

Who do you work for?

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Preacher: Tobin Miller

[0 : 00] Okay, how you guys doing today? Good? Just good? All the dads get their nice watches? I'm trying for us, guys.

I'm trying, okay? So just, we'll see what happens. You know, this has been a crazy, crazy week for us.

I don't know what we were thinking. We had three birthday parties this week. We have four kids, I think. Four kids, right? And we had three birthday parties.

So on Tuesday, we had a birthday party for Rebecca, and we had six girls spend the night. So the birthday party Tuesday, spent the night.

Wednesday was the day off, and chaos ensued, right? On Friday, we had Kip's birthday party, and we had about six boys spend the night, 11-year-olds, and Lego wars, and just give them some Nerf guns, and everything's good, and chaos.

[1 : 09] Then last night, we had six little seven-year-olds spend the night at our house. And it was all about Barbie and talking, and I realized that I need a lot of help.

As a dad, I mean, I'm very teachable these times. I realized that sometimes it's easier to give the boys a gun and let them go play, but that's not a good model. And so you give the daughters dolls, and you let them go play, and that's not necessarily a good model either.

So you're kind of stuck in between how do you model for your kids, and what does it look like to be a good parent in that sense. And so we're very, very, very teachable right now. It seems like parenting goes in cycles.

It seems like there are times when things are ordered and calm, and God is where he should be in the household, and everything is good. And you come home, and just, you know, your wife meets you at the door, or you meet your wife at the door, and everything just seems like, oh, this is perfect.

And then there's times when things are just chaotic and out of control. And just recently, we had one of those chaotic times, and our kids just seemed to be undisciplined.

[2 : 29] And so we were realizing that we were going to go home on home leave, and we needed to send them to boot camp to give them some codes, and some values, and some ethics, and some things they do, and things they don't do in grandparents' house.

And so I came up with these rules, and I wrote them out there, and I said, here they are. They're cowboy rules, which I thought would be kind of cool, because the kids could get into that, because we're going to Texas.

And so we listed out the rules, and so we started teaching our kids these rules. Rules, rule number one, cowboy rule number one, boys always open the doors for girls.

Cowboy rule number two, take your hat off when you come inside the house. Cowboy rule number three, always say yes, ma'am, and yes, sir, to adults. Number four, if you take something out, make sure you put it back where you found it.

Now, these are all pretty profound rules, aren't they? You wonder what the family would be like if everybody obeyed these rules and did these things, and it would just be great.

[3 : 35] Cowboy rule number five, no talking with your mouth full. Cowboy rule number six, be nice to your sisters. You know who that's for.

And so we went home, and we're trying to give these rules to them, and we were out, and we were, I think it was that we went to a Target, and for some reason, Targets have these magnets in our family, and it just attracts the ladies in our family, and they just disappear.

And it was well past the time we were supposed to gather in an orderly way and to check out and go on to the next place, and everybody was gone. And Kip and I were there, and we were looking at each other, and we were like, okay, where are all the women?

What's going on with these girls? And Kip looked at me, and he goes, cowboy rule 100. I'm like, cowboy rule 100? We don't have a cowboy rule 100.

What's cowboy rule 100? He goes, women like to shop. That's out of the mind of a nine-year-old, right? So you can give him some grace.

[4 : 40] But I realized we had these cowboy rules, but then as we went through the summer, something happened. The cowboy rules started getting broken. One of my kids broke it.

I'm not going to say who, but they have an XY chromosome in their body. That's guys, if you don't know biology. And he broke the cowboy rules, and I called him on it, and I said, dude, you broke these four cowboy rules.

How could you do that? And he looked at me, and he said, dad, I thought these cowboy rules were only for the house. Because when I go outside of the house, I have to have a different set of rules.

Because no one knows you can have the same rules in the house as you can have outside the house, because you need different rules for different parts of your life. And I sat there going, wow, my eight-year-old, he's already learned compartmentalization.

He's already learned how to bifurcate his life into house and outside and with his friends. And you know, as I thought about that, and I thought about this talk that we're going to do today and for the next couple of days, that's one of the things that people tell me often when I talk to them about business in Hong Kong.

[6 : 07] I don't know if it's the same everywhere. But they tell me these things. You've got to have different sets of rules for different parts of your life.

They tell me that the biggest challenge for us as Christians is to keep the same rules in all the compartments. I put a quote for you in your bulletin.

I don't know what he is like, what Stephen Green is like, but I love this quote because it speaks so well of what we want to talk about. This is what he says.

Stephen Green used to be the former chairman of HSBC. He said, compartmentalization, dividing up your life into different realms with different ends and subject to different rules. Compartmentalization is a refuge from ambiguity.

It enables us to simplify the rules by which we live in our different realms of life. And so if we do this, and if we're not careful, we can avoid moral and spiritual questions.

[7 : 09] One of the most obvious and commonplace manifestations in the tendency to compartmentalize is seeing our work life as being a neutral realm in which the questions of value other than shareholder value or of rightness other than what is lawful or of wisdom other than what is practical need not arise.

There are many other ways in which we compartmentalize our lives. Work, family, friends, society. These are different, though often they partially overlap different realms of our life.

And it is all too easy in a thousand ways to play a different set of rules for each of them. These different realms of being also overlap with the inner realm of our self, but none of them completely.

The question is, what star does your inner self navigate? And would it even know when it's off course? Compartmentalization helps us to shut down these questions.

What do you think of that? I thought, dude, that is, that's powerful. I hope you hear our heart here.

[8 : 27] Our desire and our expectation is not within one sermon or one set of sermons or one time coming together to change everybody's ethics, morals, and values.

I didn't bring up my article here, but I was on vacation. We took people to Israel, and I was reading an article from Vanity Fair. It was talking about hunting down this guy, and you know him if you're in business.

It's Steve Cohen. And it seems like the Fed is closing in on him and going after all the people around him. And there was one quote there that really stuck out to me.

The quote was this. They had just arrested one of the junior guys in a firm that was attached to his, and the FBI was interviewing him, and he said, what wouldn't you do for 20% of \$350 million?

You do a lot of effing stuff. That's what he said, for 20% of \$350 million. In my world, there is no black and white.

[9 : 33] There is only gray. And the question is, how close do you want to get to the gray? I know that some of us in this congregation right now are walking in gray and black areas.

It's human nature. Stephen Green says it's the inevitable thing when you compartmentalize your life, and you have different rules. And sometimes we forget what rules we're playing by and which compartment.

So again, this isn't a guilt trip, but it's a journey that we can do as a family and see, what does the Bible have to say with our work?

What does the Bible have to say with how I should act in the workplace? What does the Bible say that I should be doing and I should trust the Lord for on this journey that we're in? And I'm hoping that as we discuss it, we will come up with some changes and some things in our life and maybe even challenge each other on what that looks like.

I want to look at just three principles today in the passages that were laid out before you. The three principles are very basic. They're very simple.

[10 : 40] They're very fundamental. You've probably heard them a billion times. They're probably going to be, well, that was the most simplistic sermon I've ever heard. Why did he even talk about that? But I think that we want to get it out there and we want to lay down this foundation of what that looks like in our life.

And the first principle is just seen in the Genesis passages that I laid out. And the principle is this. In the beginning, God was working. God worked to create.

And after he created, he made you and I and he put us in the garden to continue his work. Work is seen as a good thing.

Work is seen as an honorable thing. The Bible says that when we work, we reflect God's glory. We reflect how we were made and put together as individuals.

Our gifting, our talent, everything about us. And when we work, whatever you do, Scripture says that is where God has placed you. And the Bible says that you reflect God's glory to creation all around you.

[11 : 49] I don't know what you think about that first basic principle. I grew up in a world where people really struggled with that.

They saw work as something bad. They saw work as something evil. They saw work as something that they had to do. They saw work as something that happened because of sinfulness in the world. And most of the people that I grew up with would say something like this.

I can't wait until I can retire so I can just relax and do nothing. I can't wait until I can retire. Then I can go do something that I really want to do.

Maybe work in an NGO and do something worthwhile. But the Bible says that work is honorable. It's how we're made.

In fact, the Scripture says that we were made to work. There's never a time that we shouldn't not be working except on the Sabbath when we're trusting God for our future. And that if we don't work, we're not who God made us to be.

[12 : 55] I studied medicine. I love reading documents and articles and latest articles. And it seems to be there's a lot of information and correlation coming in about people's mental health, their physical health, and their ability to work, and if they are working and if they retire.

And it seems like there's preponderance of evidence that suggests, in a physiological sense, the same thing that Scripture says, that if people are not working, something's wrong with them.

And they feel that in their heart and in their soul. I was talking to one psychiatrist, psychologist, and we're talking about dealing with people who go into death and they find out they're going to die.

And they made a very interesting statement to me. They said this. They said, you know, sometimes with guys, it's easier for me to counsel him through death than it is for me to counsel him through losing his job and being let go.

Because there's something about job in a work that speaks to the very heart and nature of how God made us. Now, you might be sitting here going, yeah, yeah, yeah, I agree, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[14 : 05] But when Paul shared that in his day, no one agreed. That would have been the most shocking, revolutionary thing that Paul shared to the church in Ephesians. Because the Greeks and the Romans, they all believed that work was an evil and it was nothing that you should be doing.

And you should always work to get out of work and that a satisfied, a life that was well-lived was a life that lived in not having to work and do anything.

So when Paul said work is valuable, it's good, it's something that we should be doing, no one in the congregation, no one listening to him would have agreed. They all would have seen it as just something evil and necessary and that they want to escape.

And Paul's saying this to a church that's full of slaves and masters and something that never was experienced before in a synagogue. And so he's trying to talk to them about, this is what God did, this is how he made us.

And we see from the very beginning of the Bible, work and in the very last book of the Bible, Revelation, work. And the truth is, is that God made you to work.

[15 : 22] And as you work, you glorify him, you are completed, you feel his presence, you feel his joy, and you understand what life is about.

Work isn't just to earn beer and peanuts, but it's to do what God has created you to do. In this series of sermons, what I wanted to do, what we've been praying about, is to bring some people up front and to have them share their testimony, to share what's going on in their life, and so they can just share their experiences.

And so our first guinea pig, our first gracious person to come up and share, I've asked Bernard, Bernard Yee to come up, and I wanted Bernard just to come on up, come on up, Bernard.

And I promised that I was going to be nice to him. Yeah. And so I gave him four questions just to kind of think and prompt, but we just want to talk, and I'm not going to ask any of them.

I want to ask all brand new ones, right? So, yeah. So Bernard, come on over here. I'm not going to bite you. So Bernard and Angeline, we've known them for many years, and they've been a part of Watermark for about a year now.

[16 : 35] And so the kids are involved in the youth group, and they come to our community group. And so just, Bernard, hopefully you'll relax. Sure. Okay. So I wanted you to start off and begin to share a little bit about yourself and just where you are on your journey with work, what you do, and where God has placed you.

I think maybe the first thing I'll start by saying is I struggle with this concept of how does work fit within my faith. But for many years, I didn't struggle with it because I thought it was a very simple, as a Christian, I thought it was a very simple thing.

Basically, you go to work, you don't go and cheat people, and you don't go and sleep with your coworkers, and then you earn your salary, and you take the money, and you be a good steward of your money.

And that was it. So for many, many years, I didn't struggle with it at all. But until a few years ago, and I heard a sermon on the Garden of Eden, and I had a problem.

I couldn't find something in the Garden of Eden, and that was I couldn't find a collection box. So God told Adam to go and work, but I couldn't find where Adam would go and donate his money.

[17 : 58] So I kind of figured out, you know what, maybe that wasn't the answer for work, of earning the money and re-deposit it in the Garden of Eden because I couldn't find a box.

Similar to Watermark, actually, it's kind of hard to find a collection box. But I think that was when, as you first triggered in my mind, that it wasn't just about earning the money and being a good steward of money, but work must mean something at this intrinsic value.

I work for a telecommunication company. It's an American company called AT&T.; And so I kind of try to figure out, you know, there's no mention of telecommunication or Wi-Fi or 4G in the Old Testament or the New Testament, for that matter.

So it was all done by the Holy Spirit. Yeah. The Holy Spirit. I couldn't figure it out. So it really bothered me how working for a technology company has anything to do with Scripture.

And after a while, part of my work is explaining to clients how a technology helps them with their companies and how it makes them work.

[19 : 06] So finally a light bulb went off in my head, which is seldom. But a light bulb did actually go off. And I finally got this picture in my head of what I actually do.

What I actually do during the day is helping Wi-Fi enable the Garden of Eden. Okay? So all of you who are also gardeners in the Garden of Eden can be more effective gardeners.

So helping Wi-Fi enable the Garden of Eden so that all of you can, you know, use your smartphones in the Garden of Eden to be more effective in your gardening.

So that was kind of the picture I had in my head. That's good. That's good. So everybody got that? Wi-Fi, gardening? Okay, okay, okay. So I guess as you thought about planting your citrus fields throughout the Garden of Eden so everybody can interconnect and work well and all that type of thing, what would you say is, as a Christian or a person who's following Christ in the workplace, what would you say is the biggest area that you're most compromised, you're willing to compromise, or not willing, but you're tempted to compromise or compartmentalize what we talked about in your word?

I think the one that most people talk about, I mentioned it before, even in my old thoughts, was, well, you shouldn't go and do something unethical or, you know, go and sleep with the coworkers and so forth.

[20 : 34] But I think apart from that, the underlining thing, what I found the hardest in my life is feeling entitled. There's entitlement. So kind of like where I was in my company, I felt like I had worked really hard to get there.

I studied or I worked long hours and it was my own talents or if you like, I created my own opportunities.

So there's this whole, you know, self-made kind of attitude. And I think ultimately what I realized was that wasn't true.

Or if I look deeply into the opportunities, into whatever talents I have, they were given by God. So ultimately, I didn't get to where I was.

Because once you feel entitled, then you feel you have a different set of rules. Because, you know, somebody would say to me, you know, Bernard, you shouldn't be doing that. Well, you don't know how hard I work.

[21 : 35] You know, you don't know how many hours I spend doing this. I am kind of entitled to that little bit of extra. So I think that was the thing that clicked in my head.

Okay, so just the idea of entitlement and, okay. As you think about on this journey, and so you've been with AT&T; now how long? 20 years. 20 years. Okay, so you've been building a lot of connections in the garden, right?

Yeah. I'm trying to run off of your analogy. So, which I think is very good. But we don't think about it that way very often, right? I think, I would say most people in here, if we hear this talk, I would probably say there's probably 20% of the people in here who think of what they do and they would have a very hard time thinking of how, what they do fits into the garden, right?

Would you agree? Yes, absolutely. Yeah, yeah. Okay, so as you think about then on this journey, what would be some things you would say as you look at your career and work that you've been able to pass on to your kids?

Or what would be some things, because Hong Kong is just insane with the way it wants to prepare our kids to work in the garden, even though, you know, and usually there's only certain jobs they're going to do in the garden.

[22 : 49] But for you, have you struggled through these things? What are some of the things you've been thinking about in that sense? Yeah, I think as a parent of three kids, it's very easy in Hong Kong to get sucked into what I call the feeder syndrome, right?

So the ultimate end of that feeder syndrome is Ivy League University. Then you have to get them into feeder high schools, and then in order to get them into feeder high schools, you've got to get them into feeder primary schools, and then in order to that, feeder kindergarten, feeder play group, and then it's kind of a whole ecosystem of feeder thing.

But I think the biggest thing I've learned working and what I can pass on to my kids is it's very hard.

Originally, years ago, I had this concept of how do I be a good Christian business person? And it was just really hard because it was just thinking about what should I do, what shouldn't I do, what are the things I'm allowed to do, what are the things I should say, what are the things I shouldn't say.

So this whole concept of being a Christian doctor, a Christian architect, a Christian banker, or a Christian teacher, I think it's very difficult to, how do you get your arms around that?

[24 : 12] So instead of that, I think, I always told Tobin this, C.S. Lewis said, we don't need more Christian writers, we need more writers who are Christian.

So what that said to me was, you know what, I don't need to focus on what it looks like to be a Christian businessman, I just need to look after my own faith, make sure my walk is active, I have accountability relationships, and you know what, through that, C.S. Lewis said, through the soil of your faith, you do what you love, and by, if you look after your own faith, and just do the things you love, and what, so what you should do is look after your own faith, and just be an excellent teacher, look after your own faith, be an excellent architect, or be an excellent dentist, you know, and so forth.

So it's less about, what does a Christian dentist look like? Actually, I don't know, what would a Christian dentist look like? You know, but, no pain, no hurt, no, yeah.

Or the pain, pain builds character, you know, or something like that, you know, but, but, you know, but instead of being, what's that looks like, which is really hard to get your head around, I couldn't, is just be strong in your own faith, and do, give excellence, and do the things you love, and, and your faith will come out naturally, and it won't be forced, and it will be just more natural, and that's what I would try, and pass on to the kids, and I think, ultimately, that applies to, how do you be a Christian father, or how do you be a Christian mom?

You know what, I think at the end of the day, is if you look after your own faith, and you just parent, God will show you how to do that, versus, you know, what does a Christian father look like?

[25 : 58] Okay, that's good, so I want to throw one question at you, that wasn't in the bulletin, but, it's a, it's a question that I hear a lot, and I think all of us have struggled with, and the question is this, or, this is how the statement would go, I'm new to my work, or I'm junior, and I don't feel, the confidence, or, if I can do these type of things, maybe with partners, or talk about, or hold a stand, or, what it would look like, I'm just going to, toe the party line, do what I know, will get me up the ladder, and then once I get up the ladder, then I can change, and do what God wants me to do.

How do you respond to that? That's a great question, because I remember starting off in my career, and, and, you know, you're the bottom of the, food chain, so to speak, at work, and, and you basically just got to, toe the party line, and, and I felt very alone, because I felt like I was the only, Christian in my workplace, and, and I think, that struggle, firstly, is healthy, and, we are not, to struggle alone, I think that's the key, I think, finding a community, where you can talk about that, with, with others, it could be in a community group, or in the men's group, or the ladies group, or whatever it may be, you don't have to struggle alone, I think that's the first thing, and the second thing, I'll just go back to that one point, if you look after, and keep focused on your faith, and, and looking after your own daily, quiet time, and, and accountability, then, with the community,

I think, you can navigate that, but, it's a healthy tension, because I think, if you don't have any tension, in your work, and you don't, feel bad sometimes, then, you're just, kind of sucked into, how the world, will have you go, you're just going with the current, all the time, so sometimes, you have to swim against the current, if you want to, get to where you want to be, good, good, thanks, thanks, so I'm going to pray for you, can I pray for you, yeah, so let's, so Bernard's going to be around, we're having a church-wide lunch afterwards, and we're going to bring up other people, to talk, and share the story, and there's actually, the text message we have, for people to text questions, in the business field, so that's, been getting some questions, so please feel free, to continue doing that, and so let me pray for us, Father, thank you for, thank you for Bernard and Angie, and for their kiddos, I pray that you would be with him, I pray, we thank you that you've brought him, to this place, but in the realization, that you are the one who's done it, and that you go before him, in the next stage, of wherever that is, we thank you Lord, that you've gifted him, like you've gifted everyone here, with talents, and you've allowed him, to see your son, and to realize, that the most important thing, is him, in our walk with him, so I thank you for my brother here, and for his willingness to share, and we thank you, that we're on all on this journey together, in Jesus name we pray, amen.

Thanks guys, thanks Vern. I want to share with you, two things, that the passage says to me, I think it says to all of us, okay, and I think that, we need to look at it, as people who are on a journey together, we need to look at it, as we've all made mistakes, we need to look at it, as if we're all broken, we need to look at it, as if we all, desperately need each other, to encourage each other, and pray for each other, and speak into our lives, and to forgive us, sometimes when we've made mistakes, and what the passage says is this, and I'm in this church, Christianity had come in, and Paul was converted, and what they started seeing, was that a whole bunch of people, from all different walks of life, were coming, and as these people gathered together, they didn't really know, how to interact with each other, and so you see in Ephesians 5, codes of ethics, and values, and families, and so Paul talks, about how men and women, are to interact with each other,

Paul talks about, how parents, and kiddos, are to interact with each other, he specifically talks, to the dads, which I think all of us dads, need to think about, and hear today, on this journey, of Father's Day, but then he goes in, and he talks about something, that no one ever would have talked about, in Roman or Greek society, he talks about how slaves, interact with their masters, now I don't know, if you understand, what he's doing, as he does this, because no one else, would have agreed with him, and no one else, ever introduced, or talked about a slave, and maybe you're in here, and you're saying, well that's about slaves, it's 2,000 years ago, it has nothing to do with me, but the passage, and how it's interacted, in our life, and how it is applied to us, has everything, to do with everybody, here today, you can substitute, slaves, for employees, and you can substitute, masters, for employers, but what Paul is doing, is he's trying to bring together, this idea, and this thought, of how we interact, with each other, now slaves lives, in Paul's day, were terrible, from most things,

[31 : 00] I've read, and accounts, and historians, about one third, of the population, were slaves, slaves, were used, abused, and killed, openly, without excuse, and without a reason, they were worthless, one of the Greek philosophers, basically Aristotle, said that there are, three types of tools, in your household, there's a tool, that can speak, which is a slave, there's a tool, that cannot speak, but makes noises, which is a cow, and there's a tool, which is silent, but does a lot of work, which is a wagon, and those three tools, made up the average household, in Rome, and Greece, and so when Paul is talking, about all these Greeks, and Romans, and these slaves, who are coming together, they're coming to Christ, and they're gathering together, it would have been, something very unusual, and very different, something we cannot, comprehend, and understand, but it was changing, the face of the world, it was changing, the face of the church, in Paul's day, and so as you read this, I just want to read, these things to you, and I want to ask, some questions, because I've been trying, to figure out, how we can go, on this journey together, and talk about, these things, and deal with, these things, and so this is, what I'm going to do,

I'm going to say, what would it be like, if on Monday, you walked, into your work, and the most important thing, the most important relationship, that governed, everything you did, was your walk, with Jesus Christ, what would that be like, Paul says it, in verses five, six, and seven, he says, employees be obedient, he's talking about, through your whole heart, through your whole actions, the Greek words, are awe, awe, and reverence, and a desire, to do the right thing, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, so Paul says, that when you walk, into your work, on Monday, realize that you see, a boss there, who's probably adversarial, he's against you, he's not for you, but you have a greater boss, who is Jesus Christ, and everything you do, for your boss,

Paul says, in Ephesians five, with your whole heart, you're actually doing, for God, what would the workplace, be like, if you walked in there, and you said, the most important relationship, I have today, is my relationship, with Jesus Christ, I see my boss, he's a jerk, but I'm going to serve him, and I'm going to do everything, that I'm called to do, because I'm not really, doing it for my boss, I'm doing it for God, he goes on, he says, not by way of eye service, the Greek words are, don't do something, just because you're seen, I know none of us, have that problem, in Hong Kong, none of us wait, until the boss, comes in the office, and making sure, that we're there, before they're there, and making sure, that we leave, after they leave, so they don't see us, to do anything, and they don't make sure, that every time, they look at us, they see us working, but Paul says, don't do things, by way of eye service, or as men pleasers, the Greek is, butt kissers, or something equivalent, to that,

I don't know, if I can say that in church, can I say that in church, I just did, okay, but as slaves, of Jesus, doing the will of God, from your heart, he's saying, what would it look like, if Monday, you walk into your office, and you just did everything, that was expected of you, and you did it, whether your boss, was there or not, whether your boss, saw you or not, because you didn't care, because your ultimate boss, saw you, and it was God, and God was the one, that really mattered, what would the workplace, look like, if we walked in there, as Christians, and we did it, not so that we can be seen, not so that we can please men, but so that we can please God, with good will, render service, full heart, goodness, gentleness, he's not just saying, these are your outward actions, he's saying, what's going on in your heart, as to the Lord, not to the men, what would it look like, if you walked into your workplace, on Monday, and you realize, I'm here, but my main purpose, is to serve God, and I'm going to trust God, with whatever happens, in my life, and I'm going to be, the best employee, that I can be, and I'm going to do things, even when people, aren't looking, at me, and I'm not going, to do bad things, when people, aren't looking at me, like playing, whatever you play, on your computer, when your boss, is out the door, but I'm going to serve, the Lord, in everything that I do, with good will, render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, what would life look like, if you did that, would there be a difference, in the workplace, and what would it look like, if all of the Christians, in Hong Kong, on Monday, walked into their office, and understood, that work has value, it's significant, it's how God made me,

God is in control, and I'm going to serve, and work in my office, whether my boss, sees me or not, or whether they appreciate me, or not, because the passage, says that God appreciates me, and God sees me, and he's the one, who ultimately matters, in everything, the question comes down to, can we really trust God, isn't it, I mean the question comes down, is God really good, can we really trust him, I mean yeah, he saved us, and now we're going to heaven, woo woo, but can we trust him, for now in the garden, as we're doing things, and fixing things, or do we need to please men, and do we need to do things, in front of people, so they can see us, what would that look like, Paul goes on, and he shares one more thing, which I think is probably, the hardest thing to do, and hardest thing to say, and this is what he says, verses eight and nine, the question would be this, what would it look like, if you walked into your work, on Monday, and you realize that God, was your ultimate master, and boss, and that he was the one, that you're going to receive, your compensation from, you weren't worried, about your bonus, you weren't worried, about getting that 20% raise, that you're entitled to, and that you deserve, you're going to receive, but you realize, that God saw everything, he knew everything, and that he is the one, who will take care of you, and you might not receive it here, right now, but you will ultimately in heaven, what would Monday look like, would it be different, maybe you're in here, and you're saying, it wouldn't look any different to me, that's great,

[38 : 14] I think that's amazing, because I think most of us, really, really, struggle, with that, most of us really struggle, with understanding, that God is our ultimate boss, most of us really struggle, with understanding, that God is ultimately good, and he's for us, most of us ultimately struggle, with understanding, that what we receive here, in heaven, on earth, is nothing, nothing, compared to what God, has for us in heaven, knowing that whatever good thing, each one does, this he will receive back, from the Lord, there's a promise, that whatever we do, as we walk in our work, as we serve the Lord, not our bosses, we will receive that back, from God, God has put his name out there, and he's promised that, whether we're slave, or slave, or free, whether we're boss, or helper, or employer, whatever we're doing, we know that God, will give that back to us, and will receive that back to us, verse nine, has always stuck out to me, because he looks at the bosses, the employers, and he said, you employer, do the same things above, so he basically just says, whatever I said to the workers, you do it too, but he adds something to it, he says, stop threatening people, stop treating them differently, than you would treat yourself, do we do that, do we get to a place, in our work, and in our life, where we're at this level, and then when people come in, in this level, we kind of look at them, and go, come on, get out of here, we don't have time to waste with you, what would it look like, in our workplace, if we didn't do that, what would it look like, if you were the employer, who treated, who treated, every employee you had, the same way, that you wanted to be treated, would the world be different,

I mean it's interesting, in this passage, because Paul doesn't say, slavery is bad, even though he disagrees, with slavery, he's not telling people, revolt, and fight, and get over it, and you're going to overcome, your bondage, and you're going to beat up, your masters, and everything's going to be good, he doesn't say that, and most of the time, the Bible doesn't say that, most of the time, people come to me, and they say, I'm in this bad situation, I want to get out of it, right now, what do I need to do, to get out of it, help me get out of it, my boss is terrible, my work is bad, I'm not married, my kids are a wreck, these situations are bad, help me get out of it, but what we see in scripture, is that God rarely says, this is how you get out of it, what the Bible teaches us, is God says, this is how you walk through this, because as you walk through this situation, I'm going to be with you, and you're going to be stronger, employers do the same thing to them, give up threatening them, knowing that you both have a master, and yours is in heaven, where there's no partiality with him,

God looks at us, he sees street sleeper, Filipino helper, driver, office boy, cleric, lawyer, intern, internist, doctor, senior partner, managing director, director, wherever title you want, pastor, whatever title you are, God looks at all of his people, and he sees the same, I taught this once in China, and I asked my students, what does this mean, and one of the guys gave me the best answer ever, he came back to me, he says, he says, he means God sees with a clean eye, I'm like, dude, that will preach, Paul says that God sees with a clean eye, so what would it look like, if on Monday, we followed scripture, and we said, this is what God wants you to do, and this is what it's going to look like, would our office place be different, would Hong Kong be different, would your family, be different, if you're like me, and you're listening to this, you're probably thinking,

I wrote down these thoughts, as I listened to this sermon to myself in my head, I read, I said, Tobin, okay, so what you're asking me to, is you're asking me, not to compartmentalize my life, you're asking me to have the same values, and criteria everywhere, you're asking me, and you're showing me, that work is noble, and it's good, and it's a part of how God made me, and I need to never think about retirement, I always need to think about working, and work basically is, using the gifts and talents, that God has given me, to serve other people, you're asking me to go in on Monday, and serve the boss, like I'm serving the Lord, with my whole heart, to serve and to submit, to people I dislike, to people who hate me, to people who are basically, going to use me, you're asking me not to worry, about my future, you're asking me, to understand that God, is my ultimate boss, that God sees everything, that he takes care of me, that he's going to take me, through this journey, and that ultimately, I can count on God, from receiving everything, that I need from God, because he is good, and he will do it, and again, did I mention, that my boss, is not a nice person, you're asking me, to do all those things, how do I do those things, and the scripture says, the only way, you can do those things, is that you can't, you can't, when I grew up, my parents, were not believers, and my parents, were trying to shape, my life, and my values, and my character, in a very early age, they gave me this letter, that was written, by an editor, of a newspaper, the letter is called, actually the letter, had no name on it, when the guy wrote it, in 1899, it was just a, it's just a nameless article, that he wrote, he stuck in the paper, as a filler, and he said, hey let's just run this, and added space up, and he didn't think, anything about it, but then two weeks later, he started getting, requests for more papers, and three weeks later, he got more papers, and he finally had, this news guy, this railroad guy said,

I want one million copies, of this paper, and the guy's going, what's the big deal, why does everybody, want this newspaper, and his helper said, it's because that article, you wrote, because I just wrote it, on a fly, and it's filled it in there, and the article, is called, a letter to Garcia, it's about the Spanish, American war, and it's about this general, they're about to go, help the people in Cuba, and they needed to get a hold, of this guy, who was a rebel leader, in the mountains, and they didn't know, how to get a hold of him, and so they wrote this letter, and they goes, how do we get this letter, to this guy, who will go do it, without being asked, who will do it, without asking questions, who will do it, no matter what, who's going to be, the most faithful person, we have, and this guy goes, I know this guy, his name's Lieutenant Rohan, you give Lieutenant Rohan, the letter to Garcia, and he'll get there, no matter what, he won't ask you, he won't do it, he'll do it on his own, he'll take the initiative, he'll sacrifice, he'll do everything that's needed, he'll get it done, and so they gave the letter, to Lieutenant Rohan, and he went out, and he found Garcia, and he coordinated the efforts, and they were able to free, the people of Cuba, at that time, and my parents gave me this letter, and say, see you need to be, just like that guy, you need to be like Rohan, who takes an order, he just says yes sir, and he goes, does it, he doesn't ask questions, he just makes it happen, he gets it done, that's the type of people, people are looking for, that's what's going to make, successful in the world, everybody needs to be like that, everybody needs to take the initiative, again my parents, weren't believers, and so that was the best standard, they could give me, and I walked away, with that article in my hand,

[46 : 30] I'm going wow, that's amazing, and there's something deep inside of me, that says, I need to be like that, but I asked the question, how do I be like that, because there's sometimes, I don't want to be like that, I mean often, I don't want to be like that, I started teaching in China, in the late 80's, my Chinese students, had a Lieutenant Rohan also, his name was Lei Feng, and whenever they wanted, Chinese students to do something, they said do it, because Lei Feng did it, he sacrificed, he worked, he did it for the good of the people, he didn't ask questions, he was sacrificial, he did everything he needed to do, be like Lei Feng, as I taught my students, we were reading that, and thinking about that, I said well how do you do that, I mean where do you get the power, to be like that, and they go, don't ask me, it's impossible, and Paul says yes, you're right, it is impossible, the only way you can do it, is by looking at Jesus, who was a master, but became a servant, who came to earth, was treated like crap, but he still served, and he gave sacrificially, he was ultimately crucified, on a cross, by his masters,

I'm sure some of you, feel like that at work, on Mondays, he died for you and me, he rose again, the only way you can be like Garcia, the only way you can be like Rohan, the only way you can be like Lei Feng, is by gazing at what Christ, has been for you, and surrender your life, allowing the Holy Spirit, to come in, and to change you, if you try to do it on your own, if you try to do all these things, I'm going to be the best employer, on Monday I can ever be, the Bible says you're going to fail, because you're sinful and broken, if you're a dad, try to be the best dad, you can be today, if you're like me, you're going to fail, an alligator, because you're going to be impatient, you're going to be frustrated, you're going to want to take a break, because you've worked so hard, and you deserve this break, and now your kids are coming in, and disturbing your break, you're entitled, but the passage says, we can do these things, and we can be these things, only as we look at Jesus, and realize he's already done them for us, and as we surrender our lives to him, and ask him to change us, he does, it's not like that, it's a journey, but you change on the journey, not because you're being a better person, but because you understand the gospel, and you're looking at Christ, does that make sense, how do we do good at work, how do we be the person, that our employers, or employees want us to be, how do we do all these things, and treat people like ourselves, and realize that our greater reward, is in heaven, how do we do these things, as Paul is telling these slaves, and remember slaves had no rights, they had no rights, they could go back home, and they could be killed just like that, and he's telling them to act, and do these things, in an environment, where they weren't going to receive a bonus, they weren't going to get a better pay raise, at the end, he said the only way you can do it, is by contemplating, what Christ has already done, for you, father we thank you for this day, we thank you for your goodness, and your mercy in our life, we thank you that you have gone before us, that you are the ultimate master, who became a slave, you're probably the only master, who ever died for his employees, that I know of, and yet your word says, that you continue to pursue us, even when we make mistakes, you can continue to pursue us, even when we compartmentalize our lives, even when we live by different rules, and we make mistakes, your word says, that you never give up on us, that your grace is amazing, and it changes us, so we come before you as your people, and we just ask you, to continue to change us, help us to be the employees, this week that focuses on our relationship, with you above all else, and realizes that all good things, come from you, sure that might get us fired, the first day, when we choose not to do something, that's counter your will, but even if it does, your word says, that you watch out after us, and you provide for us, and you go before us, and that we have that reward, waiting for us, when we see you, the next time,

Father, I pray for us, who are employers, and dads, and moms, and oversee any people, in our world, help us to love them, and to encourage them, and to serve them, like your son served us, and to die, if need be, to ourselves, for them, for them, for them, Lord, I wonder what, Hong Kong would be like, I wonder what our workplaces, would be like, I wonder what our homes, would be like, if we just thought about you, and our love, and our relationship for you, and we allowed you, to go before us, so Lord, we pray as a church, and as individuals, that we would trust you, that we would see you, as big, and mighty, and good, and in control, we would worship at your feet, we pray all these things, your son, Jesus, holy name, amen.