parenting, and so on.

If we were to just live this out in every part of our life, every part of life by God's blessing would be better. Now, it's only believers that can do this because this is the nature of a changed life of those in Christ.

But look, as God's chosen ones, what are we to put on? Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another.

[20 : 49] And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Would those things make your workplaces and your homes and your churches better places by God's grace? And he goes on, His word should dwell in you. Let the peace of Christ which should rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called.

And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. And then let it flow out of you, teaching, admonishing one another and all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Friends, there is to be a direct connection.

Direct connection between the Gospel and your life. You are to walk in a manner worthy of the Gospel. Worthy of the manner of the God and a manner worthy of the God to whom you've been reconciled.

[21 : 56] Right? That's a little bit about the Gospel and how it generally should begin to change us as Christians. Now let's think specifically about the Gospel and our work. Gospel changes behavior generally.

What does it mean specifically for our work? Again, the book that I've been mentioning this weekend, Gilbert and Traeger, The Gospel at Work, really helpful in working through some of these things.

And again, if you weren't part of the conference, think about this just for a moment. If you don't have a job, you're not employed, you don't have a 9 to 5, don't say, well this isn't for me, it's talking about work.

All of us work. We work at our jobs from 9 to 5 or second shift or third shift or whatever they are or you set your own hours and you're flexible. We work in our homes, there is yard work, there is at our house a never-ending cycle of laundry work to be done.

There is the work of parenting. There is the work that students do in studying and writing papers and taking exams. There is the work even that little children can do as they're given chores around their house.

[23 : 08] So if you are not, if you do not have an, you're not employed right now by an employer, you are employed by God. He has called you, He has assigned you your lot in life. He has given you the work that you do.

So don't check out now if you're not an employee of a company somewhere. This is for all of us and the work that God has given us to do. So for our work, things change.

Last night we talked about what doesn't change in our work. When God calls us to Himself, when He saves us, when we receive the Gospel by faith, it doesn't mean we have to change vocations, occupations. It doesn't mean you have to go into full-time ministry.

We talked about that. Some things don't change. Your work can stay the same unless you're employed in an immoral line of work. Otherwise, you can honor God in your work. So today, what should change about our work when God saves us?

When God calls you to Himself, what should change? Now I've got a bunch of changed here. Changed perspective, changed obedience, a changed goal, a changed motivation, changed effort, changed reward, changed master, and a changed identity.

[24 : 11] That's a whole lot of change. So let's dig into it. We'll try to clip through these fairly quickly one by one. Changed perspective. This one is a little bit, this one is food for thought.

Okay? I'm not here to declare something on this particular point this morning. I just want to stir you up to think about what eternity might be like with respect to our work.

We expect that the Gospel, the effects of the Gospel take place not just at a personal level, at a cosmic level as well. And we expect that when Jesus returns, He will usher in the new heavens and the new earth, prophesied in the Old Testament, spoken of in the New Testament.

Some think that the world will be utterly destroyed when that happens, and others think, and this is where I would be as best I understand, that the world not will be destroyed and replaced, but that it will be renewed and redeemed.

Just like our bodies aren't going to be destroyed, our bodies are going to be raised and renewed. We're going to have our bodies back, but they'll be better. And I think the same way with the earth, with the world that God has created, I think it's going to be renewed.

[25 : 21] New heavens and new earth. The creation is groaning, longing for that deliverance. Earlier here in chapter 1, we saw this in verse 17. And He, Christ, is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Verse 20, and through Him, through Christ, to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the Christ. And since the effects of the fall weren't just on people, but were on the earth itself, we talked about how the ground itself was cursed, I think the effects of redemption will not also just be for people, but will be for the world as well.

Resurrection bodies, resurrection, new heavens, and new earth. Renewed when Christ comes, not destroyed and replaced, though there is an argument to the contrary.

I'll grant you that. So, what then about, that we've talked about, of all of man's progress that we've made, we, through the work of men, under the blessing of God, have come from an earth with plants and trees to a world with cities and airplanes and cars and smartphones.

And that's a product of fulfilling the creation mandate, of subduing and cultivating the earth. What will come of all of that? I don't know.

[26 : 40] I just want you to think of it. I want you to think about it. What will that mean for your work in the new heavens and the new earth? Will it all be gone? I don't tend to think so. I think like our progress in sanctification, that won't all be undone.

Our remaining sin will be eradicated. Our progress in holiness will be completed. So I think an outworking of the gospel, though not the primary focus, is an outworking of the redemption of the world in which we live and the work that we do in that world.

The ability, if work existed before the fall, I think it will exist after Jesus comes again. And I don't know what will come of everything that man has made in their work.

I tend to think that everything bad will be removed and what's good will be remaining. You can argue with me on that. Like I said, I just want to give you some food for thought. What will it be like to work in the new heavens and the new earth where the ground is not cursed, where there are no thorns and thistles?

You gardeners out there? You don't have to fight the weeds anymore? You get all the good things about your gardening and none of the bad? That's interesting to think about.

[27 : 45] All sorts of things we could think about. All of the work that wasn't necessary before the fall. We didn't need counselors before the fall. We didn't need missionaries before the fall. We didn't need doctors before the fall.

All sorts of things. What will all of those people do in heaven? I don't know. I don't have all of the answers but the earth is going to be redeemed and whatever it is is going to be better than it is now. I just want you to think with me just a little bit about that and I'll give you a quote from one guy to show you I'm not totally crazy for thinking some of these things.

This is Tom Nelson in his book Work Matters. He says, If we believe that the earth, everything about it and everything we do on it is simply going to one day be abolished and disappear, then the logical conclusion is that our work is virtually meaningless.

It's all going to be wiped away. But if our daily work done for the glory of God and the common good of others in some way carries over to the new heavens and the new earth, then our present work itself is overflowing with immeasurable value and eternal significance.

Now we've seen other reasons this weekend for the significance of our work. But there's a possible another one that it may last well into eternity. Remember, Colossians 1.20 Through him to reconcile to himself all things.

[28 : 59] Whether things on earth or things in heaven. So understand there could be disagreement there. Some of that's speculative. I understand that. Now I want to dive in. So change perspective and internal perspective.

That's one thing that can change when our work begins. Now some other things. And I want you to come to chapter 3 and I want to read a few verses there that show us what should change in our work. If we have been saved by Christ.

If we have embraced the gospel. Chapter 3 verses 22 through 24. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

Not by way of eye service as people pleasers but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord. Whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. I want to make just a brief note about slaves. About bond servants. Admittedly Paul's words are addressing a different situation than ours.

[30 : 01] He's talking in those verses to slaves and masters. Bond servants and masters. But I believe that the principles apply. If he directs slaves to obey their masters and work wholeheartedly for them then how much more should we who are not slaves obey and do the work that has been given to us by God ultimately and by our employers as well.

I'm not going to I'm not preaching a series on Colossians so I'm not going to say a lot today about the nature of slavery being a bond servant in that day. My point of comparison is that slaves or bond servants had work to do and Paul instructs them to do it.

And we have work to do and we are instructed to do our work as well. We can learn from Paul's directions to them lessons about our work as followers of Jesus. So since you workers and that's pretty much everybody here maybe an infant or two here that's not really working yet can't do any chores yet but pretty well everybody here for you workers and for those particularly who are in Christ who have gone from being at enmity with God to experience His grace forgiveness and forgiveness of sins reconciliation through the work of Jesus what about your work changes with the gospel?

Changed perspective now changed obedience. Even working for an unjust master doesn't warrant disobedience. We're to obey our earthly masters or employees employers and everything.

Yeah but my boss is a jerk. Okay. Do the work He gives you to do. As He asks you to sin do the work He gives you to do.

[31 : 41] Only when commanded to disobey God is disobedience to an earthly master warranted. And that is obedience in everything. So as an unconverted unbelieving worker at enmity with God laziness may have been an option for you.

Obedying just when you wanted or felt like it or it may have fit with your that might have fit in your appropriate of standard behavior or your standards of appropriate behavior. Oh I'll do what I want when I want and a little laziness isn't going to hurt anybody.

Not anymore. That's not to say you don't still do battle with the sin of laziness but you as a follower of Jesus bought by His blood your life hidden in Him. Can you imagine Jesus being lazy in His work?

Your life is hidden with Him. And so as one who has been reconciled to God through Him if you can't imagine Jesus being lazy in His work then you shouldn't imagine be able to imagine yourself being lazy in your work.

Obedience in all things out of love to your Savior who has delivered you from that sinful way of life. Now if a command to obey was it we might continue to struggle but there's more so there's changed obedience there's a changed goal and that goal is now God's glory and not man's praise.

[32 : 55] Before being delivered from your sin your inclination may have been to work the hardest when your boss was watching or to only do your chores diligently when mom and dad were standing over you or to only obey in the classroom when the teacher was present there working for the eyes of men.

Your hope may have been the approval and praise of men. I really hope that somebody notices and I hope they tell me good job and I hope they give me a raise and I hope all for the eyes of men. I hope people think well of me because I do my work well.

All of that is gone. All of that should be gone. Anybody here still struggle with the fear of men in your work? Anybody fear that today?

We have a new goal. It's working for the Lord. Your entire orientation changes.

It's Godward not manward. It's not about eye service or men pleasing and doing your work for men. That goal is different. It is for the Lord. You see that in verses 22 and 23.

[34 : 05] Not by way of eye service as people pleasers. Whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord. Your aim in your work as in all of life is to bring glory to Him. You could recite 1 Corinthians 10.31 by heart probably.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do do it all for what? The glory of God. Not the eyes of men. The goal is changed.

Your work is no longer directed towards bringing praise to you. What a freeing thing that is. That it's directed towards God's glory. So we're to work with sincerity of heart. Verse 22 just for God's glory.

Not a little bit for Him and a little bit for us. It's all for Him. We want people to see our work in the home or workplace or school and say God is good.

There's something different about the way that guy that girl works. And it's a good thing. And they don't seem to care whether they're praised or what.

[35 : 05] They just put their head down and they do their work. That's not what you're aiming. You don't want not aiming for praise but that's what people should say. Christians that have a good reputation as workers because their working is unto the Lord not concerned for what people think.

Not because they don't care what people think like they're sloppy and lazy. That's not good gospel. I don't care what anybody thinks. I'm just going to make a mess. No. I don't care what they think. I'm going to work hard for the Lord. My concern is what He thinks.

Our work is unto the Lord and not men. You're serving the Lord Christ in your work. It's such again a freeing a motivating concept in our work. It means we should strive for excellence that reflects well on the excellent creator who assigned us that lot gave us that work to do and gave us the strength the mental capacity the skill the coordination and maybe particular giftedness depending on the type of work to be able to do it.

He gave us all of that and so it is all for Him and not for us and not for other people. Now, we talked about how our work is to be serving other people.

So in a way our work is for others to serve them. Go get the other messages. Sorry, I keep zoned. We've been hanging out this weekend. Anyway, so your work is in a sense for other people.

[36 : 22] It's to serve others but the ultimate audience is the Lord and working for His glory. There's also a changed motive and that is the fear of the Lord in verse 22. Not by way of eye service as people pleases but with sincerity of heart fearing the Lord.

There's your new motive. This is really closely related to a changed goal which is the glory of God the motive the fear of God because we fear the Lord who saved us we will gladly work for Him.

Unconcerned again about pleasing men. Those saved by God's grace will fear that God. Part of fear is worship. That's what we do when we gather on the Lord's Day in a special particular way.

We worship together but all of our life is to be an act of worship as well. Listen to what Paul says to the Romans chapter 12 in verse 1. You're familiar with this as well. I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship.

We worship in a special particular way on the Lord's Day with God's people but our whole lives which include you all. What are we talking about? What makes up a big chunk of our life? Why are we talking about this?

[37 : 37] We work a lot. Work makes up a huge chunk of our life. So if our life is to be an offering to God then a huge piece of our life which is work should be an offering to God. The way we go about it.

And so we fear Him. We worship Him. And we say in my work I want it again going back to the previous point to bring praise to God because we fear and that motivates us.

We fear God and we want Him to be honored in our worship. We also fear His fatherly displeasure. Not punishment I don't believe Jesus took the punishment in our place but discipline yes.

Because our loving Heavenly Father disciplines His children when He sees us wandering. You read about that in Hebrews 12. He loves us too much to just let us go and not bring us back and discipline sometimes is what brings us back.

So we fear that and that motivates us to wholehearted service to God in our work. The fear of God both worshiping Him and fearing discipline is a new motive. There's a changed effort in our work as well.

[38 : 38] When we realize that even being employed by earthly employees we're actually working for God that frees us to work wholeheartedly. Verse 23 Whatever you do work heartily.

That's literally from your soul. Work from your soul. That's not going through the motions. That's not just kind of I'm going to mindlessly go do whatever.

It's from your soul. It means that when you work sometimes you're thinking even if it's a monotonous job boom boom boom where you're not very engaged in your mind you're thinking God has given me this work to do and the ability to do it and I'm going to do it from my heart for Him.

A changed effort. Would you want to give anything less than work from your soul wholehearted effort in service to God?

When you view your work as service to God who saved you and not just a job to get by you begin to see that the work deserves your greatest your very best effort. God gave you that work.

[39 : 44] That means you can't go well I was going to kind of do the minimum to get by. God gave it to you. Work from your soul as to the Lord.

We've been focusing largely on employment but are you also giving your whole soul to the work of your parenting and husbanding and wifing and studenting. Yeah but my kids don't appreciate everything that I do for them.

My wife rejects my efforts to lead her well. My husband doesn't love me as he ought. My boss is unfair. My teacher plays favorites. Those things may all be true. But since our work at home and at school and at work is to be done with an eye to the Lord he does deserve our best wholehearted work.

There are there may be it seems there are some Christians who think that because we're citizens of a different kingdom and headed for an eternity of heaven that our work here in this earthly kingdom doesn't matter.

And so I'm a Christian I've got better things coming so I'm just going to kind of half-heartedly go through and get done I'm waiting for the world to come and the Bible gives you zero warrant for that attitude.

[40 : 55] Work from your soul as unto the Lord. Christians should be the very best workers and should have a reputation as such.

Not so that you get the praise but so that God does. and if the reputation of Christian workers is not that let it not be because of us.

Work well. Work from your soul. There's a changed reward verse 24 where you once may have worked for a paycheck or that pat on the back or a word of praise from someone in your household or gratitude from your kids and A on your test now as a follower of Jesus you have a far greater reward.

Is there anything wrong with getting a paycheck? Nope. Somebody compliments you in your work should you shove them away and say that's not why I work? No. They're encouraging you receive that comfort thank them for that encouragement but make sure that that God gets the glory and remember that if you don't get those things it's okay because there is a changed reward.

it's been earned for you by Jesus you see it there in verse 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

[42 : 14] It's through faith in Christ you have hope laid up in heaven it's back in chapter 1 and again that's another freeing liberating concept in our work.

As a child of God you have an inheritance obtained for you by Christ waiting for you in glory you've got it in part now you'll have it even more when you're with Christ in glory.

You can't work your hardest and best or excuse me you can work your hardest and best knowing that even if your work is underpaid by your boss graded too lowly by your teacher unappreciated by your spouse or children or parents that's okay because your reward is in heaven.

You will remember these are personal truths for you child of God you will receive the reward the inheritance that Christ has earned for you and that inheritance that will more than make up for anything that you've missed out on in this life.

Any pay that you were unfairly kept from any praise you didn't receive the inheritance that's waiting for you when you enter into the presence of Jesus for eternity that will all vaporize in an instant all of those slights and whatever else you're bearing with you that make your work such a drudging the inheritance that is for eternity is beyond our ability to comprehend or describe Paul says to the Ephesians chapter 1:18 that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and you have the Holy Spirit Paul says as a down payment that guarantees that that will be yours every child of God indwelt by the Holy Spirit and that is the guarantee that you're going to receive this inheritance again it doesn't matter what happens at your place of employment whether you're treated fairly or not whether you're well compensated or not you have a greater reward coming in it's guaranteed nothing can take it away from you because you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you

[44 : 22] Gilbert and Traeger in the book Gospel at Work say this means our jobs can never give us what we truly want only Jesus can by his life death and resurrection he has already achieved for us the highest joy the highest meaning the highest significance and the highest prize when we believe our jobs can provide this for us we forget the gospel and believe a lie your job can't give you everything that you hope for only Jesus can and he has and he will so we have a changed perspective changed obedience changed goal changed motive changed effort changed reward and a changed master verse 24 you are serving the Lord Christ the Lord Messiah both your Savior and your gracious master your deliverer and the one to whom you owe everything and how different he is from our earthly masters brothers and sisters think about this Jesus is as gracious a Lord and master as he is a Savior and isn't he a gracious

Savior don't we know that so when you go to work tomorrow you are serving a gracious master it doesn't matter who your earthly boss is I know you've got to deal with it and you can't just bury your head in the sand you can't just not go to work but in some senses it doesn't matter because your master is Christ he is gracious and he is for you and he has given you his spirit to dwell in you to help you tomorrow when you go to work your master is gracious he is the one who died so that you might live so that you might be reconciled to him he's the one who sweetly leads you through this life and as we obey our earthly masters from our soul single-mindedly as unto the Lord we're obeying Jesus and bringing glory to him and that is a whole new identity it's changed identity the gospel means we don't have to earn our salvation it means we don't have to work a certain number of hours each week with a certain level of productivity in order to get into heaven and for God to like us your work is not what saves you only Jesus can do that and that is that is such a comforting concept in our work

Jesus has saved you and so you're free to work to bring glory to God and feel his smile on you Tim Keller says another good book on work every good endeavor he says but the gospel frees us from the relentless pressure of having to prove ourselves and secure our identity through work for we are already proven and secure Jesus did that for us you don't have to earn that through your work when you go back to your workplace and into your home and your school tomorrow even even if you're disabled and unable to work and we've talked a little bit about that this weekend that can't change your inheritance in heaven it can't take the gospel away from you it can't take away your identity in Christ so do you see a little something of how the gospel changes your work it really changes everything sin messed it all up and you messed it all up with your sin and Jesus is making it better yes we still struggle with sin in our own lives in the lives of those around us we won't know these realities fully in this life but we've begun down that road by God's grace of change in our work knowing that

Jesus is Lord and is on the throne knowing that we serve him fearing him worshiping him trusting him we're set free from trying to please men free from trying to earn favor with God we're set free to do our work wholeheartedly so that God will get the glory and not us we don't need approval and praise from man because we have God's approval through Christ and so we're free to work and not be so concerned about ourselves and so may God make us then to be faithful gospel workers for his namesake in the current places where he has placed each one of you and given you that work to do you may still feel like you can't do it and you're right you can't and that means when you are able to work in this way for the Lord it's because his strength is being perfected in your weakness and he gets the glory

Galatians 2.20 I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me the life I now live in the flesh at work I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me or as we saw earlier in chapter 3 in verse 3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God and that is good news for your work let's pray together Father we thank you that your word has much to say to us and the area of our life that occupies most of our time and so we pray that you would help us to go from here changed and ready and eager to grow in the work that you have given us to do whatever that work may be we pray that we would do it with our eye upon you and not upon men that we would work from our souls with all of our hearts as to the Lord and not for the eyes of men and we pray that we would do it all trusting in our Savior Jesus who will bring us safely home to heaven and give us that inheritance we thank you for him and we pray in his name amen amen amen