

Missions in the Workplace

by Timothy Liu

God's dream for the workplace involves blessing all nations and making disciples of all nations, and it requires believers to live out their calling in the workplace and marketplace with humility and wisdom.

Duration: 10:58

Scripture: Matthew 28:19

Topics: "Workplace Ministry", "Missions Evangelism"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of God's dream for all to be safe, exploring the implications for the workplace and the role of believers in fulfilling this vision. It emphasizes the need to move beyond evangelism to building up the people of God and blessing the nations through genuine work and sacrificial love. The sermon challenges believers to be missionaries in their workplaces, transforming the culture and approach of both work and church to align with God's ultimate plan.

Transcript

There are times when I do some sharing and people come up and ask me, Timothy, are you in full-time ministry? And tongue-in-cheek, I jokingly say, I'm in overtime ministry. I have a full-time job and I help run para-church ministries as well. And in my church, I serve.

I was given the following title, God has a dream that all will be safe. What would the workplace look like if God would have his way? And it is a great question, but it has also been laden with many assumptions if we hear it from different worldview or perspective of what scripture is all about. God has a dream that all will be safe.

I have no doubt that to be true, but is that all? Is that all? I believe God's dream as we read the biblical text is much more. If you go back to the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 22, 17, it says, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand in the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies and through your offspring, all nations of the earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me.

All the nations will be blessed because you have obeyed me. Salvation is the start of the process, not the end. We are to make disciples of all nations, but also to teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you, says Jesus.

We have a tendency to forget part two. If I read correctly of God's dream as revealed in Holy Scriptures, it is in the final consummation of all things in the new heaven and the new earth. In the new city of Jerusalem, evangelization is the halfway point.

Lausanne and the global church needs to see beyond evangelism into the building of the people of God and be a blessing to the nations. We can do this through empowering believers to live out each of our calling in and through the workplace and the marketplace. Products and services being provided for that meets the needs of people and to the care of God's created order.

The second part of my title given was what would the workplace look like if God would have his way? I find it to be a rhetorical question. Because what makes us think that God isn't having his way? Do we assume that because there are so many wrong and injustices, believers somehow had to charge in to save the poor, fight, save the poor souls, fight for the liberty, elevate their poverty. I'm not saying those things are wrong.

I'm saying the manner in which we do it. We need to have humility even as we are careful. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not withhold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

Misguided fervour is a destructive force. Wise passion for the poor, the needy and the oppressed builds up. If God would have his way, we are able to catch a glimpse of God's vision in his revelations to the Apostle John at Patmos.

In chapter 17 and 18, we find the harlot of Babylon establishing ties with nations and governments, the seated on the many waters, representing the peoples, the multitudes, the nations and languages. For God, it says in Revelation 17, 7, for God has put into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast the power to rule until God's words are fulfilled. The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.

Even in the worst of times, God is still having his way, to think otherwise is folly. See, this dream is not this very nice, beautiful dream, because it is going to be messy and it's going to be like a nightmare. The first religion of Babylon was the centralising and amassing of economic and political powers.

Through the trade technology, etc, we no longer need God in our lives these days, it seems. We can spend our way through a recession, manage currency trades, manipulate inflation through monetary policies. As somebody has coined it, it's the economy, stupid.

Revelation 18, 11 goes on and says the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargos anymore. Cargos of gold, silver, precious stone and pearls, fine linen, purple silk and scarlet cloth. Every sort of citron wood and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly woods, bronze, iron and marble.

Cargos of cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, or fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, carriages, and bodies and souls of men. See, a vision for the work of the gospel, particularly in the marketplace and the workplace, cannot be triumphant, idealistic, and even naive. It has to be realistic in the leading up to the final chapters of Revelations 20-22.

We are living between what is and what ought to be. Choices in the workplace is usually not between good and bad, but between bad and worse. It means that our hands will get dirty.

We may have to work within and through corrupt systems to bring about godly work. It's easy to criticise, perhaps, from the comfort and safety of a glass house, watching a thunderstorm go by without even getting our hands wet or muddy. But I do not believe this is what is meant by to be in the world.

The fact that there is a continuity and discontinuity between this side of heaven and earth and the new heaven and the new earth gives us encouragement that genuine work performed in faith and love in factories, research facilities, fields, hospitals, stocks exchanges, restaurants, shopping centres, markets, airports, train stations, businesses, Hollywood and Bollywood, design and engineering labs are redeemable and not all in vain. We must do what we can, by all means, to administer God's kingdom in a fallen world. The vision of the new city is glorious.

The materiality, the streets of gold, the foundations of precious stones, all the fine things, the splendour outshines everything imaginable today. But what contrast between the city of Babylon and the city of the new Jerusalem is to whom glory is due? One to mankind, the other to God himself. Today's challenge of the gospel is not whether people believe it is true as we have heard today.

They also want to know that it is relevant and real. Christian witness can only be achieved through three commitments of believers. One, being involved in genuine and meaningful work amidst the toil and the drudgery.

Second, a sacrificial demonstration of love for God and neighbour. And yes, that means includes backstabbing colleagues, incorrigible bosses, corruptible government officials and unethical professionals. And three, a witness of lives that are lived under the value and the discipline of scriptures through the pain and the disappointments of life.

The new paradigm, therefore, is not to send missionaries to the workplace or missions field. The new paradigm is to mobilise, support and equip every believer who is already in the workplace or in the field as a new breed of missionaries. The implication is tremendous.

It not only changes the workplace, it must also change how we do church. Let me give you a final image that we've been studying in our church. And it's about Joshua taking and going into the promised land.

The Israeli at that time thought that that was it. And they were quite happy with the land allocated. But what was the original plan was far beyond that.

And I hope that Lausanne do not miss this. Evangelism is not the end point. It is the starting point to build the kingdom of God.

And we need to see that all the way through and make sure that this time round, we claim the entire promised land. Praise the Lord.

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