

Genesis 1:1, 26-28

The Mission of God: What's Work Got to Do with It?

Made for Mission - Part 1

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Work is a pre-Fall blessing, not a post-Fall curse. We are created as image bearers of God and royal priests who worship Him and fellowship with Him while we work.

STRUCTURE/OUTLINE OF THE SERMON

- I. Introduction
- II. Biblical Overview of Work
- III. Historical Overview of Work
- IV. Implications for our Work

GOSPEL CENTRALITY

The place where work and worship were one and the same became inaccessible to us. Where humanity was charged to guard the garden from sin, sin now keeps us from that garden. No matter how hard we try, we cannot force our way in. Our work is cursed. It is burdensome. It is endless. Are you suffering under the curse of work? There is one who has taken the curse upon himself. Is your work burdensome? There is one whose burden is light and he offers you rest. Are the throne and thistles choking the fruit of your labor? There is one who wore a crown of thorns for you which was beaten into his head. Is your work endless? There is one who says of his work, "It is finished." Jesus has made a way back into the garden. He lived in perfect obedience to God the Father, and gave himself as the way back to Eden. The serpent will no longer rule there. The serpent will be crushed.

KEY TERMS/THEMES

1. ***Missio Dei*** – the mission of God to bring glory to Himself through His creation.
2. **Cultural Mandate** – God's command to his image bearers to go out and to create culture that reflects his glory. Notice that God's command to them begins with him blessing them. God's favor and grace is upon them, and it is out of that blessed relationship with the creator that they are to go out and do what God commands (Gen. 1:28).

3. **Image of God** – humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28) as His representatives and rulers on the earth. We reflect His image through our work as we expand the boundaries of Eden to the ends of the earth.
4. **Work** – not a burden to be endured but a grace to be enjoyed. The initial work given to Adam and Eve was to be a reflected and extension of God's work in creating. "Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. It is, or it should be, the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental and bodily satisfaction, and the medium in which he offers himself to God" (Dorothy Sayers).

KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN

- What is your relationship with your work? More idle or idol? Hate or worship? How can you move from seeing work as a burden to endure to more of a grace to enjoy?
- Take some time to complete this sentence: I am a _____. I love my neighbors by _____. This is a holy calling and in this I reflect the God who_____.
- How can you leverage your skills to serve others well here? Do your skills allow you to potentially live and serve somewhere where there is little gospel proclamation? Pray about this.
- What if you engaged your work as a widening of the boundaries of the garden where God makes himself known and present? What if you saw yourself as being a frontline missionary in your vocation, being integral participants in furthering the Kingdom of God on the earth?

RESPONDING IN PRAYER

- Pray for one another – that we would see ourselves as royal priests, 2) that we would love our neighbor through our work, 3) that we would worship at work, and 4) that we would bring our work to worship.
- Pray for those among your family, friends, and community who have not put their trust in Jesus – that they would respond to the gospel and trust in the finished work of Christ.