

WORKING FOR JESUS (COLOSSIANS 3:17) 09/02/12
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, PASTOR LEE HENDON

I MUST CONFESS, I AM A RECOVERING WORKAHOLIC. I WAS INSTILLED WITH A HUGE WORK ETHIC FROM CHILDHOOD. WHEN I FIRST STARTED IN MINISTRY & EVEN WHEN WITH NEW YORK LIFE I WORKED ON NATIONAL HOLIDAYS - SO FAR, I AM STILL ON THE WAGON & AT LEAST TAKE OFF MY HOLIDAYS & VACATION TIME.

I HAVE WORKED 'BOUT ALL MY LIFE - MY FIRST JOBS WERE CUTTING GRASS & PULLING WEEDS. I HAVE MILKED COWS, PUMPED GAS, SACKED GROCERIES, BAILED HAY, INSTALLED DRAPES, MADE ASBESTOS BRAKE SHOES, BAGGED CEMENT, WORKED RETAIL, BEEN A SHORT ORDER COOK, DONE AUTO BODY REPAIR, SOLD INSUR-ANCE & INVESTMENTS & NOW MINISTRY. WORK, WORK, WORK. THING OF IT IS - I HAVE ALWAYS ***LOVED TO WORK***.

I GENERALLY NOTICE IN THE WORK PLACE TODAY - IF I AM BEING UNFAIR, PLEASE FORGIVE ME - BUT I NOTICE THAT MANY WORKERS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR PAYCHECKS THAN IN THE WORK THEY DO? IF SO, THAT COULD LEAD TO PRETTY BORING & UNFULFILLED LIVES - SEEMS TO ME. MOST LIKELY IT COULD ALSO LEAD TO POOR & UNSAVORY JOB PERFORMANCE. THIS JUST WON'T DO BECAUSE A GREAT PORTION OF OUR LIVES IS EXPRESSED IN WORK - LET US CONSIDER OUR LABOR AS **GODLY WORK**.

WE TEND TO VALUE JOBS/CAREERS/VOCATIONS BY THE MONEY - YOU KNOW WE DO. BUT HOW ABSURD THAT IS! TO THINK THAT A GROWN MAN PLAYING A KIDS GAME MAKING \$-MILLIONS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE TEACHER INSTRUCTING HIS CHILD IS JUST NOT RIGHT! I WAS IMPACTED BY MAHATMA GANDHI'S INSTRUCTION ON LABOR - THAT EACH MEMBER OF HIS COMMUNITY HAD TO ROTATE THROUGH EACH HOME TASK FROM CLEANING outhouses to BAKING TO MAKING BEDS, ETC. & THAT EACH JOB WAS OF EQUAL VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY - NO JOB ABOVE THE OTHER - EVEN IN COMPARISON TO PROFESSIONAL TASK TO BE DONE BY DOCTORS, LAWYERS, ETC. ALL WORK IS EQUAL - ALL WORKERS EQUAL WHEN THEIR TASKS ARE DONE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD - **GOD'S GLORY BECOMES THE DEFINING FACTOR NOT THE MONEY**. PERHAPS WHAT WE NEED IS A HUGE ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT?

PAUL WROTE, "***WHATEVER YOU DO, IN WORD OR DEED, DO***

EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD THE FATHER THROUGH HIM.” WE HAVE A GREAT VARIETY OF WORKERS IN OUR CONGREGATION: DOCTORS, NURSES, LAW-YERS, TEACHERS, SKILLED LABOR, TRUCK DRIVERS, CHILD-CARE WORKERS, BANKING, HOSPITAL STAFF, FARMERS, YARD CARE, MECHANICS, COOKS, RETAIL, EXECUTIVES, HOUSE CLEANING, ROOFING, HOME-MAKERS, ETC. YOU-GET-THE-POINT, A WIDE, WIDE VARIETY OF WORKERS HERE AT FIRST CHRISTIAN. WHATEVER YOU DO, DO EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS. I DO NOT KNOW HOW I GREW UP KNOWING THAT BUT I DID - THERE IS TO BE A JESUS QUALITY & REVERENCE TO ALL OUR WORK - NO MATTER WHAT IT MIGHT BE. WE SHOULD NEVER EVER DO JUST ENOUGH TO GET BY, NO, BUT ENOUGH TO SHOW WE ARE DOING IT IN THE NAME OF JESUS. **WE HONOR JESUS IN THE WORK THAT WE DO.** EACH PIECE OF WORK WE HANDLE IS STAMPED WITH THE NAME OF JESUS ON IT. TO ME, THAT IS HUGE! HUGE! THE CRAPPIEST JOB IN THE WORLD IS MADE HOLY, GODLY WHEN DONE IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOUR WORK IS - IT IS TO BE LORD APPROVED - STAMPED WITH JESUS THROUGH YOUR BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS. IF YOU CANNOT DO THE WORK YOU ARE DOING IN THE NAME OF JESUS - WELL, THEN - STOP DOING IT, RIGHT NOW. YOU BELONG FIRST & MOST TO JESUS & HE MUST REIGN SUPREME IN ALL THAT YOU DO - AT WORK TOO! THIS SHOULD PUT YOUR WORK IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE - AS CHRISTIANS WE APPROACH WORK - NO MATTER WHAT IT IS - AS IF JESUS WERE THE BOSS - BECAUSE **JESUS IS THE BOSS OF US!** THIS IS MEANT TO GIVE US PAUSE TO THINK & RECONSIDER OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK - TO MAKE ALL WORK HOLY & GODLY.

ALSO, OUR WORK IS TO BE AN EXPRESSION OF OUR GIVING THANKS TO GOD FOR THAT WORK. **THANKFUL WORK.** SOME-WHERE ALONG THE WAY I HAVE LEARNED THIS GODLY LESSON: GIVE THANKS TO GOD IN THE SEEMINGLY SMALL MATTERS OF LIFE TO PAVE THE WAY FOR GREATER BLESSINGS IN LIFE. NO MATTER YOUR WORK - BE THANKFUL IN DOING IT - BECAUSE, WELL, YOU ARE DOING IT FOR JESUS & NOT THE BOSS OR COMPANY FOR WHICH YOU WORK. IT WILL BE HUGE IN IMPACTING YOUR PRESENT & FUTURE WORK IN POSITIVE, UPLIFTING WAYS WHEN OTHERS SEE YOUR WORK AS **THANKFUL WORK.** SUCH A

GODLY UNDERSTANDING EFFECTS THE WHOLE WAY IN WHICH WE APPROACH ANOTHER DAY OF WORK AS ANOTHER WAY OR MANNER IN WHICH WE CAN GIVE THANKS TO GOD.

CONSIDER THE MOST MENIAL, SIMPLE TASK YOU DO AT YR WORK. HUMPH! SUCH A LITTLE THING! NO SO WHEN IT IS DONE WITH AN AFFIRMATION OF **THANKS TO GOD**. IT IS STARTING WITH THESE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE THAT WE INDEED CHANGE OUR LIVES & THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE.

I SHARE THIS STORY WITH YOU FROM MOODY PRESS:

“WHEN I WAS A BOY, I FELT IT WAS BOTH A DUTY & A PRIVI-LEGE TO HELP MY WIDOWED MOTHER MAKE ENDS MEET BY FIND-

ING WORK IN VACATION TIME, ON SATURDAYS & OTHER TIMES WHEN I DID NOT HAVE TO BE IN SCHOOL. FOR QUITE A WHILE I WORKED FOR A SCOTTISH SHOEMAKER, OR COBBLER, NAMED DAN MACKAY. HE WAS A FORTHRIGHT CHRISTIAN & HIS LITTLE SHOP WAS A REAL TESTIMONY FOR CHRIST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

IT WAS MY CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY TO POUND LEATHER FOR SHOE SOLES. A PIECE OF COWHIDE WOULD BE CUT TO FIT, THEN SOAKED IN WATER. I HAD A FLAT PIECE OF IRON OVER MY KNEES & WITH A FLAT-HEADED HAMMER I POUNDED THESE SOLES UNTIL THEY WERE HARD & DRY. IT SEEMED AN ENDLESS TASK TO ME & I WEARIED OF IT MANY TIMES.

A BLOCK AWAY WAS ANOTHER SHOP THAT I PASSED GOING & COMING TO OR FROM MY HOME. IN IT SAT A JOLLY GODLESS COBBLER WHO TOLD LEWD TALES - HE WAS A MENACE TO THE COMMUNITY. YET, SOMEHOW, HE SEEMED TO THRIVE EVEN TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN MY EMPLOYER. AS I LOOKED IN HIS WINDOW I NOTICED HE NEVER POUNDED THE SOLES AT ALL BUT TOOK THEM FROM THE WATER, NAILED THEM ON, DAMP AS THEY WERE. ONE DAY I ASKED HIM, “I NOTICE YOU PUT THE SOLES ON WHILE STILL WET. ARE THEY JUST AS GOOD AS IF THEY WERE POUNDED?” HE GAVE ME A WICKED LEER AS HE ANSWERED, “THEY COME BACK ALL THE QUICKER THIS WAY, MY BOY!”

FEELING I HAD LEARNED SOMETHING, I RELATED THE INSTANCE TO MY BOSS & SUGGESTED THAT I WAS PERHAPS WASTING TIME IN DRYING OUT THE LEATHER SO CAREFULLY. MR. MACKAY STOPPED HIS WORK - OPENED HIS BIBLE - READ, “WHATSOEVER YOU DO, DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.”

“HARRY,” HE SAID, “I DO NOT COBBLE SHOES JUST FOR THE FOUR BITS & SIX BITS THAT I GET FROM MY CUSTOMERS. I AM DOING THIS FOR THE GLORY OF GOD. I EXPECT TO SEE EVERY SHOE I HAVE EVER REPAIRED IN A BIG PILE AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST & JESUS TO SAY, WELL DONE, GOOD & FAITHFUL SERVANT.”

HE EXPLAINED THAT SOME ARE CALLED TO PREACH, SO HE WAS CALLED TO FIX SHOES & THAT ONLY AS HE DID THIS WELL WOULD HIS TESTIMONY COUNT FOR GOD. **WHATEVER WORK GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO DO, DO IT IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS! WE ARE WORKING FOR JESUS!**