



Kingdom Living on the Job

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly



Introduction:

Most of us spend the hugest chunk of our time each week on the job. There are very few other things we do that take up as much time. Many of us spend more time in a given week with our co-workers than we do even with our family, and definitely more than we do with our brethren. Therefore, if kingdom living should impact us anywhere, it needs to impact us on the job. If there is any place we can shine the light of the kingdom, the workplace is the place. With that in mind, let's consider some profound principles from the Sermon on the Mount that help us keep the job in its proper place in our kingdom lives.

Discussion:

I. Examine your fruit in the workplace (**Matthew 7:15-20**).

- A. According to Jesus, if we are a healthy tree, we'll bear good fruit. While many of us would like to examine the fruit we bear while we are here in the assemblies among our brethren, that is probably not the most accurate place to see what fruit we are bearing. The workplace, however, is a great place to examine this. Too many Christians think that because they "go to church" on Sunday, the way they act from Monday to Friday doesn't really matter. That is simply not true.
- B. According to **Galatians 5:22-23**, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Are those things growing in your life at work? Do they govern your relationships with employees, employers, co-workers, customers, and clients? Or is your workplace behavior marked by competitive back-biting, vengeance, anxiety, malice, politicizing, etc.?
- C. Use the workplace as a barometer of your spiritual life. If you are bearing diseased fruit in the workplace, do not think coming here makes up for it. Kingdom living on Sundays doesn't justify worldly living during the week. Something is wrong in your kingdom life if you aren't bearing God's fruit in the workplace. That doesn't mean quit Christ and the church. That means you need to examine the roots in your life and get them anchored in Jesus so the fruit in the workplace will align with Him.

II. Work as for the Lord (**Matthew 7:24-27**).

- A. Jesus explained that our lives need to be built on His teaching just like a wise builder will dig down to the bedrock before constructing his house. That means your work ethic, your job behavior, your drive to excel, succeed, and be promoted, must all be built on the bedrock of Jesus' teaching.
- B. Unfortunately, many people believe you just can't get ahead in business doing things God's way. Even many Christians think the Bible principles of how to treat other people will hinder them in the corporate world more than help them. So they choose to ignore how Jesus teaches us to conduct our business. On the other hand, there are plenty of self-help and business authors who want you to believe otherwise. They want you to believe that living Jesus' way is the key to financial and corporate success.
- C. Here is what we need to understand. We don't need to work as for the Lord in order to have great business, corporate, and financial success. No doubt, there are plenty of those who have worked as for the Lord that the Lord has blessed with great success. But there are plenty who have pursued all the wrong ends, in all the wrong ways, ignoring the Lord, who have had great financial success as well. And there are plenty who have surrendered their lives to the Lord who have lived in poverty (cf. **Luke 16:19-26**). We need to work as for the Lord because we are representing the Lord and He is to be glorified in all our activity. If He decides to bless us financially, that's His business. If not, that's His business also. We also need to work as for the Lord because storms are coming. Whether we have success or trouble on the job, we'll need to be anchored in God's will and in Jesus Christ to survive. In other words, don't work as for the Lord because you are convinced that is the best way to have work success. Work as for the Lord because it is the right thing to do, because God deserves it, because you need it.

III. Get your light out of the basket (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

- A. You are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, not the salt of the church, the light of the assembly. Sadly, far too many Christians have lit their lamp and then hidden it in the basket of the church building. They praise the Lord, read the Word, submit to Christ while at the building, but they cover up their light while on

the job. We don't want to shine our own light so people will think we are special (cf. **Matthew 6:1-18**). But we are to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to the world so they will see our good works and glorify Him.

- B. Regrettably, many Christians think following our last point does this. They work with kindness, they are nice to people, they are diligent on the job, they are honest, etc. They think that just setting this example is the same as shining our lights. But it isn't the full picture. There are plenty of people who do not work as for the Lord and yet they are nice, honest, diligent, compassionate. There is more to shining our light.
- C. We need to live lives of confession (cf. **Matthew 10:32**). People aren't going to know we are working as for the Lord, unless we tell them. Consider some very simple ways you can do this. Carry a Bible with you and read it on your break. Pray before your meal in the break room or plant cafeteria. Bring the Bible into conversations with people. That is, when a topic comes up and a passage you've read applies, mention how it has helped you. When someone asks what you did over the weekend, tell them about the Bible class or assembly you attended. If someone expresses some problem they are having, offer to pray with them.
- D. People are interested. People are seeking. We don't need to be afraid to shine our lights. We can be laborers in the Lord's harvest if we will just get our light out of the basket and into the workplace.

IV. Recognize persecution as a blessing (**Matthew 5:10-12**).

- A. Right now, some of us are filled with some fear. What if we start shining our lights in the workplace and people get angry? What if they start persecuting us? What if they think we are weird and mock us or make fun of us? This is a valid concern. There are plenty of people who will not like us when we have shared the gospel with them and shone the light of the Lord into their lives. As **John 3:19-21** explains, if people want to live in darkness, they will not appreciate the light we shine. They will react in less than pleasant ways.
- B. However, this is nothing to fear. In fact, what Jesus explains is we should be more afraid that no one ever persecutes us. We should be afraid that no one ever mocks us or belittles us for our spirituality. Our reward is great in heaven when we are building our lives on Jesus' teaching, getting our light out of the basket, and people revile and persecute us. The kingdom of heaven belongs to us when that is happening. According to the parallel teaching in **Luke 6:26**, we really need to be afraid when all people speak well of us.
- C. Now please don't misunderstand. We are not purposefully trying to get people to hate us, mock us, belittle us, revile us, or persecute us. We aren't walking around the workplace with guns blazing, smacking people with our Bibles, defrauding our employers, and then crying foul when they speak against us. But when we are working as for the Lord and shining our light, be prepared for persecution, but don't be afraid of it.

V. Don't let work be your master (**Matthew 6:24**).

- A. As we have already said, few of us have anything else going on in our lives that takes up more time each week than work. We spend 40 to 60 hours (and some even more) each week on the job. This presents a very real danger to us as kingdom citizens. In this circumstance, work can become a master in our lives. We define ourselves based on our job. We fear losing our job. We do whatever we can to protect our job. Suddenly, our job is the governing value in our lives. We sacrifice our families, our health, our time on the altar of our job. Even worse, we sacrifice our relationship with God on the altar of our job.
- B. Obviously, in our world, work is necessary. **1 Timothy 5:8** explains that if we don't provide for our families we are worse than unbelievers. But many of us allow work to move beyond being the means to provide for our families. Work becomes the all-pervasive, all-encompassing activity that matters more than anything else in our lives. We need to make sure that work keeps its rightful place. I wish we had time to read all that **Ecclesiastes** says about the place of work in our lives. Over and again, God said through the Preacher, that "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil" (**Ecclesiastes 2:24**, ESV). But then it goes on to explain how so many of us work as a means to hoard material blessings or try to get ahead. They can't enjoy their labor because they don't accept it as the good in and of itself. They don't keep it in proper perspective. They let the job become their master as they use it to try to find meaning and fulfillment in life, rather than allowing their relationship with God provide these.
- C. Yes, you will work. You need to work hard. You need to work diligently. You need to work as for the Master. But do not let work become your master.

VI. Know that the Lord will care for you (**Matthew 6:25-33**).

- A. How do we accomplish the previous point? How do we keep work from becoming our god and master? We remember we have a God and Master who will take care of us. We remind ourselves God knows us, sees us, cares for us. He has numbered the hairs of our head. He sees our needs even before we ask (**Matthew 6:8**).
- B. It is not your job that is providing for you. It is God. It is not your boss who is keeping you afloat. It is God. It is not your work that is putting food on your table. It is God. Trust Him to keep doing so even when your job

is in jeopardy. It may be that God doesn't give you every financial blessing you've ever desired. But He will care for you. Be content with Him and His grace.

- C. **Ecclesiastes 6:12** asks a multi-leveled question: "For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? (ESV). On one level, considering this question in the context of life under the sun, life without considering God, the answer to the rhetorical question is that no one knows. We can't see the future. We don't know what will happen tomorrow. But on another level, in the greater context of the book, knowing that God really is there and we are marching on to His eternity, the answer is obviously that God knows. God knows what is good for us. God knows what is coming. God knows what we need. And when we remember that God really cares for us and longs to give us good gifts (**Matthew 7:9-11**), we know God will care for us even if we can't always see how in the moments. Remember it is God who is taking care of you, not your job. That will help you live as a kingdom citizen on the job.

Conclusion:

Being a kingdom citizen means living like one everywhere, relying on the King to take care of you, confessing your life in Him, bearing His fruit. How are you doing with that?