

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed

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25

TITLE

Good Work For The Glory Of God

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 6:5-9



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Well, Providence family, it is so good to see you here, as well as ... and all the various venues here at Providence. We're glad you're here. If you're in the fellowship hall or the amphitheater at [inaudible 00:00:10], welcome. We're at home as well, as we're glad that you've joined us. I hope you've had a great week, and if you're a guest here at Providence, we are thrilled that you have joined us. We honor ... we absolutely think it's an honor that you have come. We love to gather, and as we love to gather, we love to look at God's word. And, so, if you have one with you in your hand ... a bible ... if you went ahead to the sixth chapter of Ephesians, starting in verse five ... from verse five until verse nine is sort of where we're at.

Now, this passage speaks to an area of life that tends to dominate our lives. It dominates our time, our waking hours, our thoughts, our emotions, our affections, our stress. It's an area that can be an idol in our life. And, it's also something in which we can be idol with it where we just don't want to do it. And, it's work. Everyone of us has work to do, whether it's to run the world or whether it's to change diapers. There's work that must be done in the world, and you know what's on your plate.

It's interesting that most of us in this room, we invested a lot of energy thinking about our work. Some of us may even have something this week with our work that just causes a measure of stress and anxiety in our lives, even this morning. So, even before we jump in, what I want to do is to pray for our work. I wanna pray for your job and for mine. So, if you would, let's bow. Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we do thank you that this is the day that you have made, and we will rejoice and be glad in it. We're thankful, God, for your work on our behalf. We're grateful that you created us and you sustain us. Even when we walked away, we're thankful, Christ, that you worked, that you accomplished what we couldn't accomplish. You lived a righteous life, and then you gave your life for us. You rose from the dead, and because of that work, because you said, "It's finished" on the cross, we can say, "It's finished" every single morning of our life, even before we go about doing our work. So, I pray. I pray for those in this room and all the rooms.

Lord, this morning, I pray for those that feel like they're not appreciated in their work. They're not utilized. Their skills aren't utilized. Feel like they're underpaid or overworked. Feel like they're not respected at work. God, all the different things that stack up in our lives that cause work to be a stressor instead of a blessing, God, we lift to you. We thank you that you've worked for us, and we thank you, Jesus, that you came in order to make a strike on everything that would soil and tamper our work, and the joy in it. So, I pray, God that you would help us to see how the gospel untangles our work from this tangled up world. I pray, God, that you would help us to believe what it says, and even work through what we know and what we'll see is a very perplexing reality in the world and throughout the history of the world. So, God, would you speak through weakness? Give us belief in our heart toward what you say. And, help us to see. Help us to see that you are for us. That it is unquestionable that you have our best at heart. So, would you help us to trust you with our lives? We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, work, clearly, does not have the best reputation on the block and in our hearts. It's sort of interesting to see how we talk about work. Most of the people in our culture, we sort of view work as mercenary. It's almost that necessary burden that we have to do in order to fund our lifestyle. So, we see stickers that say, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go". They sort of resonate with our own heart. In fact, there's been lots of people that have written about how work is really just part of this unending cycle of just staying alive and just buying more things and needing more things, and so we have to go to work in order to fund this cycle.

I wanna show you one of my favorite quotes on this. This is what she says. She says, "Normal is getting dressed in clothes you buy for work and driving through traffic in a car that you're still paying for in order to get to a job that you need to pay for the clothes and the car and the house that you leave vacant all day so that you can afford to live in it." Right?

This is how a lot of us feel is that we go to work in order to have money to buy a house. We can't buy all the house. So, we have to keep going to work in order to keep the house. And, this is pretty much how we view work. It's this burden in many of our lives that is truly ... it's a sad thing. But, what's maybe even more sad is that when you look inside the church where folks have ... and maybe little bit more understanding about what's taking place and why work is broken as it is ... is often times within the church ... work really doesn't have a great reputation either because we kind of attribute it to sin or the curse of sin that when we sinned against God and God took the earth, and he says that he made the ground hard. And, he said, "I want you to work it and that work will become harder because I made the ground hard." He cursed the world with thorns and thistles. So, we kind of look at it and we think, "Man, this is all because of sin."

And, so, outside the church, it's mercenary. Inside the church, it's a curse of sin. And, yet, there's something of extreme value in each of our lives that God wants us to see as it relates to the work that we do day in and day out. And, so, to understand that, we need to go backwards. You have to backwards way before you go forwards. And, if you go all the way to the beginning, you don't get to a garden. You get to God. God was here before the garden. In fact, the very first words in the bible says, "In the beginning, God". He's the beginning. And, notice the fifth word. He says he created. And, so, God worked. God is a worker. And, you notice that he didn't have a debt somewhere. So, he created the world to sell it so that he could pay off his debt. So, his work wasn't mercenary. It wasn't an unnecessary burden, an obstacle to fund a lifestyle. Nor was there any sin or curse at the time. No, he chose to work. And, God is righteous and is just and is holy, and so what he does is righteous and just and holy. It's the right thing. So, we find that God is a work.

On the sixth day of his work, it says that he created humanity, man and woman. He created us. And, the very first thing he tells us to do is to go and work. He says I want you to take the raw materials of what I created, and with it, I want you to beautify what you see. So, what does it say? It says that God put him, that would be Adam, in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And, every single one of us have a natural instinct. It's ingrained within us that after we work, we do something. And, that something is we normally look at it. We take pleasure in it. When there's a hard task, when there's a significant job, and we've finished that job, we all tend to kind of wanna step back. That's why if you mow the yard, it's only natural after you've mowed the yard and worked all day in the yard, you can see the fruit of your labor. You look at it and you think, "You know, this looks better. This looks good."

Wanna show you a project our family's been working on. Okay? This is a flagstone patio. We started this dream back in November, I believe. So, it's been a while. We've been working, and to be totally honest, this is the first flagstone patio we've ever done, and it'll be our last also. I had no idea. None of us had any idea how hard it was to move that much material. We've moved 21 tons of material to our backyard in order to do this. And, yesterday, we finished leveling the very last stone. And, instinctively, it was interesting to see what took place in everybody's life without being invited to do so. Everybody took about three steps back, and everyone just kind of looked. There was a little smile. We said, "Man, it looks good." There's this sense of just value. There's this sense that it's gratifying when we put our hands to something.

So, you say, "Why do we do that?" Let me tell you why we do that. Because God does that. Chapter one, verse 31 of the bible says God saw everything he made and it was very good. What does that mean? It means God finished the earth. He put his thumbs in his pockets, and he stepped back, and he said, "Man, that's very good." We're created in the image of a creating, producing kind of God. So, that's why we work.

Now, there's no doubt that sins curse. When we rebelled against God, he did curse the earth. He made the work so much harder, and the thorns and thistles, it makes it very difficult. But, you have to understand that work in and of itself is a gift, not only in this world, but the next. What Jesus did, he came down, and he didn't just carpet bomb everything when sin tangled everything. No, he made a strategic strike in order to take out sin that tangles our work. What Paul wants to do here in Ephesians, near the end of it, is he's identifying different areas where we spend so much time, and we think about it a lot, and we find so much of our stress. And, what he's doing is he's saying sin has tangled all these areas up, but Jesus Christ came and I wanna show you what the gospel can do to literally untangle your work, maybe not perfectly on this side of the earth, but enough so that you can still find gratification, satisfaction within your soul, of putting forth an effort that's worthy of his glory.

So, this is what he says, starting in verse five. He says, “bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ, not by way of eye service, as people who please, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord, and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.”

Even before we work through the three really practical, hopefully, and aspiring truths that we find in this text, I think it's important to address the reality that's jarring to us, and that is that he uses the words masters and bondservants. And, the word bondservant in some of your translations is the word slave. Of course, this is jarring to us because of the racial tensions in our own country that have all been precipitated from American slavery. We look at this, and there's been a lot of people through time that have taken this exact text that we just read, that we're gonna look at today, and they've sought to justify two different extremes, and it's sort of like this coin in my hand. It's one coin, one text, and this text has been used in two different ways that really are tragic. One of the ways it's used is by Christians, I believe, who misapply, misunderstand exactly what it's saying here. And, in time and space, even in our own culture, you can go back and you can read sermons in Christian churches that use this text to justify the institution of American slavery.

On the flip side, there's another side of the coin, and that is that there have been critics, not only then, but even now. And, of course, our country is not the only country that has had slavery, or that has it now. It's an amazing thing. So, there's been a lot of people who look at this text. They don't believe in Jesus Christ. But, they do believe that with an enlightened mind, they now know, it's very, very clear that slavery is immoral. So, what they do is they look at this text and they condemn all of Christianity and Christ outright. And, the reason they do so is they believe that this justifies and condones slavery. And, they think, “Clearly, we know better. So, if that's the case, this book is outdated. This is something of the past. This is clearly not true. It's clearly not moral. It's not the moral guide to life.”

One of the things you have to understand when you study the bible is the context of the bible. It's not an encyclopedia, it's a story. And, there's very few chapters in the entire bible are written out like it's supposed to be lived. The first two and the last two. The rest of the bible, everything's broken. And, so, there's all kinds of things that you read of within the scriptures, that if you just say, “I'm supposed to emulate everything that I see here”, you're gonna live a life that is not honoring to God, you see. There is a lot of immorality. There is a lot of slavery. There's a lot of injustice. There's all kinds of things, and the reason is because ... what's happening is that God is looking down upon a world where they say, “There is no king. There is no God. So, everyone does what is right in their own eyes.” And, because our heart is sinful, we mistreat one another. So, God intervenes in this broken world, and he's trying and he's successful through Jesus Christ in order to rescue and redeem it so that when he comes back again and he fully establishes a new kingdom, his kingdom. He says he's gonna make all things new. He's gonna bring it back to where it once was.

So, you and I, we look at this and think, “Gosh, is he condoning slavery?” I do not believe so. God created all people in his image to be free. Slavery is an insult to that. It’s a wrong thing. And, yet, God recognizes that within this broken world. It’s there. So, he speaks to it.

So, one of the things we have to understand about the bible is that there’s a few different kinds of bondservanthood that we find within the scriptures. The first one, ironically, was actually prescribed by God himself. It was in the midst of the people of God, Israel, in the old testament. And, he actually gave it as a provision of mercy, and this is how it worked. If you got in such debt over your head that you lost your house, lost food, you have no income whatsoever, you’re in such debt that, literally, life is ... there’s no bankrupt laws. There was no medicare, medicaid, social security, no disability. It was you take care ... and what if you can’t? What do you do? So, God gave a provision of mercy that says that if you’re in debt that’s so deep, that you’re so over your head that you can’t even take care of your family, you can voluntarily become a bondservant to your lender, and the lender will give you shelter and food and time to pay off the debt. And, at the time, there was a maximum length. What was also so interesting was that God literally baked redemption into the culture, and once every 50 years, there was this year of Jubilee where literally all debts throughout the entire country were totally zeroed out. Everybody was free.

So, God looked, and he knew things were broken, and so he says, “Until my son makes it alright and all new, this will be a provision of mercy for you.” There’s a lot of other types of slavery. And, the one that’s most prevalent, when Paul was writing to, came as a result of conquest. You see, Rome was a country that liked to grow. Okay? Their empire liked to grow. So, what would happen, they would grow through conquering other nations. Those nations would then become under the Roman Empire. Ephesus was one of those people. So, when Paul was writing Ephesus, a lot of people, a lot of the citizens of Ephesus, they were bondservants. This is where they were at at that time. So, what you have to understand is this. Paul’s calling from God was not to run around the world condemning and condoning human institutions. He’s literally in a prison unjustly for his faith in Jesus Christ, and yet, we never hear him condemning or condoning Rome’s judicial system. That wasn’t his calling. What was his calling?

His calling was to show Christians how the gospel can inform and liberate us in the midst of these broken systems, and it was to share the gospel with people who’ve never heard of Jesus Christ. So, this is what he writes. Now, in our context, most of us today, in fact, I would assume that all of us today ... this text really applies when it comes to a job when we are going, we are working and there’s employers and employees. So, there’s in terms of all the different organizations, there are people that are higher and lower, who have differing scales of roles and responsibilities. So, in that context, how do we apply that to our lives? I’m gonna show you three things.

The first is this, that God calls us to resist the temptation to resent our position. Some of you feel underutilized at work. Under-paid. Under-appreciated. And, when we feel that way, isn't it only natural that we wanna stick it to the man? It really doesn't matter if you're the CEO or the intern. We can all find a man that we wanna stick it to when we feel under-appreciated. Not only do we wanna disrespect whoever that man is or that woman is, that person over us or around us. I think what else can take place in our lives is that we tend to work our best only when we're being watched closely.

Then, maybe another effect is that we get tempted when we resent our position to not put forth our best effort. So, what does he say? He says for those of you who are employees, for those of you who are servants ... what does he say? He says the first thing is obey and treat ... treat the person who's over you with fear and trembling. That's speaking of respect. To respect them with your words. To respect them with your behavior. Then, he says, and don't just work hard when people are watching to please people. Eye service. He says, no, not just to save your tail or your back. He says, work hard as unto the Lord. Work with sincerity of your heart. Then, he says don't just put forth an effort that's just enough. Render good service with a good will. To put forth your best effort.

Now, clearly, we know, and we've seen this in the last several weeks, that obedience to man is always limited by our obedience to God. So, we see this clearly in the old testament. There's a man named Joseph. He's got a bunch of brothers, and they get really jealous of them. So, you know what they do? They sell him into slavery. It's true. That's what it says. His own brothers sold him into slavery. So, he ends up in a house of a man named Potiphar, who's an official. And, so, it's amazing what we actually find there is he has this attitude that most of us we would never even contemplate. See, he's sold out of freedom into slavery. He's done nothing wrong. And, he gets there and says, "You know what? I don't want to be a slave. But, if I have to be one, I'm gonna be the best one here. And, I'm gonna do it unto the Lord as an act of worship. As a person, I'm forbidden to make decisions. But, under God, I'm gonna make a decision to do this work to honor him. And, you know what God does? He blessed the work of his hands. Everything he touches turns to gold.

Potiphar takes notice. So, Potiphar goes, "You know what? I'm gonna elevate you. I'm gonna raise you. I'm gonna raise you to where everything is yours. I'm gonna give you everything I have. Well, now that he's elevated, and he's a little cleaner ... Potiphar's wife spends a lot of time alone. She notices Joseph, and says, "I wanna sleep with you." He has an obedience ... am I gonna obey the wife of my boss, my ... in this case owner. Or, am I gonna obey God? There's a lot of people in this situation in the workplace today. If you'll do this, if you sleep with me, then you'll advance in this company faster. And, they look, and they think, "Okay. Am I gonna obey man or am I gonna obey God?"



My boss is asking me to lie. Should I lie or should I obey God? Everyone of us are dealt these situations. So, when he says, "Obey with fear and trembling." The first master we all have is God. We're all held fully accountable to him. So, he says no, and he says to her, he says "how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" This is remarkable to me because he could at this time have said, "You know what? God's not really paying off or me right now. I was worshiping God, and I was free, and now I'm a slave. So, why should I even pay attention to God? This is an opportunity for me to do something that's pleasurable. But, whatever, God." But, this is what he says, he goes, "How can I sin against God?" There's still an affection in his heart. He still knew that God was over all and in all, that he was over him and that he was watching him, that he was evaluating everything that he was doing. So, he says, "No, I can't do that."

Well, Potiphar's wife goes out and falsely ... says, man, this is what he did. He tried to come in and hurt me. He tried to do this to me, so he gets thrown into prison. Remarkable, Joseph gets to prison and goes, "You know, I don't wanna be a prisoner. But, if I'm gonna be a prisoner, I'm gonna be the best one here." He continues to refuse to resent his position. So, even in the prison, he becomes so stellar at what he does that everyone's like, "Why don't you run the prison as a prisoner?" It's a remarkable thing, and all this because he didn't resent. He knew that God was still watching. He knew what was taking place, that God was still the one who was over him, and let's talk about he perfect one.

Has anyone ever done this better than Jesus Christ? Think about this. He created all things by speaking it. He came to the earth, he grew up. His dad was a carpenter, so he became a carpenter. Think of his dad coming to him, the creator of the universe, and they're like, "Alright. Now this is how to build a table." He could have thought tables together. And his dad's like, "now, you take a hammer, and you take these nails ..." Imagine the creator going, "Oh, this is how to build. Oh, okay." He could have resented his position while he was here on the earth to say, "I have to set aside all of my power and strength. I'm under-appreciated. I'm under-paid. I'm under-valued." And, yet, can any of us see a poorly-constructed table coming out of Jesus' shop in Nazareth? He put forth his best.

So, Providence, let's take heart. And, let's truly the deliver the very best work that we can. See, our calling is to show the power of Jesus Christ by blooming in a bed of weeds. You said, "My work's not perfect." I know. There's weeds everywhere. Everywhere. And, yet, God, by his spirit, allows us to bloom even in imperfect places. First Corinthians chapter 10, verse 31 says, "Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." See the God that we wanna glorify, he's a creator and he's a redeemer. He's a restorer. So, think about the different kinds of work that we put our hands to. If you're here today, and your work that you put your hands to ... it takes raw materials in order to make something new. Maybe you're a cook or maybe you're an artist. You're doing the work of God. If, on the other hand, your work that you put your hands to cleans up a mess. Maybe you're a janitor, a lawyer, where you, too, are doing the work of God. Maybe your work is the kind of work that restores something that's broken. Maybe you're a mechanic or a doctor. You're doing the work of God.



Do you remember what Joseph ... what he did when he was finally promoted out of prison into second in command over the entire nation of Egypt? What he did was he created a system of provision to save the entire country. He did something with his life. He left a footprint so that when he was gone, people missed him being there. He just didn't come out and say, "okay, now it's all for me." No, he utilized everything that he had in order to serve other people. It's an amazing thing. And, the calling that we have, Providence, even in our own city and around the world is to leave the kind of footprint in our homes, our jobs, and city that we would do so in the name of Christ so that if we left our homes, our job and our city would miss us. That they would weep because excellence has moved away.

You see, we're to be the salt of the earth. A lot of the world and every noble industry for the glory of God and for the good of others. And, you simply can't do that when you resent your position. So, he comes to us, and he says, "Look, I know where you're at. I know where you're at. But, put forth an effort that's worthy. Not of him or her. But, of me."

The second thing that he does for us is he calls us to resist the temptation to abuse our position. To abuse our position. This is when he starts talking in verse nine about masters, about employers. Now, think about this for a second how this played out. A few minutes ago, I said, "Turn to Ephesians." And, all of you, or most of you, you have a bible with you, maybe it's on your phone. If you didn't there's lots of bibles on the chairs. So, everyone turned to their own copy. But, that's not what happened in this first church. Imagine they all gathered together to worship, and the pastor stands up and he goes, "Guess what, guys? The good news, the Apostle Paul, even from prison ... he wrote us a letter. We're gonna read it together today." Can you imagine how amazing that would be? And, you can't just take it home and underline your own copy and circle words and pull it out and memorize it. No. Because it was one shared copy of one letter that was given to the church. So, it was read together.

Now, think about how this plays out. Okay? So, it starts, the first three chapters of Ephesians, it's all like, "This is what God's done for you because of the gospel." And, all the church, everyone's different place and stations. They've got arms around each other. "This is wonderful. Look what Christ has done for us. This is amazing." You get to chapter four and he goes, "Now, let's live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ." And, everyone's like, "Yeah, we can do this. Let's help each other do this." And, all of a sudden, he gets to chapter five, and starts talking about different people groups.

Now, the different people groups within the church, they're all listening to this together. So, he starts, and he goes, "Alright. Wives ... " I can imagine all the husbands, "Hey, you listening? This is time. This is for you right here. This is your moment in time." Right? A few weeks ago, if you remember, it was a sermon on marriage, and I told the story about how sometimes I struggle to listen. And, sometimes when I do listen, I have a hard time even sometimes remember that I'm sharing anything back with Tab, which is a problem, right?

But, what was so fascinating was as I confessed my struggle to listen and communicate with my ... in my own marriage, it was like just the symphony of elbows going off all over the church, right? As wives saying, "This is you. This is you." This is exactly what's happening. He says, "Wives ...". And all the husbands, "You're listening, right?" All of a sudden he says, "Now, husbands" and I can imagine all the wives looking at their husbands like, "Alright. This one's for you. You listen now."

Then, he gets the children. And, maybe they're a little distracted because maybe they've gone for a while, and dad's like, "You listening? Listen. Listen." And, all of a sudden, he gets to the fathers, and I can see all the kids going, "I'm not gonna snap at you because you're dad, but are you listening to this? Because this one's for you." Then, he gets to bondservants, and everyone in the church would have known who was a free man and who was not. Now, just imagine the environment what took place when he got to masters. They're sitting right there. Everybody knows. Can you imagine the elbows and the looks? Now, this is really important because the new testament ... in fact, the scriptures are meant to be played out together. That is, the body of believers is locking arms together, and refining one another and holding each other accountable as we get to move forward, we get to grow, we get to be refined together.

So, it comes to the masters, and this is what he said to them. He says for you, the terms are just the same. Did you notice it? He says, masters, do the same to them. What's he saying? Treat them with fear, trembling, respect them. Communicate with them with a sincere heart. Don't just work when their eyes are on you. Don't just be one who seeks to please people or ... and he says don't just do it half-hearted. Render good service with goodwill. Develop good plans that's good for the people. Good ideas. Build good teams. Make good decisions that effect everyone on your team.

You know, it's interesting at Providence. I've been here 20 years now at Providence. And, what's rare is ... it's not special, it's just rare is that ... in terms of how we are built and organized. My job description says, "lead and manage the entire staff." Okay? So, that would put my job at the top of what you would look at as an org chart. But, you know, when I started, I was an intern. And, when I started, for two years, I was at the very bottom of that chart. You know what? It's interesting. Even in the same church, the same organization, I can confess to you that both want the same. The person at the very top and the person at the very bottom. They're not better than anyone else or worse than anyone else. They just have a different responsibility. And, every single person along that entire scale, they want to be treated with respect, and they want people to communicate with them sincerely, and they want people to work, not just when their eyes are on them. But, they want them to work well. And, they want everybody to do good work.

But, then, what he does is he adds one command to it, and he goes, "Here's one thing. Stop your threatening. Don't leverage your authority to manipulate and exploit people." And, this has to come from Jesus himself. Matthew 20:25-26, Jesus says, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, but it shall not be so among you. But, whoever would be great among you must be your servant."

You see, this is what he says, he comes and he goes, for you know that God is your master, and he's also their master. And, he's impartial. He's watching all of us. So, application. Let's serve those who are under our leadership. See, the calling of the Christian employer, if that's what you are, is to serve and bring out the best in those under you while you're trying to make them feel the furthest thing from a servant. What I love about what he does here is he makes everybody a decision maker.

In this context ... in the context of marriage in this century and this time ... wives, children and servants were forbidden to make decisions. They were just supposed to submit. And, what Paul does, what the gospel does, he says, "even if you're in a hard place, you still get to make a decision unto the Lord as if you're gonna serve and if you're gonna labor until the Lord as an act of worship or resentment toward the person who's near you.

Then, what he does in this culture, husbands and fathers and masters ... they had very little accountability. And, what does the gospel do? It comes in and says everybody has accountability. Everybody will answer to an impartial God who looks at everyone the same. We're all created in his image.

Well, there's one more thing. You think, "Well, how is this even possible?" It's only if we do the third, and the third is this. That God calls us to admire his son, who gave us his position. He gave up his position. You see, until we see the worth of Jesus Christ, we'll always get hung up on the worth of the people who are over us and under us in the workplace. They're not working hard enough. They're not making good decisions. So, I'm gonna do less than my best. What he's saying here is this : that Jesus is there. He's honorable and he's worthy and he's holy and he's watching. So, we get to labor as unto the Lord. That's why he keep saying, "As you would Christ, as bondservants of Christ, render service with goodwill as to the Lord, and not to men."

You see, in Jesus Christ, we find the master of all become the bondservant to all. This is what we read earlier. Philippians chapter two, verses six and seven says, "Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant." And, that word servant is the word bondservant, slave, servant. It's the exact same word that we find here in Ephesians six, verse five. Jesus did that for all of us. See, Jesus worked himself to death so that we could rest in him.

I want you to watch this. This is the most important thing I think that I can tell you today is that after six days of work, what we find is that God created Adam, and God says to him, "Your job is now to go into the world, and do my work with the raw materials that I created. And, the first task you have when you wake up in the morning is rest." Adam's first full day of life was God's seventh day of creation where he rested, and commanded us to rest. Why's this important? Because it's the gospel. All of religion says, "work really hard so that you can rest" and Christianity says, "rest in the work of Jesus that's been done for you so that you can then labor in joy".

There's a vast difference between the two that I hope that you can see. Most of us ... we adopt the paradigm that says, "I'm gonna work for the weekend. I'm gonna work so hard so that I can rest." And, what the gospel says is this. "I'm gonna weekend so well to prepare me to work." It's a vast difference. And, you find it, I think, perfectly illustrated in a movie, it's called Chariots of Fire. Some of you, this is so long ago, that you're like, "I don't even know what a chariot is." But, Chariots of Fire is an amazing movie that really tells out the gospel. What you see in this picture ... there's two men that this movie really seeks to compare with their life as runners. The man on the right, Harold Abraham, he's a secular Jew, who his entire movie, he's straining for something. You can even see it sort of in his face that he's still laboring so hard to get what he doesn't have. And, Eric Little, on the left-hand side of the screen, he's a believer. He's a Christian. He is running, you can see it in his face, that there's a sense of satisfaction, pleasure that you find.

Each one of them within the movie, they have a dominant line that sort of is the thesis of each one of their two different camps. Harold Abraham, this is what he said, "All my life, I've been running and running and running and I still don't know what I'm running for." And, Eric Little, his line is, "God made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure." See, this is the gospel. This is why when we sing, "It is finished", Jesus' very last words on the cross are to be our first words as believers.

Every single morning, we wake up and we prepare to go to work, and how do we begin? We admire Jesus who worked on our behalf. We rest because he worked so hard for us. So, Providence, let's be relentless, not only to know Christ, but to make him known. If you're here today, and you don't know Christ ... maybe you're running and running and running and you don't know what you're running for. You can say yes to Jesus Christ today by trusting in him as your savior and Lord, and he'll forgive you of all of your sin. All of his work will be imputed, will be given to you as a gift. He'll take your sin, he'll give you his righteousness, and you can then go about the rest of your life saying, "It is finished. I don't have to run to rest. I now rest in Christ, and therefore, I can run."

Some of us though, we know Christ as savior, but we still haven't quite seen the link between our work and the worth of God. So, even though we trust him as savior, we don't see our work as a means to move the gospel forward, either by telling people within that area about Jesus Christ, either by the goodness and excellence of our work, but also just loving people and maybe even having the opportunity to share the gospel in that place. But, another way to take the gospel forward is actually to work with the understanding that I get to share what I get so that the gospel can be propelled forward.

And, isn't this what we learned back in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 28? When he says, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." What was he saying there? He was saying, "Guys, it's a moral thing to stop stealing and to get a job. But, it's a Christian thing to stop stealing and get a job so that you can share other people.

And, there's so many people at Providence, so many of you right now, you see this. You see the worth of Christ, and you go and you work hard, and you even give a portion of what you have worked for so that the gospel can be propelled, and I commend you. I'm amazed by you. I'm constantly stunned by your generosity. Not only in this body, but even to our city. I just encourage you to excel still more. Keep running. Keep running. It is finished, and because it is, we can labor out of rest. So, I pray that this is encouraging to you as you get ready to work tomorrow.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for your love for us. We are grateful. So grateful for what Jesus has made available to each of us. And, I pray that you would help us to see through all the weeds and all the thorns and all the thistles, even the confusing parts of what we want asked and answered when it comes to our own work. Would you help us to see, first and foremost, just a spectacular demonstration that we see in Jesus, how he worked, how he became a servant so that we could be free. I pray, Father, that that very lesson, the fact that it is finished, that it would become, that it would be our battle cry every morning as we drive to work or as we drive our kids to school or as we change diapers or whatever it is that we put our hands to. Would you help us to labor out of our rest, and we can rest because of what you've done. So, God, it's with a grateful heart that we pray to you, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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