



Good Morning Church! I am Pastor Todd Johnson and this morning we are beginning a **NEW SERIES** entitled **WORK AS WORSHIP**.

And what we hope to demonstrate through this series is that if you are a disciples of Jesus Christ **ALL OF OUR WORK SHOULD BE VIEWED AS WORSHIP BACK TO GOD.....**regardless if we are a CEO or and entry level clerk, regardless if we are a stay at home mom or even if we are retired and have left the traditional work space.

Because you see one of the misnomers that has developed within Christian communities is the idea that **ONLY** those trained for Vocational Christian ministry can truly make their **WORK** their **WORSHIP TO GOD**.



Meaning that many believe that it's only Pastors, Missionaries, Christian Counselors etc..... who can make **WORK WORSHIPFUL**. But this perspective couldn't be further from the truth.

Somewhere along the line we have separated the **sacred** from the **secular**... meaning we have compartmentalized our work and our worship.

But you see biblically speaking God doesn't make such a distinction. God's expectations for His children remain the same no matter the venue we find ourselves in..... and so within the **theology of work** it's important that we strive to build a bridge between the **sacred** and **secular** aspects of our lives.



WORK AS WORSHIP

It's important for all Christians to join the **sacred** and the **secular** together better enabling EVERY MOMENT TO COUNT FOR CHRIST...and this series is going to help inspire us to figure out what it might look like to make our **WORK OUR WORSHIP**.

Pastoral Prayer:

Now, it might be easy for some of us to tune out of a Sermon Series like this one because perhaps you are **retired and you might be thinking**, “my working days are behind me”...or perhaps you might be prone to tune this out because you are **too young** to have a proper 9-5 job..... Well friends I've got some news for you.....



CREATED FOR WORK

WORK AS WORSHIP

The scriptures make it clear that **ALL WORK** matters to God. No matter your stage of life – whether you’re a grandparent, or a student – God cares about **ALL WORK**.

But I also need to clarify what I mean by work. Yes, work includes what you do in your 9-5 job and your career, but is also much more. When I say “work”, I mean **your day’s work**. This includes housework like washing dishes, cooking, driving kids to school. This includes volunteer work whether it be within the church, or with a charity.

What this means is that you do not have to have a 9-5 job in order to be able to **WORK AS UNTO THE LORD**... it’s very important that we understand this concept.



CREATED FOR WORK

WORK AS WORSHIP

Alright..... so our first sermon in this series is entitled. **Work as Worship** *Created for Work.*

Now to be honest for some of us the idea of being created for work is a bit depressing.

We might think... God...why couldn't I be created to



EAT ICE CREAM



Why couldn't I be created to watch the Eagles on the couch while snacking.



We might think Lord, why couldn't I be created to go from one shopping spree to the next.

Now, while these things can be fun, a life lived solely for these pursuits would be unfulfilling and empty.



CREATED FOR WORK

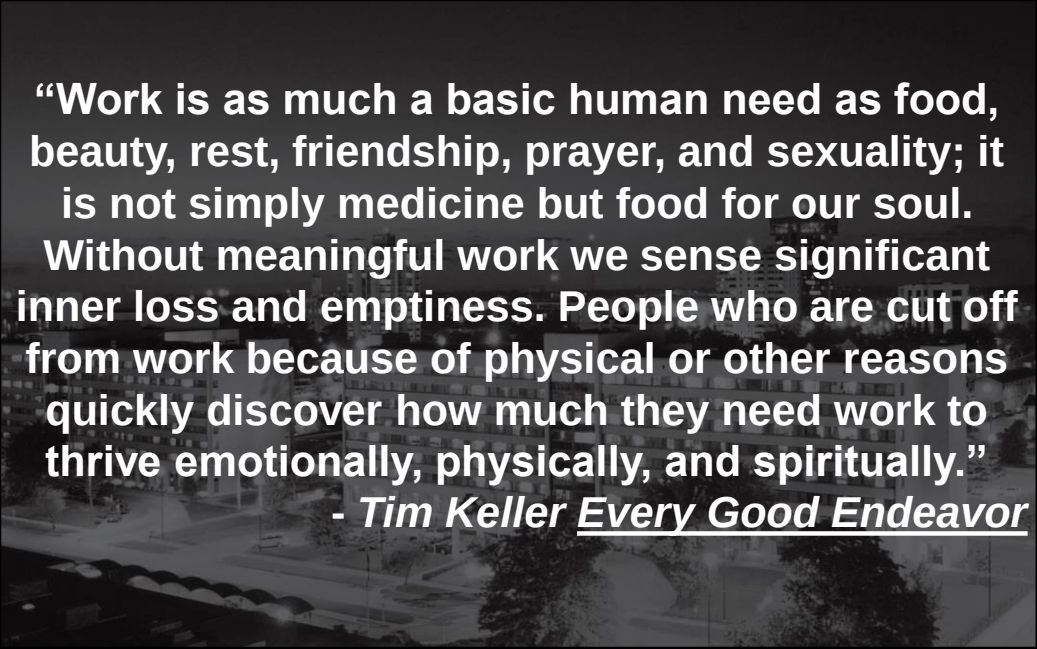
WORK AS WORSHIP

The point I'm trying to make here is that often we fill our lives with temporary distractions.....and in so doing we often miss the point of our lives... we were not created for the trivial, we were created for God's glory.

And a large part of how God's glory is revealed in our lives is through our work.

[Pause]

You and I are **Created for Work**.....and this is a very good thing.....this is how Pastor Tim Keller defines Biblical Work in his book ***Every Good Endeavor***.



“Work is as much a basic human need as food, beauty, rest, friendship, prayer, and sexuality; it is not simply medicine but food for our soul. Without meaningful work we sense significant inner loss and emptiness. People who are cut off from work because of physical or other reasons quickly discover how much they need work to thrive emotionally, physically, and spiritually.”

- *Tim Keller* *Every Good Endeavor*

Read:

This is so true...and the reason why work is so central to who we are as human beings is because we are created in the image of God.....**THE ULTIMATE WORKER.**

Please open your Bibles to Genesis Chapter 1.

CREATED FOR WORK

WORK AS WORSHIP

Genesis 1:31 (ESV)

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good*. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

In the opening passage of the Bible (Genesis chapter 1), we see God is the ULTIMATE WORKER, fully engaged with the creation of the world.

Genesis 1 states that God worked for 6 days and at the culmination of His work he declared **IT WAS VERY GOOD...** and rested on the 7th day. And these passages reveal that indeed God was the first one to ever do work on the earth. Being a worker isn't just something God did.....it's a part of who He is, and we [*made in his image*] are imprinted with His likeness in that way.

Therefore, **OUR OWN AUTHENTIC WORK** reflects the activity of God.

CREATED FOR WORK

WORK AS WORSHIP

Genesis 1:31 (ESV)

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, *it was very good*. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

BTW – as a quick aside to all of our workaholics out there. You may think that this sermon is giving you a license to overwork. *[Your like]* YEAH! PREACH ON! I LOVE THIS SERMON!

Nope. We see here in Genesis 1 that GOD RESTED. Why? He wasn't tired. He can't get tired.

You see He rested to sit back and enjoy His creation. And to teach us to rest and enjoy our WORK as well.



WORK AS WORSHIP

Have any of you ever had an instance when you completed a work project and just stood back and admired the accomplishment?

Perhaps you completed a year's long work project, and the project came off wonderfully despite many hurdles and you just sat back and said **IT IS GOOD**.

Perhaps you managed to get your kids down to bed on time, the dishes got done and you even managed to vacuum the car out and you sit down at the end of the day and say to yourself **IT IS GOOD**.



WORK AS WORSHIP

For me, I get that feeling each time I mow our lawn... we have a decent sized yard and if I take my time it takes about 2.5 hrs to mow, weed whack and blow-off. And at the end of that 2.5 hrs. I stand back look over my lawn and I say to myself **IT IS GOOD.**

The declaration **IT IS GOOD** is at the heart of why **work** is an important part of human flourishing. When we give ourselves to good work, we not only fill our lives with productivity, but we also mimic the nature of our creative and industrious God.

You see church I love the result of a hard day's work..... *but I didn't always.*



WORK AS WORSHIP

Illus:

Let me tell you a little story. When I was about 14 years old. My mom told me to get into the car. I had no idea where we were going.

*She then proceeds to drive me to the Mall which was about a 10 minute drive from our home. And as I'm trying to figure out what we're doing at the Mall on a Tuesday afternoon... she tells me that I need to **go inside and find a job. I protested...I told her that I was getting by just fine with my allowance, and that I didn't need a job.***

*You see it was my belief at 14 years of age that **work was MISERY!***



And if you know my mom, my protesting didn't go over very well. And so I went in, and actually came back out that same day with a job. And again, in my 14 year old mind I thought I was going to be miserable.

[Change Slide]

Ok so, here is a picture of the actual Sandwich Counter at Bain's Deli... .. this is where I learned my trade as a **Sandwich Artist**. I worked here all through High School up until College... ..and while this was my first job.....much more importantly this is where I first realized that **for a Christian WORK** can actually become our WORSHIP to God.



Because in the 4 years that I worked here... as I grew in my personal discipleship to Christ.....I had countless ministry opportunities in the lives of the people I worked with.

I had the opportunity to share Christ with my buddy Rich...who struggled with reconciling many things within his own fledgling Christian faith.

I had the chance to minister to Patricia another co-worker who was dealing with the ramifications of recently finding out she had been adopted.

There was Kerry's DUI and the time my buddy Rob got his license revoked for going **110 mph in a 55!**



They all knew I was “Todd the Christian”.....who went on Mission Trips every summer and refused to work on Wednesday nights becuae of youth group.

18



WORK AS WORSHIP

You see Church I came in with a negative view of work.....but I ended up seeing how God can use every moment of my life... even the “secular” bits... for my benefit and His glory.

[Pause]

You know the secular view of work was immortally enshrined in hit 80's rock song **EVERYBODY'S WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND**.....in this secular view work is a curse.

But as we are going to see as we dive back in to Genesis... God gave man work before the fall.... therefore work is not a curse..... and NO we aren't **working for the weekend**..... as we will see, all work is a part of our human identity.

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

26 Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

In Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 & 27 we see God’s initial intent for mankind as it relates to work.

Read:

And so after Genesis tells the story of **God’s work in Creation**, Genesis moves on to tell the story of HUMAN WORK.

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

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27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And while all creation displays God’s majesty, goodness and design.....only human beings are said to be ***made in God’s image....and this is an important point that we must not overlook.***

But, what does it mean to be created in God's image? The Hebrew root of the Latin phrase for image of God—*imago Dei*—means image, shadow or likeness of God.

Church we are a snapshot or replica of God. This means humans occupy a higher place in the created order because we alone are imprinted with godlike characteristics.

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Now, *[this is important]* your godlikeness **is the path to your greatest fulfillment**. You will feel the greatest pleasure and wholeness when who God created you to be is fully developed and expressed.

And while there are numerous ways in which we are to express our godlikeness over the course of our lives.... one of the primary ways we develop our godlikeness is through our **work**. *[Pause]*

But conversely, your godlikeness can also be a pitfall, because in our pride/hubris we often confuse **being like God** with **being God**.

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We are not Gods... but the scriptures point us to a **transcendant God** who has made everything.....a God who loves to create and invent.....He is relational, He has emotions.

The Bible opens up the story of our existence by telling us that God **IN HIS WORK** made everything we have ever known.

And then as He begins to make US....he says to the God-head/Trinity, “***Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.***”

It is clear from the opening of the biblical narrative that **WORKING** is an integral a part of what it means to be a human being.

Genesis 1:26-27 (ESV)

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27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

And we aren't made to work just for the heck of it... NO WE ARE MADE FOR WORK because God is a worker, God is a designer, He is a creator, He is an architect, He is an engineer, He is infinitely creative.....**AND WE ARE MADE IN HIS IMAGE.**

[Hard Pause]

And what we also see in our text is that after God makes this statement concerning us being his image bearers....he tells us what we are to exercise his image over....he states *“let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

"Exercising royal dominion over the earth as God's representative is the basic purpose for which God created us. Humans are given authority over creation, responsible to God the ultimate king, and as such expected to manage and develop and care for creation, this task to include actual physical work."

-Ian Hart *Tyndale Bulletin*

As Theologian Ian Hart writes in the Tyndale Bulletin

Read: 

And so as we exercise dominion over the created world, we do it knowing that we mirror God. And therefore our work is meant to serve God's purposes more than our own. As we work we are His representatives.

Church imagine what might happen if all Christians took seriously the mandate to work as God's representatives on the Earth. Imagine if we brought our faith to work with us.



How might our work be different if we thought about the following questions?

How would Jesus go about doing my work today?

What values would Christ bring to my work?

What products would he make?

Which people would he serve?



WORK AS WORSHIP



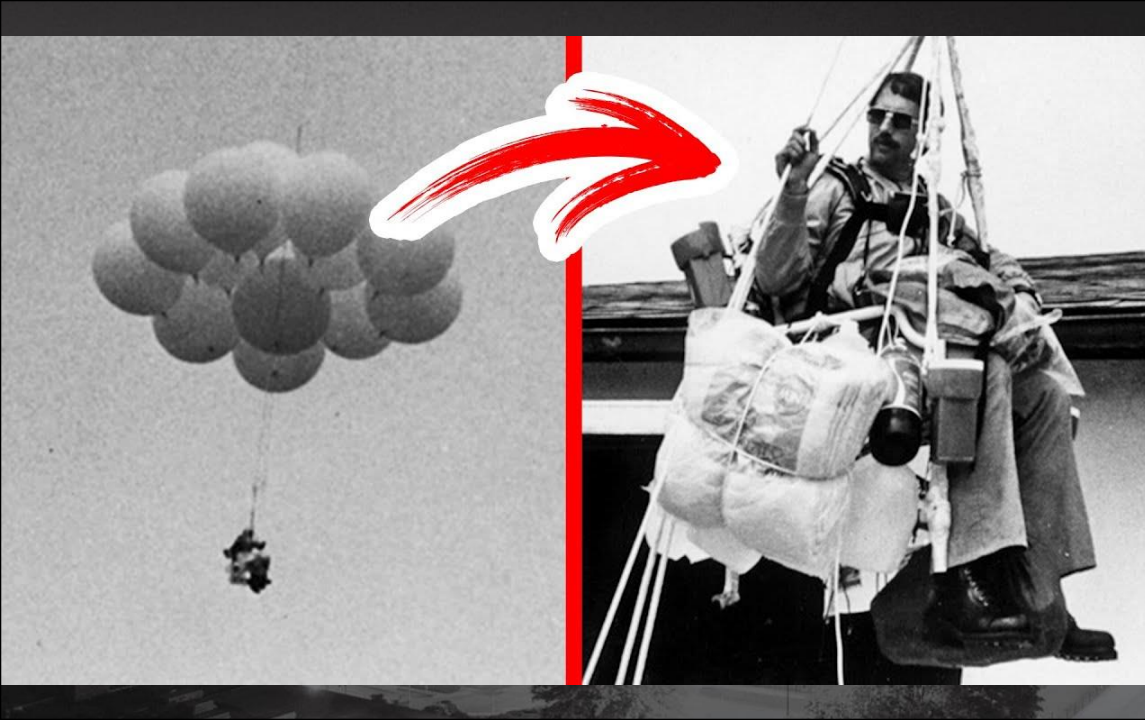
What organizations would Christ build?

What standards would he use?

You see friends, I believe that as we begin to think in those ways, and to see ourselves *as image bearers of the ultimate worker*.....we can begin to see our **work as worship**.

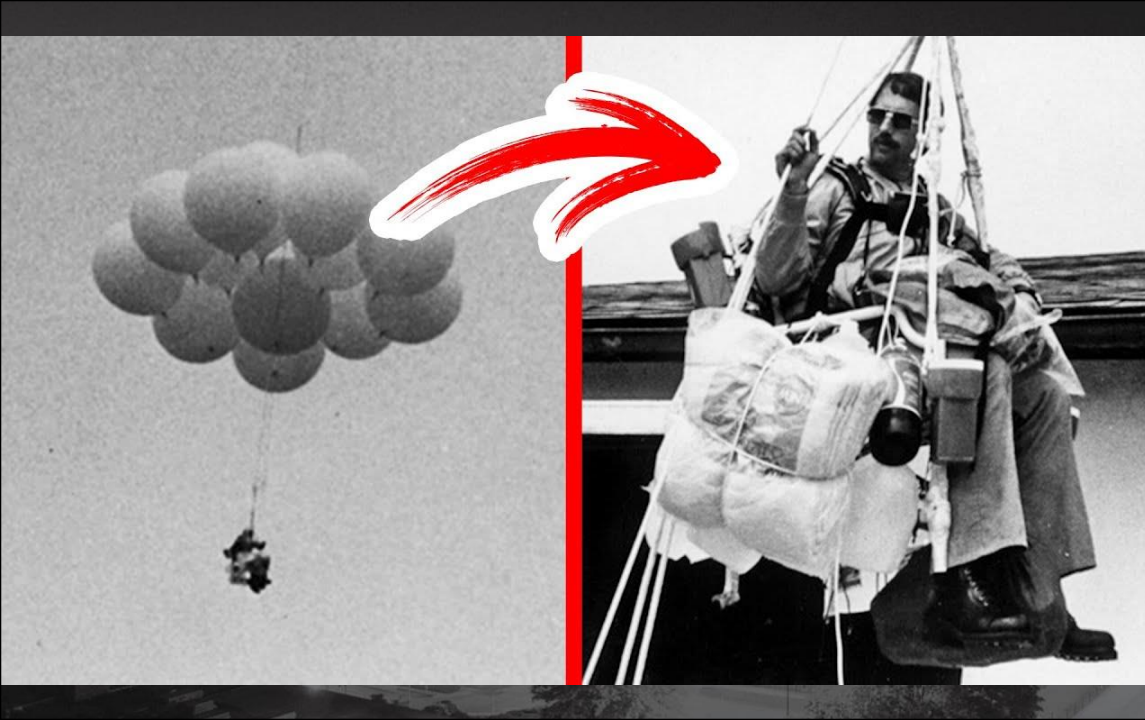
[Pause]

You know I heard a great story that really encapsulates this idea of *humanity being image bearers of the ultimate worker*.....and how often times we get into trouble if we **are not** being the fully productive people God created us to be.



If you had been reading the New York Times on July 2nd 1982.....you would have been greeted with this headline.

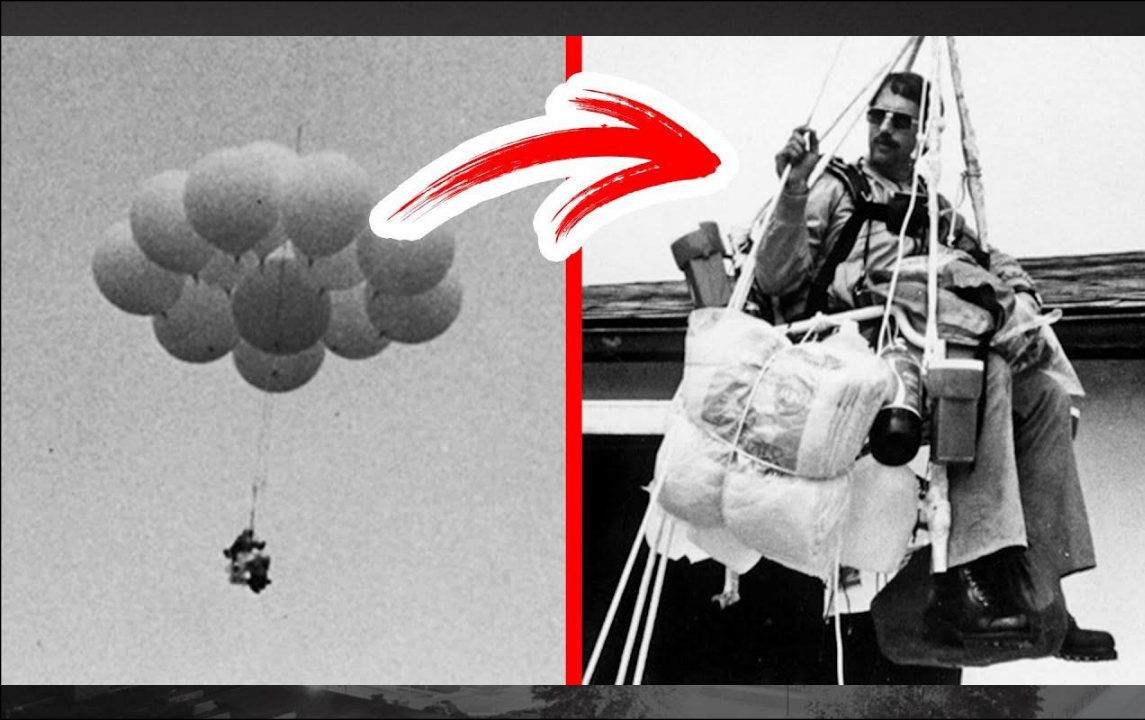
A truck driver with 45 weather balloons rigged to a lawn chair took a 45-minute ride to 16,000 feet today before he got cold, shot some balloons out and crashed into a power line. Los Angeles Police Lieutenant Rod Michelson said, "I know it sounds strange, but it's true. The guy just filled up the balloons with helium, strapped on a parachute, grabbed a BB gun and took off."



The man was later identified as Larry Walters, 33 years old, of North Hollywood. He was not injured. But the Federal Aviation Administration was not amused.

Larry was first spotted by Airline Pilot's from TWA and Delta who reported that they saw a screaming man in a lawn chair at 16,000 feet.

Neal Savoy spokesman for the FAA said in a statement "We know he broke some part of the Federal Aviation Act, and as soon as we decide which part it is, some type of charge will be filed," "If he had a pilot's license, we'd suspend that. But he doesn't."



The police said Mr. Walters went to a friend's house in San Pedro, inflated 45 six-foot weather balloons and attached them to an aluminum lawn chair tethered to the ground.

Walters thought that he might reach 100 feet or so, he had no idea that he would be sharing airspace with jumbo jets.

After he was rescued and safely on the ground reporters asked him, “ WHY DID YOU DO IT?”

And his reply was simple but profound. Larry Walters said, *“Well, I’ve been out of work for a while, and I was bored.....but most of all did it because you can’t just sit there.”*



WORK AS WORSHIP

And while Larry clearly isn't working with too much upstairs... he highlights the truth that all of our souls know all too well...***we cannot just sit there...***we are designed to work.

But for the believer this is not an unguided process...our working is a opportunity for us to
WORSHIP THE GOD WHOSE IMAGE WE ARE MADE
IN.

And so please turn with me to Colossians chapter 3, where we find the Apostle Paul giving instructions on the Christian household. And in his instructions we find a gem of truth as it relates to our work.



WORK AS WORSHIP

To set the context.....in this section of scripture the Apostle is speaking on the responsibility wives have to husbands, and conversely the responsibility that husbands have to wives and he goes on to describe a child's responsibility, and he even mentions a bondservants responsibility.

And in all of this the Apostle is describing THE WORK we all have to do relationally, in our families, to our earthly bosses, and then he ends this section by stating the most important work, THE WORK we have to do for God.

Colossians 3:23, 24 (ESV)

23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as
for the Lord and not for men,
24 knowing that from the Lord you will
receive the inheritance as your reward.
You are serving the Lord Christ.

Read:

Here we [*as believers*] are instructed to work not for men.....but for God.

The words “work heartily” literally mean in the Greek (to work *from the soul*).

Meaning that we are to apply ourselves to working not from a perspective of how we can serve our bossess, or employees **first and foremost**.....but we are instead to consider our working as FOR THE LORD.....and then work heartily...working from the soul in the direction God leads us.

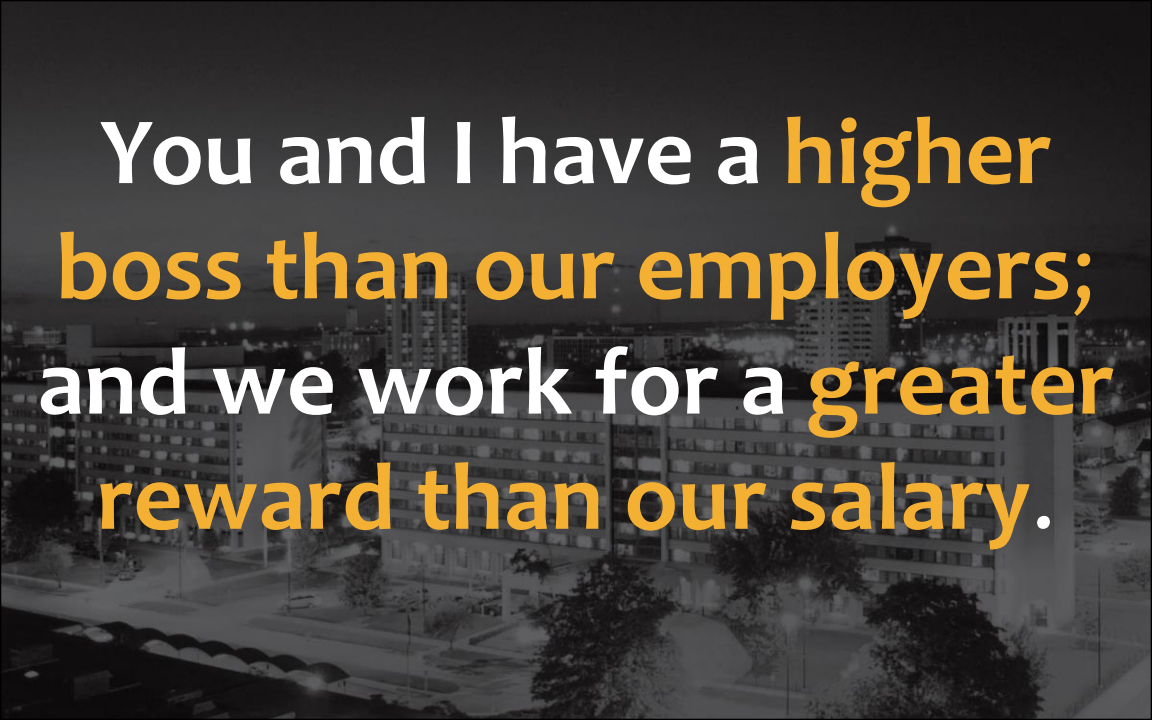
Colossians 3:23, 24 (ESV)

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receive the inheritance as your reward.
You are serving the Lord Christ.

And so, when a person looks at their work (*whether it be changing tires or changing diapers*) and they see it as working for the Lord, their **total mental out look changes.**

Because while many in our society work merely for a paycheck.....the individual who works heartily as for the Lord, they will receive far more than a paycheck.....here we see in verse 24 that they will receive THE INHERITANCE.

And what is this inheritance you might ask? This is a reference to the believers/Christians inheritance in the KINGDOM OF GOD.



You and I have a **higher boss than our employers;** and we work for a **greater reward than our salary.**

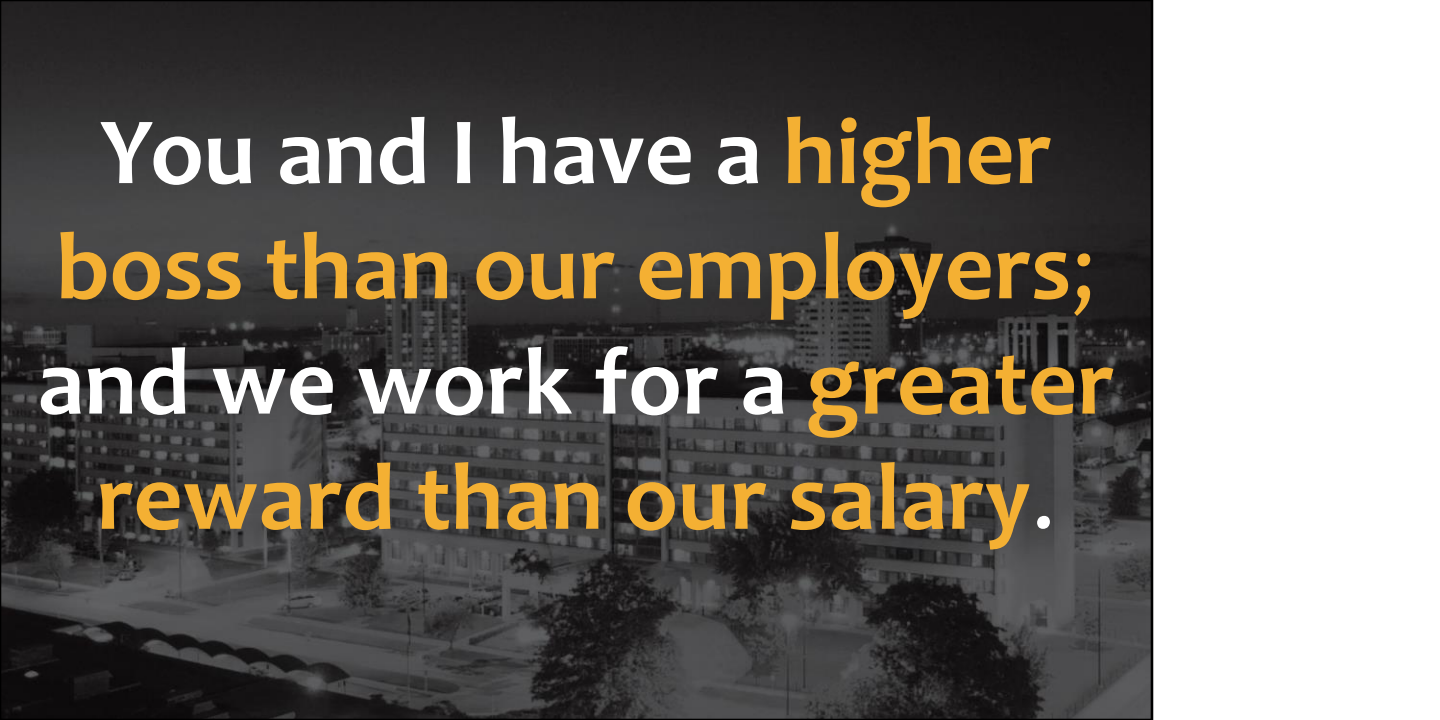
Church these things are recorded in the scriptures that they might be of great encouragement to us.

You and I have a **higher boss than our employers;** and we work for a **greater reward than our salary.**

In everything we do, Paul says, we do it as for the Lord, which means we work enthusiastically as a statement about the **worthiness of our God...** even if no one sees, or takes notice.

[Pause]

You know, **C. S. Lewis once noted** how valleys undiscovered by human eyes are still filled with beautiful flowers.

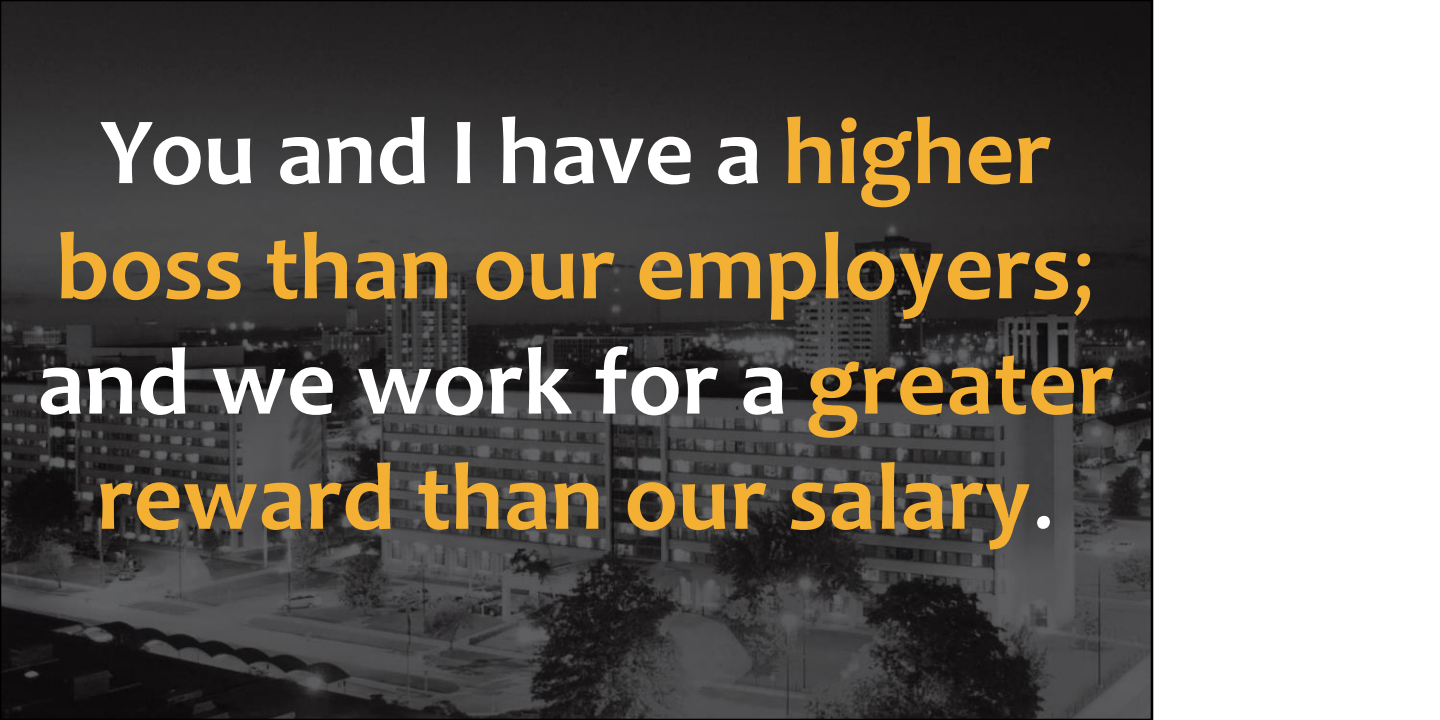


You and I have a higher boss than our employers; and we work for a greater reward than our salary.

He writes, “For whom did God create that beauty, if no human eyes would ever see it?” Lewis’ answer was that God does some things only for his own pleasure. He sees even when no one else does.

And you see church, Christians make beautiful things for God (through the vehicle of our work)—often even when no one else notices.

Someone says, “Well, my boss is terrible. They don’t reward me properly; they don’t ever give me the recognition I deserve.”



You and I have a **higher boss than our employers;** and we work for a **greater reward than our salary.**

Well in truth, **that's a situation hard!** If we've **worked long enough we've all had horrible bosses.** And it's situations like that, which cause a loss of motivation. And before we know it we're a part of the 70% of people who are miserable at work.

[Pause]

But the Christian remembers that...they are **not really doing it for their boss at work.....**they are doing it for their **Father In Heaven.....**aiming at an eternal reward that is far better than a paycheck.



CREATED FOR WORK

WORK AS WORSHIP

The idea that we are created for work doesn't mean we were created for a corporation... as we have seen this morning we were created to be an *imago Dei*—a likeness of God on the Earth.

Christians that is the most important JOB you will ever have. God created work to be worship..... when we engage in our work to the best of our ability we are worshipping God.

And so whether you're a student or a mom, a bus driver or a customer service agent..... no matter what your days work accumulates to..... DO IT AS UNTO THE LORD. That He might get the glory from your efforts.

FACEBOOK LIVE
CONVERSATIONS: LIFE, WORK & FAITH

WORK AS WORSHIP

SEPTEMBER 19 AND 24 @ 7PM

Pastor Nate mentioned last week that we were going to do a series of Facebook Live interviews...to deepen this conversation...about what it means to make our work our worship.

Thursday Sept. 19th, 7pm- A Conversation with Jon Keeler- Executive Pastor, Grace Community Church, Frederick, MD

Pastor Nate's older brother, Jon, spent 20 years climbing the corporate ladder successfully at a large financial company. Recently, Jon responded to the call on his life to use his gifts and talents in vocational ministry as an Executive Pastor. Why would he leave a lucrative career for far less money and accolades? Login this Thursday evening to hear his powerful story and perspective about the secular and sacred spaces of work.