

The Supremacy of Christ

A Study of Colossians

Week 09: Living Faith (Part 4) - Worship at Work

Scripture

Colossians 3:22-4:1

Key Points (Where We Are in History)

- Paul wrote to the Colossian Church, while he was under house arrest in Rome
- Paul never met them, but wrote in response to the report of Epaphras (their pastor)
- The church was facing pressure to *mix religious systems*
- Paul wrote with the goal of showing Christ's supremacy over all things
- Colossians 1-2 (doctrine); Colossians 3-4 (practical outworking in our daily lives)

Motivation (Why They Need to Know It)

Paul has been talking about putting to death the old life in favor of new life...

- Setting Your Mind on Things Above (3:1-4)
- Remaining Sexually Pure (3:5-6)
- Maintaining Relational Peace (3:7-17)
- Keeping Household Harmony (3:18-21)
- **Today** – Working as Worship (3:22-4:1)

Information (What They Need to Know)

Let's begin with a short conversation about slavery (people owning people).

Colossians 3:22 (ESV) Bondservants [*one belonging to another without any rights of your own*], obey in everything those who are your earthly masters...

Examples of Slavery

- **Domestic Servitude** (those whose workplace is a private residence and are often trapped and/or abused; denied benefits such as days off or fair pay)
- **Forced Labor** (those whose workplace is a business where they often feel trapped and/or abused; denied benefits such as days off or fair pay)
- **Sex Trafficking** (manipulating or controlling an individual to engage in a sex act; force is used to hold the individual against their will)

Paul was not endorsing slavery in the way we might think of it.

“Paul upholds the duties of slave and master, of which the modern parallel is the duties of employee and employer. Scripture never advocates slavery, but recognizes it as an element of ancient society...” – John MacArthur

We’re going to follow Paul’s teaching as a guideline for the relationship between employers and employees.

Work is a way to worship.

What’s are some purposes of having a job?

- It provides for the needs of your family
1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV) But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
- It allows you to support the furtherance of the Gospel
Matthew 6:19 (ESV) “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- It allows you to establish relationships with unbelievers and live out your faith before others

Paul’s Advice to Live Out Your Faith at Your Workplace...

- Employees are to obey their employers
Colossians 3:22 (ESV) Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.
 - Follow the rules/policies and do what you’re supposed to do
 - Work with *heart*, not just with the *hands*
- Work hard as you represent Christ
Colossians 3:23 (ESV) Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. **25** For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.
 - *Heartily* means from the soul (from within); the Spirit empowers us to work hard for the sake of the Lord
 - Even if you’re not recognized on earth, eternal reward awaits you

- Employers are to treat their employees justly and fairly
Colossians 4:1 (ESV) Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

“As Christians put on the new man, they will be **just and fair** to those who work for them. It is a terrible thing for a boss to cheat or mistreat his workers, but far worse for a Christian to do it.” – David Guzik

- Treat them justly (Greek word for righteous, meaning that which is right)
- Treat them fairly (Greek word that carries the idea of treating with equality)
- Ultimately, God is the Master over employees and employers

Application (What They Need to Do)

How to make the most out of your work...

- Determine to do your very best, regardless of circumstances
- Keep in mind that you work for the Lord, not man
- Pray for your workplace to succeed and the individuals who work alongside you
- Give God thanks for your job on a regular basis