

## Theology of Work

Often when we meet people, especially in Jo'burg, one of the first questions is: "What work do you do?" So I am going to ask three people in the room two questions:

- 1) "What work do you do?"
- 2) "What work for God do you do?"

I am going to give you all time to think what your response would be – just in case I ask you.

If I define work as "Purposeful activity, including mental, emotional and physical energy" how would that change your answers to my questions? What I am trying to say is that work encompasses everything we do – not just earning a salary. It includes studying, caring for our families, encouraging friends, praying. In the second question that I asked, I was trying to highlight this Greek Platonic view that we have adopted. We think the world is split in two – part A for worldly things like work, recreation, cycling, eating, watching movies, i.e. body and soul and part B for spiritual things like attending church, praying, prophesying i.e. spirit. This is not a reflection of the way God sees things. God sees everything as one. (Steve can expand here).

This evening I would like you to take two things away with you:

- 1) Work encompasses everything you do
- 2) There is no sacred / secular divide – all work you do can glorify God

Before we start on the main, to get you thinking let's read

Ecc 2:17-26

How many of you feel this way about work – and identify with the author "meaningless, meaningless"

Let's pay careful attention to the author's conclusions

Ecc 3:9-14

It is important to focus on God. Without God work can be meaningless. In fact it's a blessing from God to find meaning in your work!

Read Psalm 128:2

Read Proverbs 13:4

### **The Creation Story values work**

Now let's go back to the beginning...

Gen 1:1-4 tells us that God created the world. In created God worked.

Gen 1:28 and Gen 2:15 = God tasked man with work.

Jesus also worked John 5:17, Phil 2:5-11

### **NT references**

The theology of work begins in Genesis, and it is also supported in the New Testament. Work is seen as important:

Let's read

1Cor 10:31

Thess 3:6-14

### **Slaves and masters**

There are a few scriptures written by Paul regarding slaves working. It is important to note that Paul does not condone slavery nor sanctions revolt against masters. Rather he calls on both slaves and masters to show Christian principals in their relationship and thus attempts to change the institution from within.

Scriptures are: Colossians 3:22-24, Eph 6:6-7 and Titus 2:9-11.

Pull out of these the attitude of the slaves

And that it is a way to show their masters (guess people around them) that the gospel is attractive.

How can we apply this to us today??

Our work can be done as an act of worship to God. If we understand that God created us to work and that it is His desire for us to work, then we will begin to see our work as the place where we can bring God glory. Our work can advance God's kingdom and help puts things to right.

God will judge our work 1Cor 3 :6-15

### **Theology of place**

God is calling us to do certain work in a certain place to bring his kingdom. We have looked at a theology of work. Now let's look at a theology of place. Steve and I don't think that being in Jo'burg is a coincidence. We believe that God has called us to be here and make a difference here. Let's reference two scriptures:

James 4:13-16

Psalm 139:1-16 = God knows us and he knows our actions

If we have time, Proverbs exercise:

I am going to give you scriptures to read: think – what is the character of the person and what the outcome of their actions is:

Proverbs

18:9

24:30-34

14:23

15:19

26:13-16

Do you need to change your attitude to work after this evening's homegroup?

Let's pray:

See our work as a God-given privilege and responsibility

Pray for a biblical understanding of work