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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **The Sacred Workplace**

### **Ephesians 6:5-9**

I have been in some amazing places of worship all over the world... even in pagan countries, no expense was spared to make their pagan temples awe-inspiring structures. Perhaps the most impressive place of worship I have ever seen was a cathedral in Prague—the awesome St. Vitus Cathedral; construction begun in 1344, it took over six centuries to complete and it dominates the skyline of Prague; it has awesome stained-glass windows and two soaring towers that reach up to the heavens. A truly breathtaking place of worship. But it's not the oldest place of worship I've been in. I've been in a Shinto shrine in Osaka that is at least a thousand years old, with wooden pillars and a massive bell that would sound when the priests would smash a large wooden log into to wake the deities for prayer. But even that's not the oldest.

I have been in many historic places of worship as a Christian... in Boston, the historic Park Street church is the oldest church I worshiping in in Massachusetts; I have walked through the historic Old North Church in Boston, where the famous “one if by land, two if by sea” lanterns were hung for the midnight ride of Paul Revere. I have stood in the massive church where John Calvin preached in Geneva, and looked at the Wittenberg Door where Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses; the door is attached to the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, Germany—the most famous Lutheran church in the world.

All of these sacred sites have moved me in different ways. The only biblical location I've ever seen with my own eyes is Mars Hill in Athens, where Paul preached his famous evangelistic sermon recorded in Acts 17. It was actually very moving for me to climb to the top of that tiny little rocky outcropping attached to the Acropolis in Athens... the tops of those rocks were literally polished to a glassy shine by the centuries of feet of Christian pilgrims who walked there before me. But the oldest sacred space I've ever been was the acropolis itself, that pagan temple to Athena, the goddess of wisdom in Athens; built around 570 BC, around the same time as the Exile to Babylon was happening.

Some of you have been to Jerusalem and stood at the Wailing Wall, the remnants of Herod's Temple which was destroyed by the Romans. These sacred places of worship have truly dominated history.

But the Bible speaks of sacred space in a way very different than the pagan religions do.

***Jeremiah 23:23-24 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? 24 Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.***

God is OMNIPRESENT... no more in one place than in another... and GOD SEES EVERYTHING WE DO ALL THE TIME! God is as much in one place as he is in another.

Stephen picked up on this theme in his defense before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:

***Acts 7:48-50 the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:  
<sup>49</sup> "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? <sup>50</sup> Has not my hand made all these things?"***

And as Paul says in Acts 17 in that very speech I mentioned a moment ago, to the philosophers of the Areopagus:

***Acts 17:24-25 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.***

Every square inch of the universe belongs to GOD and every moment is a sacred one, if we see it properly:

**Abraham Kuyper: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"**

But yet, there is such a thing as a SACRED PLACE... a SANCTUARY...

***Exodus 3:5 God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."***

Holy Ground is then a place where we can ENCOUNTER THE LIVING GOD...

This morning, I want to establish the CHRISTIAN'S WORKPLACE as a SACRED SPACE... it could be a Fortune 500 office building; it could be a laboratory; it could be a doctor's exam room or a surgeon's operating room; it could be a bank, or a retail store; for you teens, it could be CHICK-FIL-A or Home Depot... if you have the proper view of WORK, you can and should make your workplace as SACRED PLACE

In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic church had a very faulty view of WORK... sacred and secular:

**Eusebius, 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.: "Two ways of life were given by the law of Christ to his church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living.... Wholly and permanently separate from the common customary life of mankind, it devotes itself to the service of God**

**alone.... Such then is the perfect form of the Christian life. And the other, more humble, more human, permits men to ... have minds for farming, for trade, and the other more secular interests as well as for religion.... And a kind of secondary grade of piety is attributed to them."**

## 2. Medieval Catholicism: hierarchy of holiness...

- a. "sacred": pope, cardinals, bishops, monks, priests, nuns... full time servants of God
- b. "profane": everybody else... lower-level work: tradesmen, clerks, secular leaders

## C. Protestantism: The Sanctity of All Legitimate Types of Work

### 1. Martin Luther: priesthood of all believers

Luther: "When a maid cooks and cleans and does other housework, because God's command is there, even such a small work must be praised as a service of God far surpassing the holiness and asceticism of all monks and nuns."

And: "Seemingly secular works are a worship of God and an obedience well-pleasing to God."

And: "Your work is a very sacred matter. God delights in it, and through it He wants to bestow His blessing on you."

### 2. Puritans Agreed Unanimously

William Tyndale: [If we look externally] "...there is difference betwixt washing of dishes and preaching the word of God; but as touching to please God, none at all."

William Perkins: "The action of a shepherd in keeping sheep ... is as good a work before God as is the action of a judge in giving sentence, or a magistrate in ruling, or a minister in preaching."

This morning, I want to obliterate the idea of SECULAR WORK... secular in our increasingly atheistic culture means a RELIGION-FREE ZONE... a place where God is not welcome! No Christian should ever do SECULAR WORK... for the Christian view of work is that everything done by faith in Christ, by the power of the Spirit, for the glory of God is SACRED... no matter what your employment

I want you to see your workplace as a place of WORSHIP where you can encounter the living God... where everything you put your hand to is done with excellence, as an act of piety, a magnificent sacrifice you are offering to God.

I want us Christians to be the best possible employees and employers we can possibly be, because we have read Ephesians 6:5-9 and have understood the ramifications:

***Ephesians 6:5-9 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. <sup>6</sup> Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. <sup>7</sup> Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, <sup>8</sup> because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. <sup>9</sup> And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.***

Now I am well aware that in talking about the EMPLOYEE-EMPLOYER relationship from this text, I am making a leap of interpretation... it speaks of SLAVES and MASTERS, not EMPLOYEES and EMPLOYERS... I want to talk about that openly and in far greater detail next week. But today, I want to speak of our workplace as a place of worship where, by faith in the invisible Christ and a vivid sense of the coming Judgement Day when we will give our true Master a full account for everything we've done while alive, I want to teach you how to work vigorously for the glory of God... BY FAITH IN THE INVISIBLE SAVIOR

## I. Understanding Work Biblically

### A. Greeks' Faulty View: Work is Punishment

1. Gods punished us by making us work... they relax all day long!

Greeks: considered work a curse. "The gods hated mankind, Homer argued, and out of spite condemned men to toil

2. Two-tier concept of work: physical vs. intellectual

"Plato & Aristotle promoted a two-story concept of work—that the majority of men should do the heavy lifting so that the minority, like themselves, might engage in higher pursuits such as art, philosophy, and politics."

### B. God a Worker, Not an Idler

1. Bible opens with God at work
2. Immensely creative and active... shaping a universe filled with stars, planets, sun, moon, sky, seas, dry ground, all kinds of vegetation, birds, fish, animals, creeping things, then MAN
3. Resting on the Seventh Day
4. Furthermore, Christ revealed that the Father never stops working

**John 5:17** *Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day*

C. Work in Eden: The Gift Given

1. Adam and Eve given a world-embracing commission of creative labor

**Genesis 1:26-28** *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

2. There was a world to be explored, studied, subdued, and worked until it could reach its fullest potential... and reveal the glory of God woven into every atom
3. So Adam's calling was one of creative LABOR from the very beginning

**Genesis 2:15** *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

Conclusion: work a good gift from God, not a curse and punishment because of sin!

D. Work After the Fall: The Gift Cursed

1. Not that "Now, Adam, you need to work" ... but rather, "Now, your work will be cursed"

**Genesis 3:17-19** *To Adam he said, ... "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

2. Greatest curse on work: ultimate futility!!

**Ecclesiastes 2:22-23** *What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? <sup>23</sup> All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.*

3. Work, then, was carried on after the Fall... and included creative work with metallurgy and livestock
4. The Egyptians made the Israelites' life bitter with hard labor

**Exodus 1:14** *They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.*

5. After the Exodus, God regulated work after the pattern He had set at creation

***Exodus 20:8-11 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work...***

a. Here work is COMMANDED: "Six days you shall labor"

b. Here work is LIMITED: "On the seventh, you shall rest"

E. Christ's Example: Glorifying the Father by Labor

1. Jesus works alongside His Father

***John 5:17 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."***

2. Jesus imitates and obeys His Father

***John 5:19 "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."***

3. Christ gets joyful nourishment from laboring for the Father

***John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."***

4. The greatest glory the Father has ever received: The Labor of the Son

a. Comprehensive obedience in all the work the Father gave Him to do

***John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.***

F. Paul's Example and Commands

1. Paul's hardworking example: Acts 20

a. secular work

***Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.***

Acts 18:3 tells us Paul was a tentmaker by trade... and worked hard with his own hands to make tents

He even worked late at night to do this so his days would be free for gospel ministry

b. Gospel work

**Acts 20:20, 31** *You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.... Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*

2. Paul's consistent commands

- a. idleness is sin... provide for your own needs & those of your family

**2 Thessalonians 3:7-10** *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us... "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."*

- b. work is an act of worship to God

- c. Master-slave: work must not be done to "please the eye," but to please the Lord

G. Work in the New Heaven and New Earth

1. In one sense, we will "enter our rest", and "cease from our labors"
2. But some people do not think this means we will do no creative work in heaven

**Revelation 22:3** *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.*

3. To serve God and reign with Christ in the New Heaven and New Earth means active creative labor
  - a. BUT there will no longer be any curse
  - b. No failed projects, no deadlines, no frustration in labor... everything we do will succeed and glorify God... we will DELIGHT in creative labor for eternity

So, how now should we work until then?

## II. Paul's Commands to Slaves: Serve Christ in Your Work

### A. Basic Command: Obey Your Earthly Masters

**Ephesians 6:5-7** *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. <sup>6</sup> Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. <sup>7</sup> Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men*

1. Obedience... do what was commanded
  - a. Paul: the master has the right to command the slave, and for the slave to obey
  - b. This basic relationship is fundamental to authority... the God-given right to command
  - c. In the American workplace, it comes down to the boss's right to give work to the employee; that is the boss's role, it is the boss's right, and the employee must do what he or she has been commanded to do
  - d. Obviously, as we've said before, this does not give the boss the right to command wicked, unbiblical things

***Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"***

- e. As I said in my recent sermon on marriage:

### **God-given authority can never command God-forbidden activity**

- f. BUT in every other respect, when an employee willingly and skillfully does everything the supervisor has commanded, it is glorifying to God
2. "Earthly" masters: Greek phrase is "according to the flesh"
    - a. Implication is they have control over our bodies... can command our physical existence
    - b. ALSO implication that their authority is temporary and earth-bound... God alone rules over both soul and body
  3. Obey the master AS YOU WOULD OBEY CHRIST

***Ephesians 6:5-7 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. <sup>6</sup> Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. <sup>7</sup> Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men***

- a. The idea is to look beyond the physical, earthly master to Christ who stands behind the master
- b. The employee is seeing the commands as really coming from Jesus, and thus the service rendered is as if it were to Christ!
- c. This can only be done by FAITH... seeing into the invisible spiritual realm:

***Hebrews 11:27 By faith ... Moses ... persevered because he saw him who is invisible.***



### **Applications:**

**Whenever your boss tells you to do something eminently reasonable for the job, you should serve him or her as if Christ Himself had given you something to do**

**Imagine you are waiting tables, and the owner tells you to buss someone's table that isn't even yours... you will get no tip for it, it isn't the way it is usually done, but by faith in Christ, you see the command as coming from the Lord... it is in NO WAY an immoral command, and you should do it whole heartedly as if it were an act of worship to Christ**

**Suppose you are a nurse, and your supervisor tells you to take care of a particularly irritable patient who has a lot of needs; the tendency will be to COMPLAIN to your fellow nurses; but if by the power of the Spirit you see the command as coming from Jesus Himself, it is so much easier to do it wholeheartedly**

#### **B. Faith-Filled Demeanor**

1. Paul says we should work quietly under authority with RESPECT and FEAR and SINCERITY OF HEART
2. Paul actually uses the expression “fear and trembling”... the sense of having been commanded something by Almighty God—it is a matter of the greatest significance!!
3. Sincerity of heart: wholeheartedly... with every fiber of your being
  - a. The idea is “I want to give the Lord the BEST EFFORT I CAN... for his pleasure and glory!”
  - b. It is so easy to be HALF-HEARTED in work... to cut corners and do the minimum just to get by
  - c. It is so easy to MAIL IT IN, to work 8 to 5 and at exactly 5:00 and zero seconds to get out of Dodge as fast as possible... that mentality effects how you work through the day too... just to do the minimum to get by
  - d. So much labor and workmanship and service is PATHETICALLY SHODDY these days
  - e. It's as though America lives for entertainment and recreation and free time and hobbies; work is an unwelcome interruption in that true purpose of pleasure and self-indulgent recreation

- f. We have all experienced the frustration of shoddy workmanship, of carpentry done in a slipshod manner; of electronics that don't work after one month; of appliances that have planned obsolescence and that start to fall apart long before their time
4. "EYE-SERVICE" and "MAN-PLEASERS" is the opposite of a worklife done by FAITH... you work better when the boss is watching you; but as soon as he walks away, you relax and become lazy again

Eye-service is an act... a smarmy deceiver telling his boss "Yes, sir, right away sir..." then making a face as he turns away and slandering his boss after he's gone

**Illus. Years ago, I had a laptop based chess program that had a hot-key you could hit that would instantly put a fake spreadsheet up if the boss was walking by; it was evidence of how deceptive employees can be... working at a much different level when the boss's EYES are on you**

**BUT the life of faith is lived "AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE..." doing the absolute best work you can for the glory of God**

5. Every moment we live is an opportunity to glorify God with whatever we do

***1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***

### C. Specifics for Employees

1. Work fully... sixty minutes of diligent labor for every hour of pay; be fully invested in the task at every moment
2. Work honestly... do not steal from your employers; as I mentioned in the sermon on stealing, employee theft is a multi-billion dollar problem for retailers like Wal-Mart
3. Work skillfully... develop your craft; get better and better at your job; go the extra mile; I AM NOT SPEAKING OF MAKING YOUR JOB YOUR IDOL (fanatically committed to the career advancement that can become an idol); I'm just saying develop your skills and get better and better for the glory of God
4. Work wisely... not every job requires a high level of craftsmanship, because it'll take too long; know what is best for every situation;

**I remember a draftsman named Pete who spent an additional two hours drawing an electrical connector so beautifully it looked like Rembrandt had drawn it; but there is a drafting convention for a connector that was**

**perfectly acceptable and would have taken ten minutes to draw; his boss was understandably upset**

**Work WISELY... doing what every situation really calls for**

5. Work energetically... it's easy to grow weary as the day drags on... especially in that hour or two after lunch; but ask the Lord through the Holy Spirit to keep you focused ALL DAY LONG!
6. Work respectfully: Do not gossip or disrespect the boss behind his back; do not tell jokes or demeaning stories; when other employees do, do not join in
7. Work thankfully: Be obviously and energetically thankful for the job you have; speak often your works of thankfulness to other peers, for how glad you are to have that job; or the opportunity to work at all, in such a great country, with such economic advantages
8. Work spiritually: be mindful of God at every moment; do everything AS UNTO THE LORD... offering every moment as a sacrifice of worship

**D. Making the Gospel Attractive**

1. Paul's concern is ultimately the glory of God in the attractiveness of the GOSPEL
2. If an employee works like any other unbeliever, with EYE-SERVICE as a MAN-PLEASER, he will be turned off from the gospel
3. But if he serves WHOLEHEARTEDLY in his work, he will put the gospel up on a pedestal for everyone to see:

***Titus 2:9-11 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, <sup>10</sup> and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. <sup>11</sup> ¶ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men***

4. Paul there goes right from the service of the slaves to the display of the gospel
5. WORKPLACE EVANGELISM is one of the most effective ways we Christians can reach out to non-Christians with the Good News;
  - a. American society has become very closed-off and private
  - b. It is very hard to talk to strangers
  - c. People in neighborhoods don't know each other as much as they did when I was growing up; they have electronic entertainment and other things that

enable them to withdraw into their castle and pull up the drawbridge; neighbors seem almost surprised when you talk to them... it's not IMPOSSIBLE in the neighborhoods, just difficult

- d. Out in public, with total strangers, you can share the gospel, but people find it strange and feel threatened to be approached by a total stranger
- e. Even if you do have a good conversation, it's hard to follow up, because you'll not see them again
- f. BUT at the workplace, you can build LONG-TERM and close relationships with non-Christians
- g. BY HOW DILIGENTLY you work, by how much you respect the supervisor, by how much you glorify God in every moment of time, you will ADORN THE GOSPEL... you will make it APPEALING to the people who are watching

6. AND Christian slaves are to give Christian masters even better service because they are brothers:

***1 Timothy 6:1-2 All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. <sup>2</sup> Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them.***

E. An Eye Toward Judgment Day

- 1. All of this is BY FAITH... we see the INVISIBLE CHRIST behind our boss's orders
- 2. AND we see the INVISIBLE JUDGMENT DAY as well, when we will be fully rewarded for our faith-filled service

***Ephesians 6:7-8 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, <sup>8</sup> because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.***

- 3. We should be LIVING FOR REWARDS... the rewards our true Master, our Sovereign King will give on Judgment Day

***Matthew 25:21 His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'***

***1 Corinthians 4:5 He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.***

4. The lowest slaves on earth who were faithful to the Master will receive the highest rewards in heaven; the more you humbled yourself and became obedient, the most highly exalted you will be

***Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.***

Your earthly master may be brutally unfair, depriving you of wages and of commendation for the good work you do... Christ, your true master, will not miss anything

***Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.***

“Inheritance” = a piece of the New Heaven and New Earth; an eternal possession, based on faithfulness to Christ here on earth

### III. Paul’s Commands to Masters: Deal Fairly with Slaves

***Ephesians 6:9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.***

#### A. Paul Connects the Commands to the Masters with What He Just Said to the Slaves

**“Treat them IN THE SAME WAY...” that is, by faith, seeing the spiritual reality of the situation; understanding Jesus in the relationship**

1. BY FAITH, see Christ in your slave
2. BY FAITH, see Christ as your true master

#### B. Understand Your True Master: Christ

1. It is easy for the master to lose perspective
2. He may play the role of tyrant and abuse his slaves
3. DO NOT THREATEN THEM... do not abuse them!!

In 1853, Harriet Beecher Stowe published the second edition of her novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, a vividly dramatic depiction of the abuses of African people in American slavery, the deluxe edition was published with artistic renditions of many of the most poignant scenes from the book; in one of the drawings, the wicked master Simon Legree is beating Tom savagely, while Tom is praying and crying aloud to Jesus... in the artistic rendition, Jesus is watching the beating though unseen by Simon Legree

Ephesians 6:9 reminds every master that Jesus watches everything he does to the slave... and that there will be an accounting for it on Judgment Day

### C. Understand Your Future: Standing Before an Impartial Judge

1. So many unjust structures were set up in the American South... wicked masters would commit crimes against slaves, but no court system would ever touch them, because they were part of the same corruption... the ultimately wicked “good old boy” network
2. But Judgement Day is the great leveler
  - a. The text says that with Christ, there is NO PARTIALITY... he does not fear man, he will judge with righteousness and justice

***Isaiah 11:3-5 He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.***

***Revelation 20:11-12 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.***

**Did you hear that? The dead, “great and small” are arraigned before the throne for justice**

**The SIMON LEGREES of the world will face the perfect justice of Christ and he cannot be bought, bribed, intimidated, deterred, distracted by the tricks of a clever lawyer... he will judge every master with JUSTICE**

### D. Present Ethics

1. Bosses should carry themselves humbly toward their employees, mindful of the fact that they are no better than their workers
2. Supervisors should make sure the workplace is a fair and equitable environment in which every employee has a chance to excel and not be harassed or abused
3. Supervisors should evaluate the performance of their workers with justice and equity, rewarding each for his service
4. Workers should get a reasonable wage for the labor they do

**Reading an article about Asian “sweatshops”... in a region of the world in which there is a surplus and desperate supply of manual labor, companies can EXPLOIT their workers**

**Sweatshops are work environments in which there are long hours, low pay, and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions; policies may limit bathroom breaks and eliminate all talking between employees; at worst, physical violence is used**

**Companies like Gap, Liz Claiborne, Kathie Lee Gifford, Nike, and Wal-Mart have all come under scrutiny and received criticism for marketing good produced in sweatshops**

**The greatest INJUSTICE in the workplace is insufficient pay:**

*James 5:4 Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.*

**The chance of INJUSTICE in wages is greater in an age of undocumented people who are desperate for work... they can easily be exploited**

**Refugees that are desperate to survive can be hired and fired with no recourse, because they are terrified to go to the police!! But God hears their cries**

5. Implication is treat your slaves the way you would want to be treated

a. Give words of praise and encouragement

b. Be KIND... like Boaz was to Ruth, speaking kindly to her, making sure she was protected and well-compensated for her labor

*Colossians 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.*

c. “what is right and fair” = wages for labor

d. “what is right and fair” = respect and commendation for a job well done

e. “what is right and fair” = how you would want to be treated if the situation were reversed

E. Understand Your Future: A Full Account

*Colossians 3:25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.*

*Ephesians 6:9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.*

“No favoritism” = both Master and slave will be judged based on how they handled their roles

***2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.***

#### IV. Application: Work Made a Sacred Offering

##### A. Trust in Christ

1. All work must first and foremost come SECOND to faith in Christ

***John 6:28-29 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"  
29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."***

2. Trust in Christ before anything else, that your life may then become a fragrant offering to God

##### B. Offer Your Work Up to God Every Day!

##### C. Big Picture: A Sense of Divine Calling

1. Every Christian “called” by God to a certain employment

William Perkins: “A vocation or calling is a certain kind of life, ordained and imposed on man by God, for the common good.... Every person of every degree, state, sex, or condition without exception must have some personal and particular calling to walk in.”

Have a sense from God of your sacred calling from God... your spiritual gifts, your training, your talent, your education... all of it given up to God in a CAREER which develops more and more for the glory of God!