

**The Sunday to Monday Connection - Genesis 1-3/Colossians 3:17 & 3:22-4:1  
Argyle – 9/3/17 – Labor Day**

**Introduction to Worship**

What will you be doing at this time on Wednesday? Some of you will be at your first day of school. Some of you will be caring for children or someone else in your home. Some of you will be at your job. Some of you will be at the senior citizen meeting. Some of you will be doing volunteer work. Some of you will be working around your house. What is it that you will be doing at 10 a.m. on Wednesday and how is that related to what we are doing this morning?

Our focus this morning is on how our Monday through Saturday activities are connected to what we do here on Sundays. Think about that as you prepare for worship this morning.

And see if there is any unrepentant sin in your life that you need to turn from in preparation for our celebration of the Lord's Supper.

**Colossians 3-4:1**

Our memory verse today is Colossians 3:17 - "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Say that with me. (Repeat)

This is a verse that can guide everything you do. It is Paul's way of summarizing what he has been saying about Christian living. He began Colossians 3 saying "Since you have been raised with Christ," set your hearts and minds on the

things above, not on earthly things. He went on to describe how this should be reflected in our character. We are to put to death certain behaviors and attitudes like sexual immorality, greed, anger, slander, filthy language and lying. And we are to clothe ourselves with certain other attitudes and behaviors that reflect our new position in Christ, like compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, thankfulness and hearts that worship. (Slide #2) I want you to remember these two lists as we think about the Sunday to Monday connection in our lives. As you engage in your marketplace activities of school, care giving, work, volunteer activities, etc. which of these lists most reflects your approach? Paul's summary to all of this is "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Paul then went on to apply this "in the name of the Lord Jesus" principle to specific situations. He talked about what this looked like for wives, husbands, children, fathers and slaves. For our purposes this morning we are most interested in what he said to slaves, because it can be applied to our own marketplace activities. Paul wrote, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,<sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24) Then he had this application for slave masters. "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven." (Colossians 4:1)

So, there you have it - the Sunday to Monday connection. Since we have been raised with Christ we are to set our hearts and minds on the things above, not on earthly things. That means allowing God to transform our character - remember those two lists of attitudes and behaviors? And we are to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, which means in ways that reflect who Jesus is. As that applies to our marketplace activities we are to work as if we are working for the Lord. Sure we have teachers and bosses and others in authority over us, but ultimately the homework we do, the diapers we change, the projects we work on are for the Lord. They are an expression of our love for him and gratitude toward him. Our work is an act of worship, every bit as much as what we are doing here this morning. (repeat)

Let me tell you how I began to understand this principle in my own life. Like most kids, I grew up having responsibilities around the house like making my bed, shoveling the walks, cutting the grass. I didn't have a "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" attitude as I did these things. It was more of a "do as little as possible, get it done as fast as I could, and grumble as I did it" approach. My first out of the house job was at Howard Johnson's restaurant as a dishwasher. I got this job so that I could go to Young Life camp that summer. My parents had paid for me to go the year before, but the second time was on me. I had become a Christian that first year at camp, but I didn't understand how that should impact my work at Howard Johnson's. Since I had learned a pretty good work ethic at home, I was a reasonably good worker. And, I made great coffee. It was the dishwashers at Howard Johnson's who

make the coffee. All I did was follow the recipe that was on the side of the coffee urn, but apparently I followed instructions better than the other dishwashers because the regulars would always want to know if that long haired, hippy kid- that was me - had made the coffee. So I worked hard and followed instructions, but I didn't have a "do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" perspective.

That didn't come until I was on work crew at a Young Life camp following my senior year in high school. I always tell our kids who go on work crew that being on work crew in high school changed my life. I am the disciple of Jesus I am, the husband and the father I am, the firefighter I am, the pastor I am, the worker I am because of that work crew experience.

When I got to Frontier Ranch I was disappointed to find out that I was assigned to the kitchen. I was hoping to get a break from washing dishes, but God had other plans. I am convinced that God put me in that job to learn this lesson. About the second or third day at camp, our work crew boss called us out of the kitchen as we were washing up from one of the meals and had us sit down in the dining hall. He was not pleased with our performance up to that point. He said, "When we work, we work for the Lord. And when we work for the Lord we give it all we've got because that is what he did for us when he was on the cross. He gave everything he had. All our sins, not just some of them were forgiven. Jesus did his work excellently and we need to do our excellently, as well." That insight not only changed my work crew service, but it changed my approach to washing dishes at Howard Johnson's.

I was no longer working for the manager or the company or even the paycheck. I was working for Jesus. That meant that if there was a roll on the floor underneath a booth, I would get down on my hands and knees and get it. Previously, if it was out of sight I would have ignored it. Working for Jesus meant that I wouldn't go home until I had finished washing all of the pots in the sink. Previously, I would have left the dirty pots for the next shift, like they always did for me. Working for Jesus meant that as I was walking to my car to go home after work, if there was trash in the parking lot, I would pick it up and put it in the dumpster. Previously, I would have ignored it because I was off the clock. When I see myself as working for the Lord, whether that was as a dishwasher at Howard Johnson's or as a student at Gordon-Conwell or as a pastor at Argyle Presbyterian or as a volunteer in the Argyle Fire Company or even when I am cutting the grass at my house, I understand that no matter who my human supervisors might be, ultimately I am working for the Lord. It is to him that I ultimately answer to for the quality of my work, for how I treat others and for my attitude.

The Sunday to Monday connection is that my motivation to work, my attitude toward work, the quality of my work, the way I treat others at work is a reflection of my relationship with Jesus Christ. Of course I fall short on occasion, but my goal is to do everything "in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God the Father through him."

## Genesis 1-3

Our approach to work is not only a reflection of our relationship with Jesus Christ, but also a reflection of the fact that we are created in the image of God. This is the beginning of our understanding of work and why I asked you to read Genesis 1 & 2 in preparation for this morning. I should have also included Genesis 3.

Probably 75% of what we need to know about life is found in Genesis 1-3, including the meaning of work. Genesis 1 begins, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He is an important truth that we often overlook. God is a worker. God created and organized the world. The high point of his creating work was when he created us. We read in Genesis 1:27, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27) We are created in the image of God which means we are like God in some ways. One of the ways we are like God is that we, too, are workers. In other words, being a worker is fundamental to what it means to be a human being.

If that is true, why is our work experience so often difficult? That is why I should have had you read Genesis 3, as well, this week. In Genesis 3 we read about Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God’s authority and the consequences of that sin. Conflict in marriage and other relationships, pain and suffering, death, and damage to creation all result from sin. Trouble in the workplace is another consequence of sin. God said to Adam, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ ‘Cursed is the ground

because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground,

since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” (Genesis 3:17-19). Our work is negatively affected by what we call “the fall.”

What is important to see here is that work preceded the fall. Work was part of the “very good” world that God created. The difficulties that we face in the marketplace are the result of sin - Adam and Eve’s sin, our own sin and each other’s sin. We don’t want to confuse our sometimes disappointing experience of work with the concept of work. Work is a part of what it means to be a human being. It is a good thing that is often marred by sin.

One other key insight to our understanding work comes from these first three chapters of Genesis. We read, “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.” (Genesis 2:2-3) God worked for six days and rested on the seventh. There is a limit to our work. So important is this limit on work that God included it in the Ten Commandments. Right up there with “Have no other gods” and “Do not murder” is “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” We are to set aside one day each week where we don’t work. Instead we worship, rest, serve and are restored. Work is important, but it has a God given limit.

## **Conclusion**

If you are interested in reading more about growing in a Biblical understanding and practice of work, I have listed two helpful books in your bulletin.

What will you be doing at 10 a.m. on Wednesday? How is that related to what we are doing this morning?

(Prayer)

## **Invitation to Communion**