

Work as Worship, "Your Faith at Work", 9/29/19

summary principle. "God created mankind to work for the glory of God, according to our divine design, in ways that benefit the world."

Today we want to talk about **faith in the workplace**. Billy Graham once said that he believed the next great revival will happen in the workplace. If he's right, that means it won't happen because of my preaching, but your working! I believe the workplace is the greatest mission field in the world, and many of us spend 40-60 hours a week with people who may never darken the door of a church, and Jesus has strategically placed you there, with a group of people who I may never meet. Paul says it this way.

2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

You are the ambassador, the strategic representative for Jesus at AstraZeneca, Chemours, JP Morgan, Brandywine School District...to make an appeal to be reconciled to God- we can have peace with God. We call this "evangelism"- Greek word that comes right out of the Bible- Proclaiming the "Good news", we believe that the news about the person of Jesus Christ and what he has done, gave his life so that we can be forgiven and at peace with God forever is the single greatest news in the world. And Jesus is our greatest treasure. Is that your story? All evangelism must start with that heart conviction, not obligation. But the question for today is "how do we share our faith in the workplace?" I'm not allow to proselytize at my job, I could get fired. I'm a boss and I'm concerned if I invite someone to church it might be manipulative. I don't want people to label me in a way that keeps me from progressing in my career.

Well there are some unwise ways to share you faith that can get you ostracized, or maybe even fired. In 2004 an **American Airlines** pilot came onto the intercom in the airplane and said, "I want you to be sure that if the plane goes down you know where you are going to spend eternity. And there are some Christians on this plane that can identify themselves so you can talk to them." Needless to say there were some people that were not so happy about that. While I applaud this pilot's zeal for sharing his faith, this is probably not the best example of workplace evangelism. Let me give you 5 other bad examples of Sharing your faith on the job.

- 1) While working at the **Gap**, put "Gospel tracts" in the hands of the mannequins.
- 2) At an office birthday party, give them a card with a **fake \$100 bill** with the gospel on it instead of real money.
- 3) You see your neighbor in the **backyard digging a ditch** and so you decide to stand over him for the next 30 minutes telling him about Jesus instead of grabbing a shovel.
- 4) Tell your boss that instead of a smoke break you need 10 minutes every hour for a **prayer break**.
- 5) When it is your turn to drive in the **work carpool**, blast your pastor's sermons in the car speakers on the way to and from the office.

3 Biblical Principles to effectively share your faith at work. And I believe you will be able to apply these principles to all your days work in the relationships you encounter whether working, at school or retired. The first two form a bridge from last week's message.

Principle #1- Excellence breeds opportunity.

Solomon said in **Proverbs 22:29, Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men.** Your hard work and skill can open doors of opportunity and influence for Christ. We know this as a universal truth- who has more influence the kid putting in extra work in the batting cage after practice, or the kid chasing butterflies in right field? But the converse is true as well. Laziness and an unwillingness to do work, calling off work, showing up late, leaving early, doing the minimum required...for a Christian, this is like salt losing its saltiness.

The church in Thessalonica was filled with people who loved Jesus and they had a lot of great things going for them, but they had become so spiritually-minded that some of them developed a reputation for being all talk and no work. Paul is exhorting them to get some dirt under their fingers.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your own hands as we charged you; so that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody.

SO THAT- you would earn the right and opportunity to share your faith with the non-Christians who observe your work ethic. There is a very close connection between the way we do our work and the attitude that unbelievers will have toward the gospel that we believe. Remember the Dorothy Sayers quote- about the skilled woodworker who is a Christian? "That the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables." You want to be effective in evangelism? Work hard at what you do! Are you known for your work ethic?

Principle #2 Ethics breed credibility.

Again this is a bridge from last week's message. Not only our excellence but our ethics in business and our personal life that give us credibility. The gospel ought to be having a transforming effect on our ethics and behavior as we live life worthy of the gospel. We conform to Christ, not the pattern of the world. 1 Peter 2:12, Peter is speaking to Christians who aren't living in segregated from the rest of society, but integrated in every way among a non-believing world. In their work, in the public square, everywhere. He says, ***12 Live such good lives (ethics) among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds (ethics) and glorify God on the day he visits us.***

Your ethics in the workplace, in the public square, in the home are consistent with your faith- that even if someone would want to slander you, they wouldn't have a leg to stand on. **What about your personal ethics**- are you quick to join in the gossip or badmouth or complain about the boss, your teacher or your coach? Or do you honor others and refuse to speak ill of them.

How's your language? Do you display sexual integrity and respect for others or do your eyes wander or you are known as a flirt? If you are married, how do you talk about your spouse with your co-workers?

What about your ethics in business? The standard upon which we do business, treat clients, interact with patients, treat our co-workers or employees has such a reputation of consistency, high ethical standard, of honesty and fairness and values. Are you about doing right by the client or about the bottom line financials? Is it about what you can get away with or is it about always doing the next right thing, even if that doesn't lead to the best financial impact. Do you have a code of ethics that you operate by in your sector that are informed by the Word of God? Might be in the form of values. Example of Skip Schoenhals.

Principle #3 Be prepared to share.

The apostle Paul in Colossians 4 addresses the work of both foreign and domestic missions. And he asks for prayer for him on the mission field, but then he addresses the work of domestic missions- that is evangelism in the community of the non-apostles, people just like you.

Colossians 4:5-6

⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Paul's instruction is to be equipped with a missionary mindset. Living with an expectation that people are going to ask you about your faith. One pastor says, **"Evangelism is doing normal life with gospel intentionality."** *1 Peter 3:15 Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within you. And do it with gentleness and respect.*

Your life, your behavior, your conversations show be like a belt-high fastball for questions about your faith, your purpose, your hope, why you are different. This is how much friend, Leo lives his life. When people ask him how he's doing, he says, "Better than I deserve" to lead to a conversation. He asks if he can pray for people before lunch. He's always quoting Solomon's wisdom with clients. He tells me. I'm a Mortgage Broker, but that's just my cover, I'm actually an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

I was speaking with Christian Entrepreneur, started Chatham Financial, Mike Bontrager, He says he wanted to his leadership and the culture of his company to embody the themes of the gospel- trust, authenticity, loyal love, grace, forgiveness. He told me true story that made an impact on him. There was a girl in Marketing in Madison Ave. Cutthroat- made mistake cost company 25k. Packing up stuff...boss goes into board and says, let me say that I didn't train her well enough, give her another opportunity and put this on my account. She doesn't lose her job. Girl hears about this, can believe it and comes in to ask him, I have never heard of anyone doing this, why? "Since you asked, I will tell you. My life was transformed because I learned what God did for me. A lot more than 25K that I owed, Jesus paid it all for me when he died for me and restored my relationship with God forever. So when I see an opportunity to show this

kind of grace to others I try to do it." This is living in a way that embodies the gospel, so that when the question is asked you have a belt-high fastball.

Some people work for the paycheck, some people work for the weekend, you ought to work for the question, "Why?" - J.D. Greear

10 practical ways to be ready for the "why?"

1) Get to work a little early to pray for God to open your spiritual eyes and spiritual ears to see and hear the things he wants you to hear, and to open doors of opportunity. We can get lost in the frenetic pace of the day.

2) Develop a Prayer List. List people that you care about that you want to share your faith with, Lord would give you opportunities. Maybe even someone you don't even like at work. Maybe you would dive into a relationship with someone who wouldn't normal work with. What would say more about the reality of Christ than that?

3) Intentional relationship building at lunch. Instead of eating lunch alone, intentionally eat with other co-workers and learn their story.

4) Mention church/ministry in your weekend activities. When co-workers ask about what you did over the weekend, mention church instead of intentionally dancing around the topic.

5) Learn how to share the gospel briefly (less than 30 seconds), so that you can communicate it in a conversation without hijacking it entirely.

6) Ask great questions: Do you ever go to church? Did you grow up with a faith background? Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? How do you cope with difficulty in life? What do you think is the greatest purpose of life? Strategy Evangelism- Stephen Parker

7) Ask people how you can pray for them. Meeting with Mayor Purzycki recently.

8) Admit your mistakes and ask for forgiveness from others.

9) Keep extra copies of books in your office/cube- The Reason for God, The Case of Christ, The Bible.

10) Invite people to church, a Christian event or service opportunity.

Watch Video of Nils.

Action Item- write down name of someone who needs the gospel.

Work as Worship w/ Lucy Malmberg- This Tuesday Night Live at 7pm