

(The Sufficiency of the Saviour) 4. for Work Life

by Stephen Olford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of making Jesus Lord of our work life, and of being faithful and involved in our daily work as a witness to Jesus Christ.

Duration: 52:53

Scripture: Colossians 3:22

Topics: "Sufficiency Of The Saviour"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the challenge of reaching an apathetic world with the gospel. He shares a humorous anecdote about a church where there was only one unsaved person in attendance. The speaker then transitions to the topic of the family, specifically addressing the relationship between servants and masters. He emphasizes the importance of fairness, justice, and transparency in these relationships, highlighting that both servants and masters are accountable to the Lord.

Transcript

All right, let's turn to our reading tonight, and you'll be very amazed, folks, to find out that while the family had just two verses on them, though we borrowed heavily from the companion epistle, Ephesians, last night, just two verses, we have verses 22. That's Colossians chapter 3, of course, 22 through chapter 4 and verse 1. And I'm not going to read all the verses because we shall be dealing with them in detail, and it'll save time. But let me just read the opening verses.

At verse 22, servants, literally slaves, servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with thy service as men pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. But the verses will take us right into the fourth chapter.

Somebody asked straight away, why does Paul give, in this particular epistle, a relatively short statement on the family as against this rather lengthy exhortation concerning servants, masters, and work? Of course, many answers have been given. Paul may have had in mind the issues raised by Onesimus, who was the bearer of this letter, incidentally, back to the church, the runaway slave, the companion of Paul for a time, and, of course, the treasurer and guardian of this wonderful epistle that we have for exposition tonight. But more likely than this is Paul's concept of the work ethic, as given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or what I'm calling the primacy of work.

Most people spend the greatest portion of their lives working, earning their bread and butter, honestly and justifiably. Now, whether or not these were the thoughts in Paul's mind, we're not sure, but he has a tremendous statement to say in these verses concerning servants and masters and the work that we're called to do. I do want to pause, however, and say this, that there's no passage in the word of God which dignifies the ministry of service in whatever level of life you find yourself.

There is nothing sloppy, and there is nothing undignified about work. God has elevated work to its highest position by creation and by redemption. By creation, he created man and then created a woman and gave them work to do long before the fall in that beautiful paradise of Eden.

That's creation. By redemption, all work has been hallowed by the incarnation. When God broke into time and contracted to the measure of a woman's womb and was born, and as a little boy grew up and worked at a carpenter's bench, as we're going to see, and actually dirtied his hands at that bench, and made not only the yolks that were sold, so tradition tells us, to all farmers around, I want to tell you something, all work was hallowed forever and for eternity.

So any people who take a low view of work have to listen very carefully tonight, as we were exhorted in the announcements. In fact, Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. Neither shall he eat.

God has hallowed all work, and especially the vocation to which you are specifically called and appointed. But I want us to enter this wonderful passage tonight with great carefulness and with your Bibles wide open before you, and notice three tremendous movements in Paul's reasoning here. As a guide in God to all work, he states three things that I want us to look at.

First of all, the Christian's commitment to work. Underscore that, please. The Christian's commitment to work.

Servants or slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters, fearing the Lord. Abbreviated, it is the Lord you serve, masters. You too have a master in heaven.

And that covers the whole reading. It is self-evident that the whole emphasis in these verses is on the theme of worship this evening, the Lordship of Christ. The Lordship of Christ.

It is Christ the Lord whom you serve. And that's going to be repeated all the way through this message tonight. It's Christ the Lord you serve.

The central thought is summed up in those words. It is the Lord Christ, or Christ the Lord you serve. And Paul saw all service as an opportunity for demonstrating the Lordship of Christ in terms of our behavior patterns and our ministry here upon earth.

Jesus Christ is Lord. In everyday life, this should be expressed in two ways. Will you notice? Number one, submission to Jesus as Lord in our daily work.

Submission to Jesus as Lord in our daily work. Having declared it is the Lord Christ whom you serve, Paul adds, immediately servants in all things obey those who are your masters. And masters, you're not excluded.

You too have a master in heaven. Now slaves in Paul's day had it rough. They were little more than the beasts of burden with no civic rights.

A master could walk out on his servants and lash them with a whip or pierce them through with a sword. And they had no reprieve and no redress. They could do nothing in answer to brutality or cruelty.

All they could do was accept what they took or else fight back and of course be destroyed at once. With this in mind, Paul introduces into this oppressive, oppressive I repeat, situation a fact and a force that was forever to destroy slavery. I've heard preachers from pulpits say there's nothing from Genesis to Revelation which is against slavery.

My friend, the dynamism of the message I'm going to bring tonight shows that no way could slavery or inequity or injustice exist if this passage under the lordship of Christ is understood. Look at it for a moment. It's a fact and a force that Paul introduces here that changes our whole attitude as well as our activity in everything we do.

The point is that if Jesus Christ is Lord of all life, then servants and masters are responsible and accountable to God for everything they do. That changes everything. Attitudes and activities have to be different.

The only question is, is Jesus Christ Lord? Here is a servant who rebels. Very well then, Jesus Christ is not Lord. Here is a servant who disobeys.

Very well then, Jesus Christ isn't Lord. Here's a master whose crew or crew takes advantage, exploits him. His servant, Jesus Christ, is not Lord.

It's not Lord. For all, all service is commitment, but it's commitment in the sense of submission to Christ as Lord in our daily work. That's why I love to pray almost every day of my life.

In my quiet time, a little chorus I learned when I worked with the CSSM on the beaches of Great Britain. Lord of every thought and action. Lord to send and Lord to stay.

Lord in writing, speaking, giving. Lord of all things to obey. Lord of all there is of me, now and evermore to be.

Submission to the Lordship of Christ. Are you committed to your work? It should be the expression of your submission to the Lordship of Christ. But let's go deeper into it.

It's more than that. It's more than that. And here is what I want to weigh very heavily tonight.

It is a confession of Jesus Christ as Lord in our daily work. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. When Jesus is Lord in everybody's life, that Lordship will be confessed in the work you do.

A. T. Pearson once put it this way, a light that does not shine, a spring that does not flow, a germ that does not grow is no more an anomaly, a contradiction than a Christian who does not witness. And no way, no way can you hide that witness. In fact, it's the Lord Jesus who said, let your light so shine before men that they shall see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

This idea that because I'm a Christian, I must keep my life under a bushel or put my life under a bed is just what the Lord Jesus absolutely condemned. You see, to put your life under a bushel is to be too busy for

God. And people can be too busy in their work to witness.

But to put your life under a bed is to be too lazy to witness for God. And the light doesn't belong under that bushel, and it doesn't belong under that bed. It's to be put on a candlestick wherever you are so that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Now I want to come down to something which deeply concerns me. In a very real sense, work is a platform for the preaching of the Lordship of Christ by life and by lip every day of your life, without exception, without exception. You see, we go to church on Sunday, but if you're truly theological and understand your Bible correctly, the gathering together of saints, whether in houses as in the early church, or whether in a temple or a tabernacle like this, is for worship.

That's where we come together for fellowship. That's where we come together for encouragement. That's where we come together for the ministry of God's Word.

That's where we come together for refueling for another week. The church, the church gathering is for worship. Very incidentally is it corporate witness, very incidentally.

But we leave our Sunday ventures, we leave our Sunday churches, we leave our Sunday pulpits to go out for a week of six days of witness. And you say, how can I witness? In your work. Otherwise, Christ is not Lord.

Christ is not Lord. And the only reason why he doesn't take us to heaven the moment we're saved and rapture us right away, is simply this, that he's left us down here through our ordinary avocations and vocations, our work life, to declare that Jesus Christ is Lord of all life. Not just Lord of our singing, not just Lord of our reading of scripture, not just Lord of our preaching, not even Lord of our ministry work, but he's Lord of that factory, he's Lord of that judge's bar, he's Lord of that campus, he's Lord of that classroom, he's Lord of that garden, he's Lord of every single occupation represented here on earth, done under his Lordship.

I'm going to go a little further. If this is not true, then the church is the coward's castle, and the rest of our time is a waste of our time. If this is not true, I repeat, then the church is the coward's castle, and the rest of our time is a waste of our time.

If evangelism of the world depends on one day a week, God have mercy on our wretched souls, and we're in bad shape. Indeed, this may well explain why the witness of the church leaves so much to be desired. And it's important to add that a real and radiant witness can be affected in every single situation of work, without stealing the boss's time, or being intolerable.

Because, as we shall see in a moment, the kind of work you do is so faithful, so efficient, so loving, so courteous, that the boss cannot want you to do anything less than that. Your life is telling out a message for the eight hours, or ten hours, or whatever you put into that work day by day. I've had a wonderful day.

Had two hours with a dozen evangelists or more in the pastor's vestry. It was one of the highlights of my entire visit to Australia. And I want to tell you, we had a whole batch of sandwiches and lovely goodies.

I managed to nibble one and a half. The questions came so hot and so fast. But you know what came through more than anything else? Stephen Offutt tell us, in our evangelistic work, and especially in our church work, how can we break through the hard crust of an unrelenting, unconcerned, apathetic world out

there? So that we get up into our pulpits Sunday after Sunday, and you say, preach the gospel, but there's no one to preach to.

Reminds me of a church I went to, and I told them I was bringing an evangelistic message, and I wanted them to bring in the unsaved. I got up onto the platform with the pastor, and I said, brother, in a whisper, of course, are there unsaved here? He looked around. Yes, he said, there is, there is.

I said, how many? One. I said, who is he? It isn't a he at all, it's a she. I said, where is she sitting? Over there.

I said, that's my wife. I want to tell you something, he didn't expect what he got, because I never preached an evangelistic message that night. Never preached an evangelistic message that night.

I want to tell you something, I've known me back. Not because I wasn't invited, but I tell you, I laid it on the line. I laid it on the line.

You see, basically, I am an evangelist, and I want to tell you something. When I go around and say, now then, let's have an evangelistic endeavor. Let's make sure that each one brings one.

Pre-evangelized people for whom you pray, that through the evangelistic gift of harvesting, we may bring them to birth. And I see people looking at one another saying, I'm saved. I don't know anybody.

I just don't know anybody. I just don't know anybody. And we have made ourselves holy huddles that are insular to a desperate world outside.

Why? Because we have lost the work ethic. Because every one of us spends more time at work than in any other thing we do except sleep. And to imagine that God intended that your eight hours a day should be totally useless to the rest of the week, is unthinkable, is unthinkable.

Sunday should be a converging point of people who've been pre-evangelized all through the previous week, by the light that's been shining, not under the bed, not under the basket, but on a candle. And people have seen something so miraculous, so supernatural, so courteous, so efficient, so wonderful, that they've had to say, hey, what's the secret of your life? Come with me and I'll tell you the secret of my life. I go to a place on Sunday where I learn all about it.

All about it. Now I'm not talking out of ivory towers. My dear sweetheart and wife is better and here, praying me through this message, and she'll tell you and concur with absolute affirmation that the greatest thrill of my ministry in Wales and then in London and then in New York City wasn't to see people get converted through television, that was wonderful, and radio, that was wonderful, and through our own preaching, that was wonderful.

My greatest thrill was to stand at the communion table every Sunday morning, not at the door to slap Christians who don't need any encouragement at all if they have any maturity, but to know the pastor has something more to do, but I stood at the communion table every single Sunday to receive, to receive in love and tenderness and joy 30, 40, 50 people who had been led to Christ by the membership of the church who had never heard of Stephen Olford, never heard him on radio, never seen him on television, never heard him from the pulpit, but they had been making Jesus Lord of their work life. Now I want to tell you, your churches will never grow until that begins. One of the tricks we have today, of course, is to bring a Billy Graham or a Layton Ford.

I see no pattern for that in the New Testament anywhere. I am for Billy Graham, 35 years, personal friend, talked about it many times, been on hundreds of thousands of platforms with him, preached with him in many parts of the world. I know Layton Ford, the great crusade starting in Sydney shortly, and I think there is a great value in the bringing together of churches for united witness and raising the consciousness of evangelistic impact and even the conviction of sin as the Savior is lifted up in crusades of that kind.

But I've come full circle and I believe evangelism ought to be done in the local church with a fired-up pastor and members who are ready to bring in the unsaved and then to do the follow-up work all on their own. And that's not going to happen until eight hours of every day, from Monday through Friday, or if you work on Saturday, you are making the platform, the platform for the Lordship of Christ in commitment to your work. Listen, the Lordship of Christ, the platform for the Lordship of Christ, your work, your work, your work.

To me, this was the real test of my own personal ministry, and this should be a challenge to all who fail to see that church is the place for worship, the world is the place for witness. All right, let's go a little further and notice not only the Christian's commitment to his work, but the Christian's involvement in his work. Servants, in all things, obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily. As for the Lord, rather than for men, masters, grant your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven. Now, there's no point in making Jesus Lord either by your submission or by your confession if that doesn't come through in involvement in your work.

What do we mean by that? Let's look at it very carefully. Where there is commitment to our daily work, there will be involvement in our daily work. If Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives, then all we do and say as servants and as masters will reflect, reflect that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And there are two words that I'm going to choose to sum up this whole passage right here. What are those two words? Number one, faithfulness in our work. Faithfulness in our work.

Servants, in all things, obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, hearing the Lord. Masters, listen, grant your slaves justice and fairness. Now, it's awfully easy to read those words in this comfortable auditorium.

It's so easy right here in Australia to be free just to emphasize those words. But do you know what the background to those words really meant to the slave or even to the master? The uncongenial conditions of employment and the unscrupulous characters of the employers in Paul's day made it virtually impossible to follow that through. And yet Paul gave no ground, no ground at all.

In many instances, this is true in our time, and I've heard of people being sneered at and scoffed at, even right here in the city, especially at break time when they tried to bring a word of witness in, while the unconverted person was choosing where he was going to put his next bet, or drinking, or engaging in coarse conversation. Oh, it's tough, but Paul doesn't waver. He doesn't waver.

He still maintains faithfulness to the Lord, faithfulness to the Lord. Notice what the servants are to do. Servants are to see that they work not with eye service, as men please, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Do you know what eye service is? It's hypocritical service. It's a serious form of dishonesty. It is all show without reality.

And oh, how that exists, especially in high places of government, like the members of Parliament. Men pleases is the other thing. They're just as bad.

Such people work with ulterior motives, and this inevitably leads to bribery and corruption. Have you ever heard of bribery and corruption in high places? So Paul says they must serve with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Now, that phrase, sincerity, in this particular context, if your exegesis is found, that word, sincerity of heart, literally means without a fold.

Without a fold. Here's my handkerchief, and there it is, wide open. There it is, floated, full folded.

It's without a fold. Do you know what a fold is? A cover-up. A cover-up.

Nothing under the counter. No black market. Nothing hidden.

All work will be performed, says Paul, transparently and above board. Faithfulness of this kind calls for three things that are inherent in the whole concept of faithfulness. One, integrity.

Two, efficiency. Three, consistency. Let's look at those just for a moment.

What is integrity? Integrity is moral faithfulness. Integrity is moral faithfulness. If Jesus Christ is my Lord, and my submission is complete, my confession is clear.

How can I let my Lord down? How can I let my Lord down? No one was a better worker in every kind of situation in which he was placed than Joseph, that glorious character of the Old Testament. It's awfully hard to find one single negative thing about Joseph in all of his history. But you remember when he was given work in Potiphar's house, and he did it so well that he came into the favor with the whole family? And then how that wicked wife of Potiphar tried to snare him into sinning, and he cried out, how can I do this, and sit against the Lord, and fled, and was put in prison? But God saw his integrity, and vindicated him, and vindicated him.

Integrity is moral faithfulness. It calls for and what my beloved brother sang so poignantly and pointedly at the beginning. Loyalty.

Loyalty. Honesty and loyalty. Integrity.

The other ingredient is consistency. That's mental faithfulness. That's mental faithfulness.

It calls for a mindset that steadfastly seeks to be punctual, pleasant, patient, and purposeful in all that you do. Let me ask you, young lady, how do you enter the office for your secretarial work, or that word processor, or whatever, on Monday morning, or possibly Friday morning, last day of the week? Are you punctual? Are you pleasant? Are you patient? Are you purposeful? That's mental faithfulness. A steadfastness to do that.

Then we come to that word efficiency. That manual faithfulness. Manual faithfulness.

It calls for quality work under all circumstances. We must remember that the divine mandate is to do all to the glory of God. I can't lift a Coke can to my lips.

Whatever you eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God, says Paul. So everything I do, everything I do, every nail I hammer home, every single room I dust must be for the glory of God. And when God says, do all to the glory of God, do all, do all, he means A-L-L, all.

That's not hyperbole. That's mandate. And this demands faithfulness.

This demands faithfulness. Heather and I moved to Wheaton from Florida some years ago. The circumstances are irrelevant at this point, but we went ahead of our luggage and all our household effects because we were going to rent a little apartment in what's known as the Vatican of the evangelical world, Wheaton.

And we found a little apartment up on the 19th floor. Do you know what happened? All the moving business went on strike. And the truck that had all our belongings, the most precious belongings that we have here upon earth, was held at gunpoint.

The truck behind it was burnt to the ground. And our truck had all the tires blowed out. So for two whole weeks, we were in an empty apartment without a stick of furniture.

Our David was studying at the time at Wheaton, and we borrowed a mattress from him and a sheet. It happened to be very warm weather, so we just slept on a mattress on the floor. We had a little kind of a camp table, and we gathered some crockery together, and we went out mostly to eat.

But when we ate, we had just that with a few boxes around us that we sat on. But you know, while we're concerned about all this business, I lay back on that mattress, and I happen to have an engineering background, and I cannot stand a picture on the flange, or out of skew. And you know, no pictures were up.

The walls were bare. But I began to look at the fittings in that apartment for which we were to pay a handsome sum. Do you know those hardly a socket? By a socket, I mean where you put the plug in, you know.

A socket that wasn't off square. And you know, I just threw up. I thought, Jeremy, where is the work ethic? How can men ever take pride in this kind of work? You know, when the Lord Jesus finished a plow, or a piece of furniture, as antiquity literature teaches, even if it's apocryphal, they said it was the best work to be found anywhere in the Holy Land.

And I want to tell you this, if your light shone that bright in your faithfulness, I want to tell you, the door would be wide open to give the explanation. Sanctify Christ as Lord, and be ready always to give to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. And as for masters, they're to be just and fair.

Faithfulness is expected of them also. In those days, as in our time, greed for wealth and lust and power could lead to all matter of injustices and inequities. But for the Christian master, this cannot be.

He, like the servant or employee, is answerable to his Lord. And he must be fair, and he must be just, and his actions must be transparent. Servants and masters alike are to be faithful.

As I was thinking about this message tonight, my heart left within me as I went back many years to my boyhood days, and I recall a paramount chief who got a terminal disease. And my dear father had to tell him that he wouldn't live very long. But he's an honorable man.

In fact, I believe, a born-again man. And he wanted a successor. And he told my father how he was going to find his successor.

And I happened to be a witness to what took place. He screened a whole lot of younger men, eventually chose three. And one day he said to those three men, I want to see you at daybreak, and I want you to appear before my hut with a calabash.

That's a gourd all hollowed out. A gourd, a calabash, and a sift, a regular sift, a sift for sifting corn, a mandioc meal, and the rest. I want a calabash and a sift.

You three men, daybreak. They were there. The old man threw his skin over his shoulder, went down with him very slowly to a river at the bottom of the village.

And he measured several, several paces from the river up the hill. And he told the three men to put the calabashes down. One, two, three.

Now he said, I'm going to give you the signal. And when I say go, I want you to go down to that river. I want you to plunge your sieves into the river and bring up water to these calabashes.

And I want to see who gets the most water into their calabash. Now are you ready? Are you ready? Go men! And he slipped into the undergrowth of the forest, of the bush, as you call it over here. Well, the first man ran down, plunged his sieve in, came up, and he wasn't halfway up.

When it was almost bone dry, he tried it again, tried it again, threw down the sieve and said, he doesn't mean it. He's testing our intelligence in quitting. I'm quitting.

And he went off. The second man, he lasted a little longer, about noon, and he quit. He made the same excuse.

The third man went down and came up and went down and came up until he almost had a river flowing in two ways. But only a few drops at a time. He went right through midday as the sun went down.

He was still working. When out from those bushes came the old chief with a smile on his face. He said, those men thought I was testing their intelligence.

I wasn't. I was testing their faithfulness. You're my man.

I didn't expect you to be successful. I'm no fool. But I did expect you to be faithful.

Well done, good and faithful servant. Are you faithful? That's what it's all about. Faithfulness.

But not only faithfulness, not only faithfulness, will you notice the next word? Fervency. Fervency in our work. Fervency in our work.

Oh, I wish I could take off on this one. Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for them. You know what that word heartily means? The word heartily means out of your soul.

Literally out of your soul. Christian endeavor ought to be characterized by an enthusiasm and diligence not even found in unconverted people. Someone has said that where there is no heart, there is no art.

And that's not just play on words. It's the truth. The reason why we do not see good workmanship today is because people have no longer heart in their work, leave alone pride in their work.

They're not interested. They're soon a strike. Soon a strike.

Now, people often criticize me for expending so much energy in the pulpit. But I can't help it because I'm committed to the biblical concept of enthusiasm. And I believe that our Lord Jesus was the most enthusiastic person who ever lived.

Now, how he expressed it is another matter. But when he drove those men out of that temple and overthrew the money changers and drove out the animals, I want to tell you this, the disciples were absolutely shocked and astounded and stood back and said, what's all this about? And Jesus said, haven't you read your Bibles? The zeal of God's house has eaten me up. That's our word, zeal, fervency.

Translated fervency in Romans 12, same word, zeal, zeal, zeal. Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. That's our word.

It means actually, very simply, boiling hot, boiling hot. We could almost use it as a domestic word, boiling hot. When the Lord Jesus addresses the Laodicean church, which some people say is so characteristic of our age now, he says, I wish you were cold, frigid in your hostility, belligerent, totally against me.

I would honor that. I'll know where you stand. Or that you're boiling hot, boiling hot.

But because you're neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth. If you want to know why churches are such a sickly mess across the world today, the judgment has already been enacted. And that can be true of individuals, it can be true of churches.

Jesus cannot stand lukewarmness. Cannot stand lukewarmness. I want to ask you, what about your fervency? The world has borrowed a word from us.

In fact, they've stolen it. It's the word enthusiasm. Do you know what the word enthusiasm is? It's entheos, entheos, means possessed of God, full of God.

Anyone who's enthusiastic is full of God. You put faithfulness and fervency together, you've got involvement. You've got involvement in the Christian work ethic.

The Christian work ethic is something we've forgotten all about, and I was deeply moved by that opening prayer on that very issue. And we as Christians are to blame for a lot of it. When we see that the Christian qualities that God expects of us are performed in our daily duties because Jesus Christ is Lord, I want to tell you, there's no problem in getting people into church.

They want to know the reason. They want to know the answer. Quickly, there's one last point that was brought up so beautifully in the music.

The Christian's fulfillment of his work. The Christian's fulfillment of his work. We've looked at the commitment.

We've looked at the involvement. Here is the fulfillment of his work. Whatsoever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, you also have a Lord in heaven. Now the fulfillment of our work is determined by the ultimate goal that we have in view.

However pleasant or unpleasant, however congenial or uncongenial may be the circumstances here upon earth, there's a day of reckoning coming. There's a day of reckoning coming. And once this truth really grabs you, once this truth really penetrates your mind and heart, it'll change your whole perspective, whatever you are.

And you're not a slave under the whip, whatever tough situation you may be in. But Paul wrote these words to slaves. To slaves.

We soften it with the word servants. To slaves. And he says, listen, there's a reckoning day coming.

A reckoning day coming. And get that goal in view and you'll have a new perspective and a new sense of fulfillment in your work. Two things.

Two things. In closing, what motivates our desire for that fulfillment? Number one, the censure of our Lord in a coming day. I repeat, the censure of our Lord in a coming day.

He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. When we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, it will not be a matter of whether I'm a servant or a master. Everything will be naked and opened under the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

If our service has been done for the glory of God, there'll be no shame. No shame. We shall look into his happy face and hear him say, well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter thou into the joy of our Lord. On the other hand, on the other hand, if our work has been wood, hay, and stubble, whether it happens to be in the work life, which is your ministry. Not the gold, silver, precious stone.

Listen, it'll suffer loss. It'll be burned up so as by fire. And the word will be, you slothful servant.

You say, can that be true in heaven? Yes, it can be true in heaven. And I'm not talking about the Thronos for the unregenerate, I'm talking about the Beamer. And if you were judged any other way than what you deserve, heaven wouldn't be heaven.

You'd never be happy in heaven, to be honored for what you never did. But we've got memories in heaven, we have memories in heaven, and you will remember whether or not you made work your platform to demonstrate the Lordship of Christ, or whether you fooled away your time in dreamy unconcern. Every man's work shall be judged so as by fire.

The last thing in the world you want is the displeasure of your Lord, his censure. But thank God there is the other side, the pleasure of our Lord in a coming day. The pleasure of our Lord in a coming day.

Whatsoever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward, the reward of inheritance. The greatest joy that we can ever experience in time or in eternity is just to see the Savior smile and say, well done, son. Well done, daughter.

Enter into the joy of your Lord. I didn't expect the success the world looks for, but I did look for faithfulness and fervency. I did look for work done right out of your soul, and you did it.

Let me embrace you. Come in. Enjoy the pleasure of my Father.

Even when our work is hard and discouraging, we can always sense when we have the savor of his favor, the savor, the aroma of his favor upon us. But whenever joy, whatever joy we may experience down here is only partial compared with what we're going to have in that day if we have served him faithfully and fervently. Paul affirms this when he says, if any man's work abides which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, he said, I always do the things that feast my Father. And I want to tell you something. He did that during those 30 years in obscurity at a carpenter's bench with shavings flying around and sawdust in the air, just as much as when he laid his hands upon the leper, or put his beautiful hands upon the heads of little children, or when he broke bread and fish and gave to the multitude, or called dead people to life, or whether he taught on the mountainside or preached to the multitudes, there was no difference, no difference.

In one instance, God said, my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. In the other instance, my son in whom I'm well pleased. That same Lord Jesus of Nazareth, who took his humanity back to heaven and poured out his Holy Spirit, that that light he lived down here might be lived in us and through us by the Holy Spirit under his Lordship is a sufficiency for working as he intends us to work.

The sufficiency of the Savior for our work life. Commitment to my work. Involvement in my work.

Fulfillment of my work. Not his censure, but his pleasure. Ron and Pat, as I prepared this message, some words came to me.

I'd love you to put some music to them, but I want to close with these words. Lord Jesus, I own your sway as I go to work today. Make me faithful, fervent, true in the task I have to do.

Give me grace to serve you well, that my life for you may tell to my workmates who observe and my master whom I serve. Let me work for you each day as I journey on life's way so that when my course is run, I may hear your words. Well done.

Well done. Let us pray. Each night we've opened the altar.

I just put it in that way. We just made available the opportunity in the closing hymn for people who have come to grips with eternal truth and with Jesus Christ as Lord at the level of the particular message I've delivered each night, to come quietly and kneel at the front and then return to their seats unless they want to remain for counseling. We're doing that again tonight.

And last night there were people kneeling at the altar. And Monday night there were people kneeling at the altar. And I want to give a further opportunity for you to kneel at the altar tonight.

The issue, the supremacy of the Savior for our work life is Jesus Christ, Lord of your work life. Oh, it's so easy to sing he is Lord in church. So easy to even say, well, he's Lord of my life in a general way.

But let's come to where it really, really touches life's situation at its longest and most penetrating level, your work life. Your work life is Jesus Lord of your work life. How many people in your office have been

converted since you started work? How many people in your classroom have ended up as people in your Bible class? How many people in that factory have turned from darkness to light because Jesus is Lord? How many people are coming to your church because they want to find the secret of your life? Will you make him Lord tonight, undisputed Lord? And then with a commitment, involvement, and fulfillment in the area of your work life, go out, not to put the light under the bed or under the bushel, but on the candlestick of unashamed witness.

Lord, seal home to every heart, to my heart, afresh, the mighty truth of your word, and bring the harvest worthy of your name tonight as we sing together our hymn of response. We ask it for your dear name's sake. Amen.

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