

Work

Brynmaur Family Church Sermon
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 5th July 2009

Intro

- Starting example- *Spring Harvest come down.*
- Q. Have you ever felt your work has become like a prison? Place of punishment? Have you ever felt like you could really be on fire for God if you could just only live in a Stoneleigh type environment all year round? Ever felt pulled between the Church and Work? Guilty of not doing more in the church because of stress at work? Ever felt excluded from the rest of the 'working' world?
- Going to look at 4 principles from the Bible to bring fulfilment in our work.

1. Work is Spiritual

- Reflects God- God works & rests- (we also need both)- Days of creation **Gen 2:3**; continues to work **Jn 5:17**; Jesus 12-30yrs carpenter.
- Work was pre-fall (garden tending)- **Gen 1:28;2:5;2:15**-we reflect God's glory partly in our works (**Ps 104:23-24;31** -God's works more manifold than man's & His works bring Him glory). Thorns & thistles, toil & sweat=part of the curse
- There will be work in heaven parable of talents-'put in charge of many things' **Mt 25:21,23**
- Sacred not secular. No church-work divide-Church in the world. Legitimate missing meetings- *me nurse Sundays*- make sure get enough fellowship. Be realistic about what take on. Share work issues for prayer. Place of work=holy- *in Egyptian bus radio prayers Ramadam*. Work=part of our worship (being a living sacrifice, holy & pleasing to God **Rom 12:1**).
- 'Christian' work not more spiritual (**1Cor 7:24**)- *Is there more spirituality in washing and feeding a person who cannot wash themselves than in preparing a talk on a Sunday. Is there more spirituality in standing your ground as a Christian in a godless gossiping environment than in attending a conference on prayer with fellow believers?*. Answer – it depends on our attitude- in flesh or spirit? Your work is as spiritual as you decide for it to be. See your service as spiritual- cleaning house, washing up, visiting sick, nursing, getting cars thru MOT's, homework.
- Q. Do you see your work as part of your worship? Do you give God of your best?

2. Work is Obligatory -2Thess 3:6-14

- For all. (If you think you are disqualified from work- doing it will never fulfil you). Knowing work is part of our call makes us 'go the extra mile' rather than say '*I won't put out that fire- it's not in my job description*'.
- Unemployed- work isn't just being paid- do voluntary-make you more employable, bless others- Brings Fulfilment -Self esteem needs *me depressed unemployed*; Occ Therapy; Sense of identity + purpose *what are you-@party*.
- Retired- heard said if no retirement plan die early. Bless others. Pace self, but still make plans, goals
- Young- School is work. Give all, work hard. Develop organisation at young age- eg. Tidy as you go.
- Housewives/husbands. See housework as work to God. Glorify Him in it. Make home a great place to be in. Get support from others who understand- don't allow isolation.
- The sick –Occ. therapy essential. If long term sick, depressed etc. look for other ways of working.
- CONSEQUENCES TO ACTIONS

- Laziness condemned- rebellion against God. There will be a judgement- parable of talents. **Mt 25:14-30; Lk 19:12-27**
- Sluggard=foolish- one slack in work brother to one who destroys **Prov 18:9**. Laziness destroys. *Nurses home kitchen*. Brings poverty- **Prov 24:30**- A little folding of the arms & suddenly poverty like a bandit- poverty=more than financial, spiritual. *Sponge- only able to soak up what others give, unwilling to give out*.
- Warn idle (see 2Thess passage above)
- Responsibilities-family+self .Worse than unbeliever. Not work=not eat **2Thess 3:10-15**
- Diligence rewarded. Well done good & faithful-Parable of talents.
- Q. When it comes to your work do you have an attitude of diligence, or is it more- I'm doing this because I have to? Do you neglect some of the things you should be doing? Are there any areas that you are lazy in that need to be addressed?
- Q. Feel disqualified from work? Principle=find what you can do and do it well.

3. Work is Necessary (our destiny tied into it)

- Biblical examples Daniel, David, Joseph, Jesus, Paul
- My example- preparation of character + skills (although not purpose of work, but a result)
- *God's anvil* (David Oliver) - place where we are tested and wisdom, ruling, reputation, faith taught (church is God's other anvil).
- Church in world- you are light of world, salt of the earth.
- Think about all the people you have worked with/for, or been in charge of in your life. If I was to ask them what you were like in the workplace would they say?

4. God-centred (not to be otherwise) -Eph 6:5-7

- The purpose of work is to glorify God (God's works in Ps 104). He should be the focus. Therefore work for Him even when eye is not on you. Man sees out-God heart. *Psych. Nurses helping selves to food off trolley*. God is always watching. Can you be trusted to be self-motivated? 'Having to'. God loves cheerful giver-work also. Each job a masterpiece. Privilege of service.
- Spirit-inspired- Being where God wants you Joseph=prison. Do you know God's calling for you to be where you are, even if hard? Knowing His will encourages our dedication under hardships.
- Spirit-empowered - Using Sp. Gifts. I prayed for healing-not healed but felt God; tried to have words when chatting. Give out God's wisdom. God's entrepreneurial creativity. *Richard Branson-Virgin Records started in phone box record delivery*. Allow God to inspire you to new heights. God's hand of blessing. Abraham's business blessed by God, Jacob also. Increased productivity. *Prayer of Jabez- ask God to bless what you do*. Company blessed by you- pray that you might be a blessing to those around you (Abraham's promise-we are his sons).
- Evangelism. The way you work and love you show=witness. We meet most people in work/school. In the first century, Christian slaves had even less reason to be enthusiastic about their work. But Paul gave them a way to grasp a glimpse of glory amid the grind. He wanted them to "adorn the doctrine of God," that is, to show the beauty of their faith in Christ by how they work (Tit. 2:10).
- Q. What motivates you to work? Family? Wanting security? Position? God should be our motivation. Wrong motivators -Money; God & Mammon. Prosperity=result, not aim. Paul-Godly contentment. So when you work expect God to bless you financially, but do not make this your goal- decide to make glorifying Him goal. Position -God lifts/humbles. God often wants to give us responsibility and position, but it is up to him and in his time. David's life as a shepherd.

A significant and often overlooked way that we serve God is in our everyday tasks. Martin Luther understood this when he wrote, “The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays—not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship.”

Conclusion

- Work is Spiritual. Do you see it that way or different. Work is obligatory- have you disqualified yourself, or nullified your contribution? Work is necessary- do you see it as part of your destiny in God? Work is for God- is He your primary motivation for working?
- Pray for a change in mindset. Pray for people looking for employment & those who would like prayer for the workplace.

Recommended reading:-

‘Work- Prison or place of destiny’- David Oliver (Dave D, Phil L)

His sequel- ‘Church that Works’

‘Thank God its Monday- Mark Greene (Steve T)