

## ***“Thank God It’s Monday”***

*Genesis 1:26-2:3 / Colossians 3:22-4:6*

First Presbyterian Church, Corpus Christi, TX

Rev. Charles S. Blackshear • September 4, 2022

What is your favorite day of the week? Most of us, I think, have one day that we tend to look forward to more than the others. Show of hands, how many of you would pick either Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. The rest of you should be ashamed of yourselves for lying in church. OK, how many would pick Monday? Years ago there was a song called, *Everybody’s Working for the Weekend*. People say, “thank God it’s Friday.” Nobody says, “thank God it’s Monday.”

How we feel about our jobs has a lot to do with that. Over the last few weeks there has been a trending topic on the internet called “quiet quitting.” So much so that just on TikTok the quiet quitting hashtag has received over 8 million views. Quiet quitting is a trend among workers where they decide to only do the bare minimum in their job to keep from getting fired. At its best the idea is to have a healthy work-life balance, not stressing over work when you are home. The problem, of course, is that more often than not the result is that the employee simply “checks out.”

A recent Gallup survey found that only 36% of workers were “engaged” in their job, meaning they were “involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace.” That means that almost 65% of employees have kind of checked out. This is really important because researchers have found that the single most important factor in life satisfaction and overall well-being is job satisfaction. People who are happy in their work tend to be happy in other areas of their lives while people who are miserable in their work, no surprise, are miserable when they’re not at work. One study even showed that apart from genetics, the number one predictor of how long you will live is job satisfaction.

Since tomorrow is Labor Day, I want to talk about work and specifically, working *with* God. Let’s begin by asking what we mean by work? Is it my job? Does volunteering count? School?

What about working around the house? Here’s a good way of thinking about it. Work is exchanging energy and time to create value. Work is using your talents, abilities, and time for something productive, creating value. Obviously, when you go to a job you are exchanging your energy to create value – they pay you; that’s valuable. But you are also providing a service or product that is valuable to others. The Bible actually says quite a bit about work so let’s look at that.

First of all, *you were made to work*. God made you to work. Work is good. We get really confused about this and it messes us up all the time. The highest aim in life is not leisure. The goal of living is not to do as little work as possible and still get by. We so often think of work as a necessary evil. Or we think work is the punishment for sin. When we look at the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis, we discover that work is an important part of God’s plan. Genesis 2:15 says, “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” This is before sin entered the world. Work was a part of paradise.

In most of the ancient world, work was considered a bad thing. In ancient Greece, only slaves and women and non-citizens practiced trades. Some of the Greek cities passed laws making it illegal for citizens to work. Israel was different. All through the Bible we see the importance of people working, having a trade. Peter was a fisherman. Paul was a tent maker. Jesus was a carpenter. God is a working God. This was totally at odds with the cultures around them. Unlike the Greek gods who spent their time lounging around eating, the God of the Bible is at work. The very first words of the Bible are, “In the beginning, God created.” God went to work. One day Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and the religious leaders got upset with him. Jesus said, “My Father is always at His

work, to this very day.” God is a working God and we were created in His image.

Work is good and you were made to work. That’s the biggest problem with chronic unemployment. It’s not just that you don’t have a job, it that you are not fulfilling the role you were created to do. That’s also the problem with “quiet quitting.” If you are focused on doing the minimum, you are not engaged in your work in a meaningful way. By the way, if you are able to get by at your job just doing the bare minimum there’s a good chance your job is about to be replaced by automation.

Point number two: just as you were made to work, *you were made to rest*. The problem with work is that it usually turns out to be *work*. It’s hard and tiring and God designed us to need rest. As we heard in Genesis, when God had finished all his work in creation, he rested. “So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”

Sabbath rest is so important to our well being. One of the first questions we ask when we meet someone is, “what do you do?” That’s not a bad question but too often we try to find our identity in our work. It makes us feel needed or important. So we work a little later. We bring work home with us. We go in on the weekend. Pretty soon you’re working every day. This is a serious problem in our world today. Busy has become a badge of honor.

But God said stop. Stop working one day out of seven. Don’t even think about work. Don’t worry about it. This is the only kind of “quiet quitting” that is legitimate. Taking time to NOT work reminds us that we are not God. The universe will continue on without us at work. William Diehl writes, “On Sunday we say we believe that God’s grace alone has made us a whole and accepted person. On Monday, our actions betray a belief that our identity and work are based entirely on what we do and how well we do it.” Your true identity, who you really are, does not come from the kind of work you do. Your value, your identity comes from the

finished work of a carpenter on a cross two thousand years ago. 1 Corinthians 6 says, “you are not your own. You were bought with a price.” And 1 John 3 says, “See what love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God. And so we are.” It doesn’t matter whether you’re a CEO or a janitor, a lawyer or a stay-at-home mom, in God’s economy no job is better than another. What matters is the kind of person you’re becoming and Sabbath rest reminds us who we are and whose we are.

So how do we go about having God at work? The answer is to realize that He’s already there. God is a working God. John Ortberg says, “God is a Monday God.” He cares about your work. As Tim Keller puts it, “My work is a critical way in which God is caring for human beings and renewing his world.” Here are three practical ways you can be at work with God.

First, invite Jesus to be present in your work, in the problems and challenges you face. Ask Him to help. He said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” That’s work language. Animals are yoked together so they can share the burden. Jesus says, “don’t try to do your work alone. Let me help.” You are never alone with your problems.

Second, how many of you would work differently if Jesus were literally your boss. Guess what? Jesus is literally your boss. As our reading in Colossians 3 says, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” Whatever kind of work you do, whether you are paid for it or not, do it as if you’re doing it for God. That means always bringing your best, you’re A-game. Always. Good enough isn’t good enough. God deserves the best.

Third, be the bringer of the Kingdom of God. One author put it this way, "Work is the daily invasion of the Christian influence into the world." That means we are to exhibit Christ-like attitudes and behaviors, whether we feel like it or not. People are watching you because you're a Christian. Our reading from Colossians says, "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." Be honest. Always. Do what Jesus said. It's as simple as letting your yes be yes and your no be no. If you supervise other people you should memorize Colossians 4:1,

"treat your employees justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven." Another way to bring the kingdom into your workplace is to look for people you can encourage. Go out of your way to help others.

Finally, live the divine pattern of work and rest, trusting God to provide what you think you're missing by not working that day. Spend the day worshiping Jesus, growing in your faith and connecting with other believers. Once you get those priorities in order and are with God at work you will find yourself saying, "Thank God it's Monday!"

*Amen.*