

Monday Morning Christianity

Ephesians 6:5-9 (06/03/18)

Ernie Godshall

Faith Bible Church

Eph 6:5-9 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. 9 And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

If you work full time until you are 70 and do the math, you'll clock around 150,000 hours for your boss or in your business or whatever you do to put food on the table and a roof over your head. That's a huge chunk of your life. Here's my question this morning: Do those hours count for eternity? If you're not a preacher or campus minister or foreign missionary, are those hours sacred hours? Of course the answer is "Yes!" Luther said the maiden sweeping the dirt off the porch is doing God's work as much as the preacher in the pulpit. The Reformation and the Protestant work ethic swept away the division between the secular and the sacred. All legitimate work is sacred. Genesis 2 says God created us to work. Work became more difficult in Genesis 3 – "in the sweat of your brow you shall labor." But work didn't become less sacred after the fall. Every day you go to work counts for eternity. That's what God is saying in our passage this morning.

I'm calling it Monday Morning Christianity. Your tools and computer and manuscripts and whatever you work with day in and day out have "holy to the Lord" metaphorically etched on them. You are in the Master's business. After pastoring for 13 years, I took a year off back in 1990. I worked in a paint shop preparing trim and doors for new homes. Well-meaning people would ask me, "When are you getting back into the Lord's work?" My response, "Brother, I'm in the Lord's work. I'm staining these doors for Jesus! I'm setting these nails for God's glory" And I meant it. It was one of the most exhilarating years of my life. When the workers heard a preacher was coming to work, one young guy, Mitch, vowed to the others, "I'm going to get him to sin within the first week!"

In verse 5 Paul introduces this teaching by addressing slaves. The Roman Empire had 60 million slaves. Some were horribly treated; others were given positions of honor in families. The New Testament did not attack slavery as an institution, but it did undermine it with its emphasis on every human being bearing the image of God and accountable to God. The calling of the church is not to attack all the injustices in society but to preach the gospel. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, "The task of the church is to remind men constantly of their relationship to God, even as our Lord did." We as a church don't organize against social and moral ills, but as a believer, you can protest against abortion or sex-trafficking or sexual deviancy. But the business of the church is to preach the gospel and build up God's people, preparing them to live for Christ on Monday mornings! God changes hearts through the gospel and as God changes hearts, He changes lives, and as He changes lives, He changes values and morals and worldviews and attitudes.

Now, as a believer God says when you go to work on Monday morning, whether slave or free, you are going as a Spirit-filled, submissive Christian. On Sundays we worship and prepare to live for Christ; on Mondays we go out and apply what we've learned. How does a believer think about his or her Monday morning Christianity? There are four principles in our text.

WHEN YOU GO TO WORK TOMORROW MORNING, YOU ARE ON A DIVINE MISSION TO DO THE WILL OF GOD. Verse 6 says you are doing God's will. It's wonderful that we have people this summer serving Christ by serving others and sharing the gospel in South Africa, going to the Orlando Project, and serving in Cuba, Texas, and Guatemala. We support missionaries doing God's will when serving in foreign countries. But every believer wakes up on Monday morning to do the will of God, and whatever you do is sacred, holy, and counts for eternity. Don't forget it. "Where are you going?" "I'm going down

here to serve Christ.” “Wow, what do you do?” “I fix leaky pipes.” “I care for sick people.” “I give financial counsel.” Jesus worked as a carpenter or a builder. The word in Mark 6:3 is *tekton*, and simply means to produce a product. Christ spent more time in this world building stuff than He did teaching and working miracles. HE MADE COMMON LABOR A HOLY ACTIVITY.

Tomorrow morning when you drive down the Lloyd or Morgan or wherever you go, you are on a divine mission to do the will of God. You are fulfilling God’s will in at least four ways.

1. You are earning the right to eat – 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says if you don’t work, you don’t eat.
2. You are providing for your own – 1 Timothy 5:8 says if we don’t provide for our own we’re worse than an unbeliever. In 1 Thessalonians 4:10-12 Paul says “Work with your hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will...not be in any need.” Some early believers somehow got the notion that now that they were believers, they didn’t need to work anymore; they were just waiting for Jesus to come back.
3. You are responsibly using the talents and abilities that God has given you to be productive.
4. You are out there as God’s ambassadors for Christ. God injects the culture every day with a whole army of saints to shake salt and shine light. He puts you beside lost people who need to see Christ. What did the cupbearer and baker see in Joseph there in prison? His God! What did those political cronies see in Daniel? His God! What do your fellow workers see in you on Monday mornings and all week long? They should see someone different, someone filled with the Spirit, living for a higher purpose.

We read about the great missionaries and evangelists who swayed the multitudes toward God, and praise God for them. I recently read the life of George Whitefield and how God used him mightily in England and America in the 1700s. But what about all the unsung heroes who faithfully head out to work whom God uses to point the way to Christ, to listen to people’s problems, and look for opportunities to share the gospel. That’s what God is doing every day. The world needs to see genuine Monday morning Christianity in people who love Christ, handle trials with joy, and take opportunities when possible to at least invite them to church. 1 Peter 3:15, “Always being ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and respect.”

One caution -- You can’t be stealing your boss’s time to evangelize. I worked in respiratory therapy during college at the Memorial Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina. I gave breathing treatments and had a captive audience; just the patient and me. So I decided to talk about Jesus with them. I shared the gospel with one elderly man and even led him in a prayer to receive Christ. The next day I got a message from my supervisor, “Quit the preaching.” Respect your employer’s requirements, but whatever you do day in and day out, know you are God’s ambassador to the lost people around you. Pray for them and ask God for opportunity to give the gospel.

GIVE YOUR AUTHORITY THE SAME LEVEL OF OBEDIENCE AND RESPECT YOU’D GIVE TO JESUS

The fact is, whoever your boss or supervisor is, you are really going to work tomorrow morning for Jesus Christ. Verse 5 – Obey your employer as you would Christ. Verse 6 – as bondservants of Christ. Verse 7 – as to the Lord. I sat in counseling sessions many years ago with a single guy we’ll call Bert. He complained that his job as a painter was beneath him. He complained his boss was overweight and pretty ignorant. Bert was too smart to work for this boss. What did Bert need to hear? God put him under this boss to help him grow and become like Christ. Bert complained that he was getting paid enough. The issue for Bert wasn’t, “Is this job good enough for me?” but rather, “Am I becoming more like Christ through this job and under this incompetent boss?”

God tells us He is sovereign over all of life. Why did God give you the boss He did? When you realize that God put you under your boss to help you grow and become more like Christ, that changes everything. 1 Peter 2:18 says even if your boss is a “skolios” boss (perverse, unfair, surly), you must give him respect and be subject to him as long as you are under him.

1 Timothy 6:1-2 says if your boss is a believer, don’t presume on him. Honor him and serve him all the

more.

1 Timothy 6:1-2 *Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things.*

In case you think you are shackled to your job forever like a ball and chain, 1 Corinthians 7:21 talks about the betterment principle. "If you can become free, do that." If you can move to a better position, do it! However, could it be God is teaching you something through your present authority you haven't learned? And if you move, do it respectfully. Don't go out in a hail of griping and grumbling and slandering your old boss.

Our text this morning gives several Christ-like, Spirit-filled attitudes the Christian worker should have toward his or her authority.

Obey them with fear and trembling (v. 5). That means with utmost respect, just like you'd give to Jesus.

Obey them with a sincere heart (v. 5). You aren't holding grudges or bitterness and then slandering him to your fellow workers. You're loyal and trustworthy. He or she can count on you.

Obey them even when they aren't watching you (v. 6). Oh boy, have I seen this. I worked for Wes in that year of construction and he had a crew of eye-servants and man-pleasers. In fact, this is pretty common out there in the work place. When the cat's away, the mice will play! In order to know what was really happening on the construction site, Wes would set up his transit across the field and adjust the scope to see who was goofing off on the job. There are all kinds of temptations in the workplace. Some guys milk the job, taking forever. Some cheat with their time. Some people constantly grumble about something at work. They aren't content. Some are lazy and work too little. Some work too much and neglect other duties. Some are greedy. But you are different. You conscientiously do your job without complaint because you're working for Jesus!

Obey them with enthusiasm (vs. 6). "Doing God's will from the heart." I love this. You're excited about what you're doing! You go in there to do the best job you can. Listen, every believer's employer should know you are committed to the success of the business and you put your heart into your work. Proverbs 22:29, "Do you see a man excellent in his work? He'll stand before kings." Proverbs 10:4 says the slacker is poor; the diligent worker gains wealth. This is why the Puritans tended to be wealthy; they worked hard with all their heart. They knew they were working for Christ, whatever they were doing.

Author Haddon Robinson tells about a reporter who pulled the spark plug wire on his car and went to various dealerships and garages. He was given all kinds of diagnoses and estimates to get it fixed. Finally he took it to a small shop where Fred was working. Fred walked over to the car. "Let me see under that hood. Ah, here's the problem. Your spark plug wire came off." "What do I owe you?" "Nothing! I didn't do anything except attach the wire." "Why didn't you charge me anything?" "Look, I'm a Christian and everything I do I do to glorify Christ. I'm not a preacher or a missionary, but I'm a mechanic and I'll be honest with you and do my best because I'm doing it to the glory of God!" The next day a headline in the local newspaper read, "Christian Mechanic, Honest to the Glory of God." (cited in Tommy Nelson, *The 12 Essentials of Godly Success*).

WORK EVERY DAY WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW – vs. 8

I think this is the most job transforming truth of all. "Knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free." You may not get paid all that much. Maybe you think you deserve more for all you do. And maybe you do. But your real reward will not come in a paycheck or promotion. **Whatever you do tomorrow counts for eternity.** What do you do? Paint a wall? Enter data? Answer calls? Fix wires or pipes or cables or cars? Prepare meals? Change diapers? Give people rides? Fly airplanes? Wash laundry? Give financial counsel? Give injections? Give therapy?

Write stories? Teach students? Whatever you do, if it is legitimate and earns money and helps others, **YOU WILL RECEIVE BACK FROM THE LORD.** Did you see that? Every one of our days in this world has eternal consequences. Every contract you write, every lawn you mow, every room you clean, every house you build, every steer you butcher, every chicken you pluck, every haircut you give. Imagine for those slaves to hear this – the humdrum, the drudgery, the heat they endured – **YOU WILL RECEIVE BACK FROM THE LORD.** What a difference this makes for Monday Morning Christianity!

You will be on a divine mission tomorrow. You'll be serving Christ as you obey your supervisor. If you cheat, slough off, steal goods or time, you're not offending your boss as much as God Almighty! Some people are just complainers. "Everybody is stupid, morons, idiots!" One little boy asked his mom, "Why do all the idiots come out when daddy is driving?"

God's will for your life is to be a blessing to your employer and do the best you can. Keep that great attitude in verse seven – "eunoia" and be upbeat, bright, and joyful. You belong to the kingdom of God, your sins are all forgiven, you're on your way to heaven, you're working for eternity, and right here you're serving Christ as you serve your boss. So much of how your work day goes depends on the heart you bring to it. I love to hear people say, "I just love this job!" You have the freedom to quit and find a job elsewhere, but remember, you take your heart with you. Everywhere you go, that's where you are. Take that bright and cheery attitude with you.

IF YOU ARE IN AUTHORITY OVER OTHERS, REMEMBER GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY TOWARD YOU– vs. 9. Treat them well, because God will hold you to the exact same standard as He does your employees. There is no partiality with God.

God calls everyone to work and be productive in this world. However, I want to close with this. There is one work no one but God can do, and that's the work of salvation. God alone does that. You can't work your way to heaven. You are a sinner and fall far short of God's glory. At heart we are all rebels against God. We are enslaved to our sin. Our sin will curse us and take us to the just punishment of the lake of fire. Only Christ can do the work needed for you to be brought into a relationship with God. And He did it, perfectly. He came and lived a perfect life. Then He submitted to that awful crucifixion where He paid the perfect price. He endured the wrath of God in His soul for sinners. He died in the place of sinners. He paid for our sins perfectly and with finality. "It is finished," He cried. They took Him down from the cross, laid Him in an empty tomb, and three days later He arose and later He ascended back to the Father's right hand. Now, God works in hearts to believe in Him. Every believer is His workmanship. He is the perfect Workman. Have you seen your sin, humbled your heart, and trusted Christ alone as your Lord and Savior? Then you are God's workmanship, God's new creation.