

Study Guide – “It’s A Boy 4”, from 12-24-2017

Warming Up

Pastor Bobby spent some time speaking about the importance of working. Most people work for a company, an individual, or an organization. If you quit working there, the company will replace you and go on, but you will no longer be working there. Your employment there would be ended. Are you old enough to have noticed a shift in attitude in some of today’s employees, in which they seem to think that the company exists for them instead of them existing for the company? One simple example is that often when you purchase something at a store, the employee does not thank you for your purchase. Several times, I’ve said “Thank you” after making a purchase, and the cashier says something like this, “No problem.” Really, I’m glad my purchase did not cause you a problem? Have you had any experiences like this? What do you think caused this change from an employee considering himself as a server to the one who should be served?

Working in the Kingdom

Pastor Bobby read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-11. Verse 10 reads, “If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.” Of course, the Bible is referring to people who can work, not the severely disabled. Do you know of anyone who could work, but doesn’t seem to ever have a job for very long, and spends most of his or her time idly unemployed? Have you ever heard an unemployed person say something like this, “That’s just not the kind of work that I want to do”? Do you think that our culture has made it too easy for a lazy person to have a roof over his head, and food to eat? Why do some people consider what is clearly said in verse 10 (above) to be politically incorrect? Do you agree that is it too harsh? Is the Bible wrong?

Unemployment is low right now. Anyone who seeks work can find it. But, as Pastor Bobby pointed out, unemployment in the Kingdom of God is high. Is it because work is not available in God’s kingdom? If there is plenty to do, why do you think so many Christians are not busy doing it? Do we fail to see ourselves as individual parts of God’s plans in this life?

Internal VS External Joy

Pastor Bobby said, “The American dream can become Satan’s scheme.” He defined the American dream as acquiring and seeking for earthly wants – “getting.” God’s dream is “giving.” He also said, “The more we get, the more we want.” Have you ever seen a child receive a Christmas or Birthday gift or several gifts, but be dissatisfied in a very short time? How can you make someone realize that they already have more than most people will ever have without becoming a party pooper in their lives? Do we all need a spiritual reality check?

The acquiring of “things” has the goal of leading to joy, but it is an external method designed to accomplish something that needs to be fixed on the inside. Do you know someone who has an abundance of material things, yet is not happy? Acts 20:35 tells us that, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Satan’s dream is for us to want to receive. God’s dream is for us to want to give. There is a temporary place for us to live and an eternal one. Are we spending too much time trying to get all that we can in this temporary place, instead of deliberately giving to others? Isn’t God’s dream for us just about the opposite of the world’s dream? Discuss.

Pastor Bobby shared how great it makes you feel to give and help out people who are in need. Have you ever done something for which you will never get credit, which really helped another person or persons? In Matthew 6:3-4, Jesus said, “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.” Whose reward do we really want, God’s or the world’s?

Stockpiling Treasure – Rich in Giving

As Pastor Bobby pointed out, not everyone is called to work at a rescue mission or go on a foreign mission trip. But everyone can give to these projects so that others can go and bless more abundantly. Can’t funding God’s dream be just as important as going to some exotic place yourself? You don’t have the stories to tell, but you’ve got the treasure in heaven.

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus says, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The contrast between the pull to receive and the pull to give reveals what is truly in your heart. Putting the need for necessities aside, is this a real battle for you? What does your heart reveal? Does this message today convince you to look inwardly to eternity when setting priorities in this life?

Conclusion – A Birthday Gift for Jesus

Matthew 25:44-46 reads, "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

What Jesus wants from us is what He came here for – to give to others. Will you?