

Holy Work
Col. 3:22-4:1
Lynchburg, Virginia
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EXHORDIUM

One of the great doctrines that was revived in the Reformation is the doctrine of Holy Work. During the late middle ages, the Church had shifted to a two-tiered mindset of what is holy. The priests could do holy work because they were doing the Lord's Work but the laity's work was secular. Obviously, this mindset flowed from doctrine and practice that kept God's people at bay.

The people were kept at a distance from God by the guarded manner in which the Church held the Bible. The common man did not have access to the Scriptures, so they drastically needed the priests to tell them what God had said. Furthermore, the people were not given the cup at communion. They were half partakers at God's table. Thus, it made sense that they were not full participants as God's people.

This is an oversimplification of these practices and doctrines but one can easily see why so many changes flowed out of the Reformation. Once the Bible was readily available in the language of the common man, a much more accurate understanding of God's truth for His people spread rapidly.

One of those truths is that God's people are holy and therefore all lawful work that they do is holy work.

Martin Luther is famous for saying that a father washing his babies diapers is more golden and noble work than all the works of monks and nuns. One, because the man does so in true Christian faith. Also, because Luther finds that God does not assign men and women to the celibate lifestyle. And thirdly, because the father rightly does his diaper washing as an offering to the Lord.

Over the next five weeks, I am going to a series of sermons on the topics of work and money. Today is on Holy Work, next is Callings, then Debt, then Tithe, and finally Unleashing the Financial Power of the Church. I expect these topics to reveal a great deal about what the Bible teaches on all of these topics. In so doing, they will also reveal to us how far short we have fallen and why we as God's people, and we as a nation are in such a financial mess. The purpose is not to beat us up with our sins. On the contrary, the purpose is Reformational. What has God said? And how do we get back to simple obedience to Him. In some of these areas we may not be able to fix our situation in five minutes. It may take years, or even generations but knowing the what God says is always the first step in the way back. That should prove very encouraging to us.

EXEGESIS

Let us start at the beginning

Creation Mandate

Gen 1:26-28 26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth

In the beginning, God man male and female, placed them in a garden and gave them dominion over the creatures. In the following verse

Gen 2:15-17 15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. 18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Dress and Keep it- They were given work, pre-fall. They were holy so all of this work was holy.

Gardening, which is in fashion now.

Ranching

House building

Civil and Mechanical Engineering- roads, buildings, bridges, etc., waste management

Fathering

Civic responsibilities- government

Wife- helper, mothering, household duties, knowledge of outside duties, nurturing,

After the Fall- Adam and Eve have the same mandate, it is just that much harder now. They are to be fruitful and multiply but the ground gives trouble and Eve's job as mother of all the Earth has grown into a painful job.

Do All to God's Glory

Col 3:22-4:1 22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. 4 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

V. 23- In the NT, Paul tells us to do whatever we do heartily, as unto the Lord. Our work is rewarded, ultimately by God, so we must render it unto Him.

Unholy Work

Deut 27:15 15 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

Not all work is lawful- Some jobs are not lawful. You cannot serve the table of the Lord and the table of idols. If you were a sculptor that made little Buddha's before you were a Christian, you would have to stop doing that work. It would not be lawful to be producing books that extol Islam, for instance. A pastor friend of mine, knew a man that was a DJ in a strip joint, that became a Christian. Amazingly, he had to ask the pastor if he was required to quit his job. But these were some of the issues that were roaming around in the first century Church. Segments of our society have become so debauched that we will have to address some of these issues again as men are saved from all manner of degrading lives. If God grants us grace and revival, we can easily imagine a host of street occupations that will need to immediately cease but that creates a need for the church to fill the income vacuum.

EXHORTATION

1. Work is Required

2 Thess 3:8-12 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

2. Holy Work is To Provide for Family

1 Tim 5:7-8 6 7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. 8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Two parts, a) Providing is Holy. It makes one blameless.

b) Not providing makes you worse than an unbeliever. This requires hard work to make the money. It also requires the right heart to understand your responsibilities. We do not live in a land of subsistence living and this is great blessing. To not provide for your family is to deny the faith.

3. That ye Have No Lack- Furthermore, that ye have an abundance to share with him who does have a lack. Not forced sharing, that is coercion and socialism but sharing from the heart. But if you are encumbered by debt this becomes difficult at best and impossible at worst.

1 Thess 4:11-12 11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; 12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

Paul calls us to simple living and simply living, work with your own hands, just take care of your business. Incidentally, he is not charging all of the church to go out and save the world. On the contrary, he is calling them to a simple life of provision for their family. Now, we who live in more glorious times should consider how we spend that extra free time.

But the point here is a Reformational one, you do not have to do church work to do holy work. Next week we will talk about callings, specifically, doing that work that the Lord has called and equipped you to do. But if you are doing lawful work now, it is holy work. Be content with that and do it as unto the Lord.