

Title: “The Fruits of Our Labor”

Scripture Reading: Psalm 128 (all)

Text:

Psalm 128:2 (KJV)

² For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy *shalt* thou *be*, and *it shall be* well with thee.

Psalm 128:2 (ESV)

² You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

Psalm 128:2 (NLT2)

² You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How joyful and prosperous you will be!

Background:

Psalms 120-134 are known as "*Songs of Ascent*." Tradition says each of these "pilgrim psalms" was to be sung as God's people approached Jerusalem for one of the major worship festivals.

--Bible Reader's Companion.

Psalm 128 is a prayer for the material blessings God promised to those generations of His people who were obedient (cf. Deut. 28:1-6).

--Bible Reader's Companion.

Introduction:

Labor Day has been an American federal holiday since 1894 and falls annually on the first Monday of September. **This year Labor Day is tomorrow of course.**

History:

Labor Day is a federal holiday celebrated across America and originates in a bleak and tumultuous series of events in the late 1800s.

Especially during the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s, labor laws were ill-defined (or non-existent) and families often worked 12 or more hours every day to provide for their families.

I. **Our Example**—God worked, and we are Made in His Image to Work.

Genesis 2:15 (KJV)

¹⁵ And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

From the earliest parts of the Bible, God himself *worked* and built all of creation.

He then tasks humans to bear his image and work in the Garden.

This was God’s original plan for humanity before the fall.

Work, in its purest form, is an opportunity for us to display the image of God through the toil and labor of our hands, whether you’re farming in a field or mining crypto for the New York Stock Exchange.

Hard work was a privilege for Adam and Eve and is still a privilege for us to this day.

II. **Our Ethics**—How we work reflects who we follow.

Colossians 3:23 (KJV)

²³ And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Ephesians 6:7 (KJV)

⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

Many people have memories of that one job that just wasn't easy to **work**, whether it was the job itself, the supervisor, the conditions, the location, or something else entirely.

[**Illus**] I remember my cutting pulpwood for a job, hauling hay, working in landscaping, etc.

Paul the Apostle writes in a specific historical context in Colossians and Ephesians, during a time that slaves (or bondservants) served their earthly masters, and he calls them to do so as though they are working directly for God himself.

If Paul were writing to us exactly during our day, he might phrase the passage as, “*Whatever job you have, work at it with all your heart, as though you're working for God himself, not for your supervisor, or CEO, or for the bottom dollar, or just to get a paycheck.*”

If we as Christians approach our job roles with this mindset and attitude, we will truly be the “city on a hill” (Matthew 5:14).

People will notice our Christian values when we serve in our roles dutifully and loyally as though working for the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:9 (KJV)

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

III. **Our Evangelism**—Hard, Godly work ethic provides opportunities to share your faith with others.

Matthew 5:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The typical American approach to working is to live for Friday evenings, and to dread Monday mornings.

For Christians who wish to please God with their lives, hearts, and attitudes, **we have an opportunity in our work-life to live counter-culturally.**

Conclusion:

May God help us to live a humble, trusting, and obedient life—one that is submissive to Christ.

Hard Work is just that! But remember, we “can do all things through Christ who strengthens us!”

*Beach, B. OBC—a.m. 9/3/23

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