

# Your Daily Labour as an Acceptable Offering to God

Various Texts: Gen 1:26-28, Gen 3:15-17, 1 Peter 2

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## **Introduction:**

As many of you know, I have been away for a week and half, first to the ARP Synod, and then to help my mother move from Asheville, NC, to Atlanta.

- Because I did not have a lot of time to do all the exegetical work involved in preaching from Hebrews, I decided to preach on a topic that I think needs to be repeated from time to time—
  - The place that God had given to our daily labour.
  - I want to show you how to look at the work that you do everyday—your vocation—
    - whether you are a lawyer or a plumber;
    - a researcher or a mother looking after your children;
    - a receptionist or a farmer...
  - How should you look at your work before God each day?
- The church has often been very confused about this.
  - In many evangelical churches, pastors and people refer to our daily labour as something we have to do that gets in the way of our real service to God...
    - We must do it to survive, but our real purpose is to evangelise the lost and to devote ourselves to things like prayer.
    - The first church I went to after my conversion was like this.
      - I took it all very seriously at the time and devoted myself to poverty, sometimes going without food for several days.
  - This sort of error grew up in the very early days of the church, partly due to the importation of Greek notions about the evil of all things material.
    - Paul refers to it as a “doctrine of demons” in First Timothy 4:1-5.
    - The thought was, if you were truly devoted to God, you did not concern yourself with the affairs of this life—things like marriage and family and a career!
      - Oh no!
      - If you really loved God, you forsook all of that and went to the monastery or off to a cave to pray and meditate.
        - Eating and drinking and marriage were all worldly affairs for weak, uncommitted Christians, who had not really left all to follow Jesus.

But in the Protestant Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century,

- the reformers turned back to the scriptures to find out what pleases God. They did not trust in their own wisdom, but sought to shape their faith and practice by God’s word.
- We must always look to the scriptures because we are fallen and we will always go wrong if we try to figure out what God wants on our own.
  - The Lord has given us His word in writing, and if we do not consult those writings, we are left in darkness and ignorance.

- Now you know that when the reformers turned to the scriptures, one of the main things they saw that needed to be reformed was the church's worship.
  - They restored the preaching of the word and got rid of all the traditions of men that had cluttered the simplicity of the worship that God had appointed.
  - But did you know that they also discovered that the church had gone wrong about our secular callings?
- As they returned to the scriptures, they began to understand again that all lawful callings are pleasing to God and are to be done for Him—
  - that even a slave with an ungodly master could offer his work to God as a pleasing sacrifice!
    - Marriage, eating, and vocation became sacred again—
      - rather than things you did merely to survive or something you did if you were a weak Christian who was not really sold out to God.
  - Martin Luther had this to say:
    - **Those who are now called “spiritual,” that is, priests, bishops, or popes, are neither different from other Christians nor superior to them, except that they are charged with the administration of the word of God and the sacraments, which is their work and office... A cobbler, a smith, a peasant—each has his own work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops.**
- A cobbler or a blacksmith is a priest to God!
  - This is what we should understand by the phrase, “the priesthood of all believers.”
  - Have you heard people talk about the priesthood of all believers?
    - It is not the idea that everyone, with or without ordination, can preach and administer the sacraments and church discipline...
      - That was never the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in the Reformation...
    - It was rather that we all have sacrifices to offer to God,
      - and that our sacrifice includes not only our offerings of prayer and praise and our alms,
        - but also the offering to God of our daily service of labour.
  - You are thinking in the right way when you look at your daily work as God's calling.
    - The word “vocation” means calling...
    - It is not just ministers or missionaries that are called into full time service to God.
      - Everyone of us is called to be God's full time priests, offering ourselves to Him as living sacrifices, dedicated wholly to His service—

- Whether you are a farmer or a doctor, a salesman or a carpenter, a mother called to care for her children, or a student who is in school...
  - Your vocation is what God has given you to do, and you are to do it for Him.
- Sadly, it seems that in the modern-day church, this biblical view of work is being lost again—even in reformed churches!

So today I want to show you from the Bible...

- First, that God has called you to your ordinary daily labours...
- Second, how Jesus Christ enables you to offer your labour as a pleasing sacrifice to God.
- Third, that maintaining this perspective about work will revolutionise your work.

So let's begin with the first point:

## I. God has called you to labour

A. We learn in Genesis 1:26-28 that God called us to labour even before the fall.

- Sometimes, people wrongly suppose that labour was a curse that came after the fall.
  - They suppose that before the fall, we would not have had to work...
    - I don't know—I guess we would just lay around on a hammock and eat grapes or something—or maybe play hockey...
    - But scripture shows that we were given work to do—work that we would have loved!
- Take a look at Genesis 1:26-28 where God's original ordinance of labour is presented to us.
  - Please give careful attention as I read to you from God's word.
    - **Gen 1:26-28: Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."**

1. You can see two things that God called us to do here...

a. First, to multiply and fill the earth...

- This involves having babies and all that is involved with that!
  - Caring for them, providing for them, teaching them, training them... all that.
  - A huge and important task.

- When He says, “Be fruitful and multiply,” it is not only a command, but also a blessing...
    - He is not just telling us to do it, but empowering us to do it...
    - The same as He did when He said, “Let the earth bring forth vegetation.”
      - We received the amazing ability to bring forth children!
  - b. Second, the LORD told us to subdue the earth and take dominion.
    - *Subdue* means to bring the earth into service...
      - to harness and utilise the earth’s vast resources for God’s glory and our good!
      - And again, this was not only a command, but also a blessing—by speaking in this way, God gave us the ability to subdue the earth.
2. This idea of filling and subduing the earth is very comprehensive.
- a. At the most basic level are our physical needs—
    - We are to subdue the earth for food.
      - We cultivate the ground so that it will grow crops for us.
      - As the population grows, we need related services like transportation to distribute the food.
        - We are to plant crops for ourselves and for others!
    - But there is more to subduing the earth than just meeting our basic needs for survival...
      - The LORD made us with a desire for beauty and art.
        - So you have callings in music, literature, painting, architecture, cooking, cosmetology, and many other things...
        - And add desire for discovery, and you have research and exploration of God’s creation.
  - b. The rich variety of man’s work is brought out in the things that Adam was specifically called to do before the fall.
    - In Gen 2:15, we are told that he was put in the garden to tend and keep it.
      - **Gen 2:15: “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”**
    - And in Genesis 2:19, he is given work to do in classifying the animals, answering to his desire for discovery and observation.
      - **Gen. 2:19: “Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was its name.*”**
      - This was particularly a work for him to do with his mind.
- And so it is that God has given us work for both our bodies and our minds.
- Both kinds of work were given before the Fall.
  - Both kinds of work are built into our very being.

3. Our daily work is pleasing to God when it is seen in man as His image bearer.
  - a. It is something we do that is very much reflective or patterned after what He does...
    - You see, He is the one who created the earth for us and who gives it to us—delicious food, beautiful things, marital relations, interesting things...
    - He is very good and kind and He gives us these things. In His providence He brings them to us.
    - In His wonderful plan, He uses us to bestow these blessings on each other.
      - We get to be His hands and His feet as it were...bringing His blessings to others.
      - By our labour, we are able to take what He had put into the creation and share it with each other!
      - In this way, a farmer is God's agent who grows food for others...
        - And then a truck driver along with the grocer is involved in getting God's good gifts to our storehouses,
        - And then you have the chef or the woman in the home who prepares food for her household!
      - Similar things could be said about the scientist who searches out the marvels of creation and then shares what he learns with us!
        - Or the builder who takes God's gifts and makes structures for us of beauty and usefulness...
        - Or the artist who draws attention to the beauty that is all around us and presents it to us in creative ways as a poet, painter, or musician!
  - God, in His marvellous goodness, made us to be a part of the process of the benevolent bestowal of His precious gifts.
  - b. In this you see the intrinsic beauty and goodness of labour!
    - It is indeed a very honourable thing!
    - Before sin corrupted us, we were totally committed to blessing each other and to honouring God as our creator through our labour!
      - That is what we will be doing in heaven!
      - It is hard to imagine what it will be like!
        - The fall has greatly corrupted us and our labour, but we can see the excellence of the original design!

TRANS> But of course there **has** been a fall into sin and the creation **has** been cursed—and this might raise the question...

- Is labour still something that God calls us to do now that we are fallen?
  - And of course, the answer is **yes**!

B. Genesis 3:17-19 shows that labour continues after the fall.

- Turn over to Genesis 3:17-19 and you can see this.
    - The Lord is rebuking Adam for his sin and setting forth the consequences of the fall—but still, the ordinance of labour continues...
      - **Gen 3:17-19: Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” ’ ”**
1. Do you see from these words that labour still continues?
    - a. Man still works the earth to bring forth food to eat...
      - God has also addressed Eve in the previous verse and told her that she will still bring forth children.
      - The whole matter of subduing and filling the earth continues.
        - Food is focused on, but all other areas of labour also continue—all that is involved with subduing and filling.
    - b. The truth is that because of the fall, we have additional work to do.
      - Now we have callings that we might call “redemptive”— callings that have to do with overcoming problems caused by the Fall...
        - We have things like medicine and pest control...
        - We have need of policemen, judges, and guards...
        - We need preachers of the gospel because we need to be saved and sanctified.
      - These callings extend God’s mercy to us to mitigate the effects of the fall.
        - They are in particular related to Christ as our redeemer—the one who heals our diseases and restores us to righteousness.

TRANS> Yes indeed—labour continues after the fall!

2. But you can also see in Genesis 3 the difficulties that now attend our labour.
  - a. The Lord tells us that the ground is cursed so that now “in toil you shall eat of it,” and that “in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.”
    - In other words, it will be harder to get things done.
      - There will be problems and your work will be hard.
  - b. The difficulties can be broken down as follows:
    - 1) First, there are hindrances by nature itself, here referred to as “thorns and thistles.”
      - Things we did not plant will come up in our gardens.
      - The thorns and thistles are representative of all the different kinds of trouble we face in our work from nature...
        - everything from termites to tornadoes that do things we never asked them to do—we don’t have dominion over them.

- 2) Second, there is the hindrance of death, referred to here as “returning to the dust.”
    - Here is a reversal of dominion.
      - We were called to subdue the ground and have dominion over the dust of the ground; but now it eventually subdues us.
        - We return to dust.
      - By extension, this also includes sickness or injury that leads to death.
        - Problems in everything from our brains to our backs cause great hindrance to our labour so that we bring forth far less fruit than we otherwise would.
  - 3) Third, there is the hindrance of sin...broken relationships and indifference.
    - In Gen 3:16, God told Eve that she would be striving with her husband for his place or position...
    - This strife between those who lead and those who are led extends into all our relationships...
      - Store owners and managers must contend with theft and laziness as well as inefficiency, incompetence, and carelessness in those they hire...
      - Workers have to contend with shoddy selfish management and with dangerous or uncomfortable working conditions and inadequate pay.
  - 4) Fourth, there is the reality that since the Fall, some work can be, in itself, tedious and boring—working on an assembly line or filling out forms.
    - c. These four hindrances make our labour burdensome to us...
      - but you must not look at labour itself as the curse!
      - No! Labour itself is the gift of God!
- But there is something else to see here about our labour after the fall...
- Not only does it still continue...
  - Not only is it now attended with much difficulty...
3. Our labour is also attended with blessing!
    - Often, this goes unnoticed when we read Genesis 3:17-19... but it is there!
    - a. The Lord promises that
      - though it will be with toil, you will still eat of the fruit of the ground...
      - and though it brings forth thorns and thistles, you will still eat the herb of the field—it will still produce edible crops—not just thorns and thistles.
      - And, though it is with the sweat of your face, you will still enjoy bread!
    - b. And so we continue not only to work, but also to produce after the fall.
      - We need to labour to survive, and we also continue to labour to produce things for beauty and pleasure and learning...
      - God made us for this and though mitigated by the fall, there is still great blessing that comes through our labours.

TRANS> So you see then that labour is something that God has given us to do from the very beginning and also something that continues after the fall for us.

- Since He has given it to us and since it is pleasing to Him,
  - we ought to do it for Him!
  - You are to offer your labour to Him as a pleasing sacrifice!
    - But this raises a very important question...

## **II. How can you make your daily labour to be an acceptable offering to God?**

- That is what I want to look at next.

A. If you are honest, you know that we all have a problem. Our work is corrupted by us.

1. God is displeased with us.

- A lot of people try to deny this, avoid this, and suppress this,
  - but God has made it clear that He is not pleased with us since the fall.
- When He first created the world, He said that it was good, and then when He created us, He said that everything He had made was very good!
  - and it was!
- But now that we have rebelled against our Creator, we are far from good.
  - The Bible says that the wrath and curse of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...
    - We don't like to obey God and we don't even like to think about Him as He is and so we deny Him and suppress the truth.
    - His displeasure is very obvious—there is the curse with death and, what we saw before, toil in our labour, and there is all the trouble we have getting along with others...
      - This is seen very much in our daily labour.

2. You also know that you don't always do your work to bless others.

a. Remember what I spoke about before?

- How we have the privilege with our labour to share all the wonderful things that God has made for us with each other?
  - We can provide good and pleasing things for each other through our work.

b. But you know what you are like...

- You often procrastinate and leave people waiting and deprived!
- You often do far less than you ought,
  - indulging yourself and giving less to others than you should—inferior work, sloppy work, work in which you have cut corners—
    - or things that you have completely left undone.
- Instead of striving for excellence so that you can bless others,
  - you either strive for excellence to feed your own pride or merely to advance your career or perhaps to get people to like you or appreciate you...
    - or you do as little as you can get by with and still keep your job!



- You often do your work in a begrudging way—as if it were a great imposition on you.
- Perhaps you even cheat others or steal from them and try to take advantage of them in your daily labour.

TRANS> Very often, we are not even trying to bless others with our labour...

- But there is an even more serious problem than this—a problem that is even more pervasive!

### 3. You know that you often do not do your work for God!

#### a. Very often you have no thought of trying to please Him with your work.

- You may even be trying to please your boss—for praise or for a raise or for a promotion...
  - But you act as if God is not even in the picture at all!
  - And He is **God! God**, who gave you the work in the first place!
    - He is your Creator and you are made in His image and you were made to glorify and enjoy Him...
    - It is not a little omission to ignore God—it exposes a very serious spiritual blindness and enmity!
      - Your whole life is meant to be for Him, so to forget Him is no trivial matter!
  - It would be like a builder completely forgetting about the one he is building a house for—
    - and just doing what he wants without any regard for pleasing the people he is building it for...
    - He might not put doors in the house his clients could get in—or a floor or a furnace for that matter...
      - He just builds something to build it.

#### ➤ Not only do you fail to please God in your work,

#### b. You also fail to do your work with thanksgiving to God!

- Just think. He has given you the privilege of sharing His gifts with others!
  - He has given you the strength to be a blessing to others.
- But instead of thanksgiving, you do it with cursing...
  - He cursed the ground and instead of humbly accepting that, you curse Him as you work—you work with bitter complaining.
  - You resent God for cursing the ground and for making your work difficult. You should rather try to learn from the hard things—
    - They teach you what happens when we are separated from God and need to be reconciled to Him!
    - And you should see the fundamental blessing and privilege of work—and of having it continue even after our rebellion and fall.

TRANS> Every one of us comes terribly short of the glory of God in our work. Our work is characterised by sin.

B. And because our work comes short, it makes it unacceptable to God.

1. God is holy and He can never approve of what is sinful.
  - He revealed this in the Old Testament when He told the people that they would die if they tried to come near to Him...
    - They would die because of their sin—because they were unholy and He was holy.
    - They had to be washed and come to Him only with atoning sacrifices.
  - Sin repulses Him—it is reprehensible to Him.
    - Therefore, at the last day, our work will only add more to our condemnation and punishment.
2. There is no injustice in this—
  - It is just the opposite—it is justice and goodness of God that brings His wrath upon us for our sin.
  - Just think of it...
    - Here we are, made in God’s image, made to have a part by our daily labour in sharing His excellent gifts with others...
      - But we pervert it with our selfishness and corruption.
      - We do not do it for others or for the glory of God with thanksgiving.

TRANS> We deserve to be judged severely and we will be unless we find a remedy... some way to make our work acceptable to a holy God.

C. There is a way to make our labour acceptable to God—and the way is Jesus Christ!

- He is the one who enables you to make your daily labour an acceptable offering to God.
    - How does He do it?
1. First, He restores you to God as a person. He makes you a pleasing priest to God.
    - a. We were created to be priests to God—all of us!
      - There are two kinds of sacrifices that we are to offer to God...
        - There is our worship which we are to present to Him as a pleasing aroma,
          - in which we praise Him and sit at His feet to learn His wisdom.
        - And there is also our daily labour—which as priests we are to offer up to Him—to do it for Him.
          - But as we have seen, we do not do it for Him.
    - b. The Bible teaches that Jesus makes us priests to God!
      - Look at Revelation 1:5-6 and you can see this:
      - It speaks of Jesus as...

- **Rev 1:5-6: Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father...**
- Do you see that?
  - He made us priests to God!
    - When Jesus saves you, He turns you back to God.
    - He makes you a priest who serves God.
  - You see, the worst thing a priest can do is offer his sacrifice to one who is not God!
    - That is what happened to us when we fell. We were still priests, but not priests to God!
      - We became priests to idols!
      - We offered our daily service to idols...
      - But this says that Jesus makes us priests to God again!
- c. How does Jesus do this?
  - 1) Well, it says right there in Revelation 1:5...
    - **Rev 1:5: “He washes us from our sins in His own blood.”**
    - What does this mean?
      - It means that He reconciles us to God by His death—by pouring out His life—His blood—as a sacrifice to God for our sins.
  - 2) This cleansing has a marvellous two-fold effect.
    - a) First, it has the marvellous effect of securing our pardon from God—
      - Jesus shed His blood as an atoning sacrifice.
      - In doing so, He paid the full penalty of the sin of all of His elect people...
        - You can become one of His people by trusting in His sacrifice to take away your sin!
      - Let go of your pride and your denial and admit that you are in desperate need of His cleansing and come to Him.
        - He promises that all who come to Him will be saved!
        - All your guilt will be taken off the record!
    - b) Secondly, the washing of His blood has the marvellous effect of changing you—of turning you to God!
      - If left on your own, you would never turn to serve God.
        - You would keep on serving idols as long as you live—doing your labour for what is not God—never for the glory of God.
      - Jesus’ blood not only cleanses us by atoning for our sins,
        - It also cleanses us by washing the corruption and rebellion out of our hearts so that we will serve God.
          - We are renewed and made new creations in Christ.

- And from then on, we serve God—though not yet perfectly in this life—
    - but with a true sincerity that God accepts.
- So you see that by this two-fold cleansing, He makes you a priest to God who offers your daily labour (not to mention your worship) to God!
2. But there is still another problem that must be corrected if your labour is to be acceptable.
- Even after you have come to Jesus to be cleansed, you are accepted, but until you are perfected, your work still comes short of what God requires.
  - Therefore, scripture teaches that Jesus not only cleanses **you**, but also each work that you do for God!
- a. Take a look at 1 Peter 2:4-5.
- **1 Peter 2:4-5: “Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**
  - Isn't that amazing?
    - Through Jesus Christ, you are made priests who are able to offer up sacrifices to God that are actually themselves acceptable to Him!
    - By Jesus, your sacrifices themselves are pleasing to the Lord.
- b. These spiritual sacrifices include both your worship and your daily work.
- 1) They are called *spiritual sacrifices* to distinguish them from the sacrifices of the Old Testament...
    - The bulls and goats and the incense offered up by priests with robes in an earthly tabernacle were not spiritual, but carnal...
  - 2) These spiritual sacrifices are of two kinds...
    - a) They involve the sacrifice of praise to God...
      - What we do when we gather together for worship in the assembly... and each day in our homes...
    - b) But the context shows us that these spiritual sacrifices **also** involve our daily offering of service to God...
      - The passage shows that we proclaim His praises by living as His holy nation in our everyday callings...
        - as salesmen, truck drivers, homemakers, students, doctors, builders, teachers, and rocket scientists.
- c. Look at how Peter goes on in verse 9-12 to urge us to do good work as God's people—*every day*:
- **1 Peter 2:9-12: But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.**

- As priests of God, we are no longer in the darkness!
  - Now we are the people of God and we can proclaim God’s praises in the world as human beings are meant to do!
- We can serve Him by doing our daily work for Him.
  - Verse 11 continues...
    - **1 Peter 2:11-12: Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**
  - Peter is talking here about the good works that we do in the world every day...the things that the Gentiles see!
    - He makes it clear that he is talking about our everyday callings as he continues...
      - In verses 13-17, he speaks of our good works as citizens obeying our governors...
      - In verses 18-25, he speaks about our good works even as slaves who have abusive masters—
        - that they can glorify God by patiently doing their work!
        - It is an acceptable offering to God.
      - In chapter 3:1-6, he speaks of how wives can honour God by serving their husbands, even when their husbands are ungodly.
        - In verse 7, he speaks about how husbands can honour the Lord by dwelling with their wives in an understanding way.
      - And in 3:9-19, he speaks of how we are to do good works for others—as Christ did for us—in all of life!
        - It is clear that he is talking about how we live every day!

TRANS> So where does this leave you?

- If you are not a believer, it leaves you without any hope whatsoever.
  - Even your works that are highly regarded by men will be condemned as wicked and idolatrous on the day of judgement, and you will be brought to shame.
    - They were not offered to God; they were not cleansed by Christ. They are unacceptable.
    - Even our philanthropy will be condemned because it was not offered to God.
- But if you come to Christ or have come to Him, it leaves you with a wonderful opportunity!
  - An opportunity to “offer up acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5).”
    - An opportunity to get up every day and realise that you are a priest who is called to dedicate your work to God and to give yourself to God as a spiritual sacrifice in service to Him.

- With such a perspective, there is no longer any such thing as mundane work!
  - As one man put it,
    - “Believers are endowed with the incredible privilege of ministering for God daily wherever He has called them. But because some believers lose sight of their priestly calling, they slosh through their tasks day after day, week after week, losing valuable opportunities to serve God and glorify Him as priests in their vocations.”
  - What a difference it makes to know that you are God’s priest and that whether you are at the office or the kitchen sink,
    - Christ enables you to do God’s work for God’s glory.

### **III. If you would but maintain this perspective, how it would revolutionise your work!**

- Let’s look at four ways it revolutionises your work to have this perspective...
  - A. First, it would make you more diligent in your work!
    1. Just think how much meaning this perspective gives to all those Proverbs that encourage you to be diligent, like Prov. 13:4:
      - **Prov 13:4: The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.**
        - There is far more at stake here than the mere loss of worldly riches!
        - The lazy man actually gives up the opportunity to serve his God and obtain *His* reward!
    2. You only have so much time on earth, and you would do well make the best of it.
      - Ecclesiastes 9:10 encourages you therefore:
        - **Ecc 9:10: Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.**
    3. When your daily work is viewed as your service to God,
      - you can see why there are such strong statements about idleness, showing that it is incompatible with the true faith.
        - **2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11-12: “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us... (11) For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**
        - **1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**
  - If you don’t fulfill your daily calling, it shows that you are not a true believer.

- If you refuse to be God's hands to distribute His provision to your family, it is clear that you have never been reconciled to Him!

TRANS> If you understand that now in Christ, you can please God through your work, it will show in your diligence.

- but not only that....

B. You will also be patient in your work when difficulties come.

1. You will view suffering in your work as an opportunity to enter into Jesus' sufferings—
  - You will see it as an opportunity to show your love to God by continuing to serve in spite of all kinds of opposition.
  - Those who make great sacrifices for God show their love for God.
2. You will have a heart to continue serving those who are ungrateful or unkind or even abusive because you will be doing it for a much higher motive: to please God!
  - **1 Peter 4:12-14: Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.**
  - With this perspective, you will even be able to rejoice in service that is difficult or tedious.

TRANS> Realising that you serve Christ will not only make you diligent and patient...thirdly,

C. It will cause you to give proper attention to all aspects of your calling—to be balanced.

1. One of the characteristics of those who do not serve Christ is a terrible disproportion in their service.
  - a. For example, a man will give himself to his business and fail to give attention to his wife and children.
    - He will live as if their physical needs are all that matters and their spiritual needs are irrelevant.
    - He will break the Sabbath in order to gain wealth because he is not looking at his work as work he does for God.
  - b. Or, on the other hand, a man will become so home-centred that he will fail to provide for his family's material needs and will fail to fulfil his calling to subdue the earth.
  - c. There are even worse versions of this
    - as when a man abandons his wife and children altogether in order to pursue his own pleasures...

- his hobbies, some woman that catches his eye,
  - or, as you often hear about today, to pursue a life of homosexuality.
- This is the self-life.
  - Instead of looking to serve the LORD, he just follows his own desires.
  - He does not do his work as a priest for the glory of God.

2. But when you know that everything you do is for God,

- Then you begin to consult His will as far as what you do with your time.
  - After all, your whole intent is to please Him!
- As you do this, you give the right proportion of time to your activities.
  - You do not neglect one thing in order to do another.

TRANS> So then, we have seen that when you realise that your daily work is for God, it will make you diligent and patient and balanced in your work...

- and now, lastly,

D. A sense that you serve Christ in your work will cause you to be a greater blessing to others.

- Your work for them will be done as unto the Lord.
- 1. The one who wants to please Christ will truly be a blessing to those he serves...
  - How blessed is the husband whose wife is motivated in her work to please Christ!
    - He will have a wife in whom he can trust and who will do him good and not evil all the days of her life!
    - She will do her work with joy rather than with strife...
      - Nothing worse than a feast with strife!
  - How blessed are the parents whose children are motivated to do their work to please Christ!
    - They will be always ready to repent when they have sinned.
      - They won't have to be forced to do their work, but will do it cheerfully and gladly—as an offering to God!
  - How blessed is the business that has workers who are motivated to do their work to please Christ!
    - They will be honest and diligent, free from complaining and pettiness.
- Thus you see how you will be a blessing to those who are over you in authority...
  - But it will also work the other way...
- 2. If you are the one who is in authority, you will be a blessing to those under you...
  - How blessed is the business that has an owner or manager that wants to please Christ!
    - He will see to it that those who work for him are treated with fairness and equity, and that their wages are fair.



- He will correct them with gentleness and be ready to counsel them in whatever ways they have need.
- He will make them better in their work.
- How blessed are the children whose parents or the wife whose husband wants to please Christ.
  - She will not be tempted to nag him to fulfil his calling, to do his duties in instructing the family, in providing for them, and in ministering to their needs.
    - He will do all this cheerfully!
  - He will be willing to own his errors when he has sinned, and will deal patiently and gently, yet firmly and justly, with his children.

TRANS> All this will be so because the one who serves in leadership or under leadership will recognise that he is serving Christ, and that he has been called to do God's work.

**Conclusion: Christian, what a precious blessing Christ has bestowed on you!**

- To think that you can wash dishes as an acceptable and pleasing act to the God of heaven,
  - and that for such work you will not lose your reward—
    - yes, even a cup of cold water given in His name will not be forgotten by Him!
    - Every diaper you change will be rewarded!
      - God is very generous with His rewards!
- Be diligent to fulfil your calling every day.
  - Christ has made you a priest unto God.
  - You have the privilege of getting up every day to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
    - Thanks be to God.