

A Changed Work Ethic

Ephesians 4:26-27 Sunday AM, November 19, 2023

Prelude – Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-29

(NASB95) So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But you did not learn Christ in this way, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus. 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another. 26 BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Walk worthy of the calling. Do it together with others He has chosen, with all humility, showing tolerance for one another with love. Grace comes from God to each called, and that grace shows itself first in structure and accountability, all leading to the message of the gospel being carried to its desired end—each saint equipped for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. Christians under the Headship of Christ are not unstable and distracted following different voices with different goals, but purposeful in their work among the people of God where they speak into each other’s souls with the goal of each growing in ALL aspects into Christ. In direct contrast to the lives of those outside of Christ who “walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding . . . because of the hardness of their heart,” there is life, love, growth and change among the people of God when Christ is given His position as Head of the church. While the change WILL be external and noticed, the saving difference of this change will be internal as God works so His people grow to know Him in a way leading to worship for His greatness and provision and obedience stemming from a genuine desire for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Church, sing the conscious daily testimony of the healthy Christian.

*Hymn #460: All the Way My Savior Leads Me

Following under the Headship of Christ leads to intentionally laying aside our old self and putting on the new self, “which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” However, we must NOT speak of putting off/putting on, right/wrong, better/worse without thinking how the gospel centering around the love of God through the work of Christ drives this action, or we will find ourselves disconnected from Christ as Head, focused elsewhere. For this to happen, we must see the gospel as the gospel—GOD defines the problem AND the deliverance, thus making His salvation truly good news. You must not sing of God’s love without thinking about how His love differs from the love you want. Those yielding to God welcome studying His love. Yes, look to the cross of Christ, but root that love in the praise of those in the Old Testament who experienced God’s faithful love and tender mercy. If this is your testimony, sing it. If not, think about what you know from Scripture backing this picture. Meditate on it until NO OTHER GOD is worthy of your awe, your attention. Church, sing the love of God.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): What Love, My God *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: Shout with Joy! Scripture: 2 Thessalonians 3:1–18

(NASB95) 1 Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. 4 We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ. 6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. 16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all! 17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Offering: *Doxology:

There is NO GOSPEL that does not bring you into daily fellowship with God. There is no fellowship with the living God without change in your priorities and goals. We’ve talked about the larger calling which includes your work among the people of God to grow together to the fullness of Christ. But the results of this goal will also change your tongue, your anger, and today, your work ethic. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Stealing speaks of desire—they have what I want, I need. We are talking about soul treasures—desires that if not obtained, lead to things like coveting, envy, jealousy—things which work against unity/trust/love in your relationships, but also which leaves you taking from relationships even when you think you aren’t. The only true antidote to this destructive work ethic lies in finding ALL your desires met in God alone leading to a longing for more of God. That longing only grows when you meditate on God’s power and goodness. Church, join the choir and shout with joy because of God’s goodness to us!

*Hymn #3: Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven

The more you live the perspective of these songs, the more you will honor God’s words and will. And those words lead to loving, not seeking love—serving, not being served. We want this, but it won’t happen if you look to yourself. Your feelings and needs will lead to living the undisciplined life we heard warned of in our Scripture reading, doing no work, but acting like busybodies. Yes, that work means providing for yourself and your household, but it also includes doing it so you have something to share with one who has need, meaning you see their needs more than yours. You will grow weary in doing good unless you look to God for love, strength, provision, and direction, and THEN look to them, then back to Him, then to them. THIS is the gaze of this song the choir has sung numerous times. Contemplate this as Pastor preaches.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): How Beautiful

Message: A Changed Work Ethic Ephesians 4:28 *Hymn #428 (Red): To the Work *Prayer