

Sermon Script: Godspace 9-5 3) Integration

As we've thought about...

... workplace christianity, but broadened it to include whatever you do from 9-5

... let's start today with a bit of time travelling

Can we close our eyes and imagine yourself in these scenes

- What do you feel?
- What do you notice?

For a start, let's travel right back to Eden

- Look around at the plants, trees and animals
- The sheer beauty of it
- Take it all in for a moment
- And there is Adam, tending and caring for the garden of Eden
- It's like watching any gardener
 - But there are no thorns and thistles
 - No struggle to scratch a living from the earth
 - No sweat of the brow
- And he's not doing it alone; God is literally right there with him
- At the end of the day both Adam and God look at the work done, and say: 'That was good!'

- What do you feel, as you watch Adam and God working together?
- What do you notice?

Fast forward now to Egypt...

... where as one of Adam's many descendants you are now a slave under Pharaoh

- A loud crack. The sound of a whip and the searing pain on your back

... because you paused a moment to catch your breath

Your work here feels pointless

- All day you mix clay and rubble and straw, and mold and forge them into bricks for Pharaoh to make his pyramids and temples and grandiose structures for his own glory
- A scar will remain on your back and the pain quickens your mind and body back to the relentless, pointless task of brickmaking
 - This is a distortion of work. This is slavery
 - You don't matter
 - You achieve nothing that gives you any fulfilment
 - And just when you think you can manage your routine, an order comes from the foremen: 'We will no longer supply you with straw. You will have to collect it now for yourselves. But you are to make the same quota of bricks as before. Because you are lazy. That is why you cry out, 'Let us go and worship our God.'
- Your relationship to your masters couldn't be more different to the relationship between God and Adam
- As you rush to collect straw for the same quota of bricks - What do you feel?
- What do you notice?

Fast forward again...

... and now you are in a carpenter's workshop

- There is Jesus working away, learning the trade
- He seems to be making a chair

- Hammering, sawing, sanding
- The smell of wood shavings in the warm air

It strikes you that Jesus spent most of his adult life, as a carpenter

- Doing this
- Later today he will take this chair, along with the others, to the markets
- He'll be earning money for the family
- But right now, you notice the intent, the artistry. He's focused
- As you take in the sounds and scope of his work - What do you feel?
- What do you notice?
- Are you drawn to just sit there and watch?
- Are you wanting to join him?

There's another jump in time...

- A man is stretching fabric out over poles
 - It's the Apostle Paul
 - Making tents to sell
 - He's doing this to pay his bills so he can go on his next mission trip
 - He wants to pay his own way rather than charge people to hear the gospel
- But there's nothing slap happy about what he's doing
 - He's not cutting any corners
 - Or trying to knock them off these tents quickly
 - He has integrity
 - You're reminded of how he once said, 'Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God, as if working for God not man
- It's as if he is making these tents for God

He's spending a lot of time here

- Doing the same thing all day - it's pretty mindless
- Maybe he's thinking through his next mission trip; or practicing the presence of God?

What are you feeling and thinking as you watch him?

The time machine rumbles again...

... and you wonder, is it taking you to that final scene

... working together with God on the renewed earth in eternity?

- But as the idea grows in your mind the machine stops
- And you remember that verse: 'For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.'

Let's open our eyes

There are so many stories about work in the Bible

- We haven't even mentioned Joseph in this series
- And the way that regardless of what was done to him, he got noticed for doing his work well ... and rose up to become the second most powerful man in Egypt

Here's the first sermon this series:

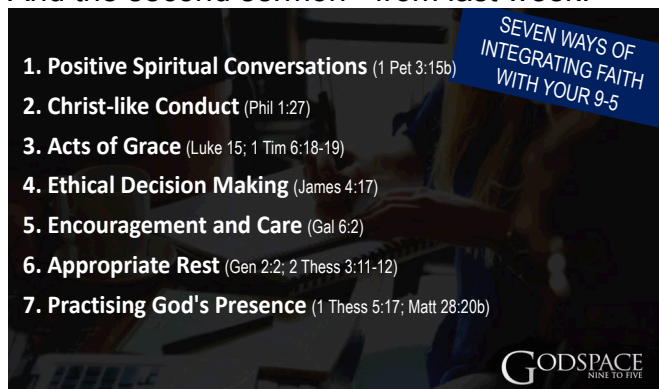
Understanding work from God's perspective

1. Unlike biblical times, our culture has a compartmentalised view of 'work', as just paid work
2. We were born to **work in partnership with God** (Gen 1:26, 28 2:15, 19-20)
3. The 'Fall' (ie. when Adam disobeyed God in Genesis 3) made our work harder in 4 ways:

i. work no longer seems like a partnership with God (for most people)	God
ii. our environment is broken - we have to work harder	Creation
iii. work can feel pointless at one extreme, or compulsive at the other	Ourselves
iv. Eden's peacefulness, replaced by deceit, selfishness, blame, power struggles & stress	Each other
4. Jesus came so that we can restore those four things (Col 1:6, 11-14, 20-23)
5. In eternity we will work again, **as partners with God**

GODSPACE
NINE TO FIVE

- a biblical overview
 - it starts & ends with partnership with God
 - 4 relationships get out of whack in between
- And the second sermon - from last week:



Today we want to focus on this integration idea

... so rather than adding lots more material

... it seemed better to get some feedback on how these seven work out

Panel - first an introductory qn or two to each of them:

Jeff Turner (Large Business - Fresh Direct - fruit & vege distribution)

Qns:

- Can you give us an idea of how many employees there are, here and overseas for Fresh Direct?
 - I'm told that thousands and thousands of dollars can be at stake if orders go wrong or food is spoiled
- So ... how do you hold all that together & keep a smile on your face & look relaxed

Chay Carter (Secondary School - St Kentigern - Deputy Principal)

Qns:

- You were recently promoted?
 - And we know the admin load on teachers can be ridiculous anyway
- Is it easy to hold together your teaching and your leadership role?

Joy Fountain (Administration - Laidlaw College)

Qns:

- What's your exact Job Title?
- You work with Christians, so everything must be easy and perfect right?

Ali Ashman (Homemaker - two kids, Charlotte & Joseph)

Qn:

- The work you do - tending to kids and their multiple needs! That's definitely work, as everyone knows who's done it!
- The situation has changed a lot in my life time. It's different from Lower Hutt to Auckland. Generally speaking, do you think there's too much pressure on Mum's to go back to paid work too soon, these days?

Panel Questions:

1. What are some of the ethical dilemmas faced in your 9-5?

[eg. Chay - 'pervasive humanism' that's everywhere in education: Example?]

[eg. Me & Jo - whether we would use throw out nappies & how much we'd end up throwing out & whether they were biodegradable. Other examples?]

[eg. Jeff - handling redundancies as a christian?]

[eg. Joy - dealing with bad behaviour? Keeping boundaries? Dealing with low enrolments some years?]

- Congregation - 2 mins: What did you relate to out of those answers?
- 2. What are some of the clever / innovative ways of combining faith with your 9-5?**
- Congregation - 2 mins: What did you relate to out of those answers?
- 3. Of the seven areas mentioned last week, which have been critical to your integration of faith and work?**
- Congregation - 2 mins: What did you relate to out of those answers?

Thanks to the panel!

There are two challenges I want to bring to you, as we head towards communion:

1. Can you think of yourself as a marketplace missionary?

- We can all ask that - whether we're students, retirees, mums at home or anything else
 - ***Are we all called by Jesus to be missionaries within our 9-5?***

I can think of some reasons why it might be hard to say yes to that

One is when you're just really unhappy in your work

- A Stuff survey from 2014 claimed that almost a million NZers are unhappy at work - 40% of the workforce
 - That's astonishing!
- It's really hard to think of yourself as a marketplace missionary when you're depressed at work

If you're one of that 40%

... then getting some help on it is really important

- There's no one size fits all solution, but...
 1. Maybe a change is due? Do you enjoy 80% of your 9-5?
 2. Maybe you're learning more about Practicing God's Presence than all of us!
 3. Maybe the fault is with you; God wants you to recognise & change something
 4. Maybe God is challenging you to stay committed to being Christlike in your 9-5, even in hard times

Jer 17:8

They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.

2. Can we be a church that is supportive of people's 9-5?

Just as Ian Richmond started this series with a sobering statement that wakes us up to the importance of the topic

Here's a similar one to close:

"In the almost thirty years of my professional career, my church has never once suggested that there be any type of accounting of my on-the-job ministry to others. My church has never once offered to improve those skills which could make me a better minister, nor has it ever asked if I needed any kind of support in what I was doing. There has never been an inquiry into the types of ethical decisions I must face, or whether I seek to communicate my faith to my co-workers. I have never been in a congregation where there was any type of public affirmation of a ministry in my career. In short, I must conclude that my church really doesn't have the least interest in whether or how I minister in my daily work."

- William Diehl, Sales Manager for Bethlehem Steel

"Diehl hints that he would dearly love to be related to in the same way his church relates to cross-cultural missionaries or pastors. His cry is to be recognized and supported as a marketplace missionary."

- Where is God on Monday

We - all together - are the church. Can we do better than that?

Just as we've gone through this series together...

... let's keep in touch with each other about our 9-5's

- Check in with people you met at the Discussion groups
- And pray for each other as we can

Communion

- Please collect a card as you come for communion

PRAYER OF COMMISSION:

We are your people, Lord, called to follow, serve, and love you.

We acknowledge afresh our dependence on you.

We want to be co-workers in your mission to this world.

Empower us by your Spirit we ask.

Give us vision to see what you want us to do.

Give us insight to see what you are already doing.

Give us humility to serve without complaint, in whatever tasks are before us.

Give us courage to testify to your goodness and faithfulness.

Give us patience and endurance in the race you have set before us.

Give us hope to believe that ultimately you will reign in all places and all hearts.

Transform us, we ask.

May your kingdom come, here on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen