

The Hope of Glory:

An Exposition of Colossians

November 15, 2020

Sermon 15: Work and the Hope of Glory

Colossians 3:22-4:1

Opening Point: When the principal comes in to “observe” the teacher during class. Remember how uncomfortable the teacher would get? I remember many of the goofiest, slackiest teachers I ever had would transform immediately when the principal was observing them. Why? Why would they do that? Because their boss was in the room and their jobs (not to mention their raise) was at stake! It is human nature to act this way. Let me ask you this, “Do you work harder when your boss is around?”

Our theme for Colossians 3: *The relationships of our lives express our conviction for our hope of glory.*

Last week, we focused on the family relationship. This week we will talk about or work relationships.

I. Introduction/Review

A. Everybody works for somebody. Nobody ultimately works for themselves.

1. This is really important to understand. Even if you are “your own boss,” you are never “your own boss.” You work for your customers and ultimately, you work for God.
2. This realization is what sets us apart from non-believers and what gave rise to the concept of the “Protestant work ethic.”

B. How we work, and the attitude with which we work, reveals a lot about our hearts and character.

1. **ILL:** “I love my job!” I used to say that all the time when I worked at the campus cafeteria in college. I mean t it sarcastically, but my boss took me seriously. He would even say to others, “Be like Dom! He loves this job!” That made me fell a little bad. I only had two options at that point: change my job or change my attitude. So...I changed jobs 😊.

II. Bosses and Employees—Colossians 3:22-4:1

A. Employees are to obey their bosses (Colossians 3:22-25).

1. Wait...I though this said, “Slaves and masters?”
 - a. It does.
 - b. However, since we don’t have slavery in this culture (and it’s good that we don’t), it seems reasonable for me to apply this to employees and bosses. That is the closest parallel.
 - i. After all, why waste your time with a history lesson on the nature of biblical slavery?
 - a) Wouldn’t this miss the point of Paul’s exhortation, here?
 - b) Paul’s point, here, is not the nature of slavery. Instead it is the attitude that must be present in the hearts of people on different levels of the work force.
2. What does this mean?
 - a. In “All things”?
 - i. What does this tell us to do?
 - a) Basically, this means that your boss can boss you around!
 - b) This means that we are responsible, as Christians, to be the kind of people that show a sincere willingness to do what those in authority tell us to do.

ILL: “I don’t work for you. I work for the deacons.” Awkward...the most difficult couple of years of my life. I was even told to do my own office work. We can’t be like that.

- ii. What are the limits to this?
 - a) **Acts 5:29** and context.—We cannot obey our boss if to do so would be to disobey God.
 - b) **ILL:** If the elders told me to kill somebody, I couldn’t obey that (depending on who it is).

3. What must be our attitude?
 - a. Sincerity in your work
 - i. Don't be "eye-servants" [Greek: ὀφθαλμοδουλία]

ILL: When the cat's away, the mice will play! Have you ever been in a situation in which a boss showed up and everybody instantly gets more efficient? Why do we do this? Because we are eye-servants. We only serve (or we serve better) when somebody is watching us. Here's the truth: Somebody is ALWAYS watching us!

- ii. Don't be "people pleasers" [Greek: ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι]

ILL: We (husbands or wives) tend to do things only so others can see it. Our wives may be shampooing the carpets and we interrupt her to tell her, "Hey, I washed my glass and put it back in the cabinet." We want recognition...glory. Christians, don't be like this!

- iii. Do your work reverently
 - a) In sincerity of heart [Greek: ἀπλότητι καρδίας]
 - b) In the fear of the Lord [Greek: φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον.]
 - iv. Do your work heartily [from the soul Greek: ἐκ ψυχῆς]
- b. Singularity in focus
 - i. Remember who you are really working for! [vv. 23b-24]

B. Bosses are to deal reasonably with their employees. Colossians 4:1

1. What must be their attitude?
 - a. Gentleness
2. What does Colossians 4:1 command against?
 - i. Oppression
 - ii. Heavy-handedness
3. What is this command demanding?
 - a. Justice
 - b. Fairness
 - c. Grace
4. What does this call us to?
 - a. To treat those who are under your employ in a gentle, fair and Christ-exalting manner.
 - b. To protect those who are under your employ from becoming overworked, exhausted and discouraged.
 - i. ILL: When the next-door neighbor in MI got the exact same car as me.

III. Conclusions

A. How is your work ethic?

1. Do you work harder when the boss is around?
2. Do you inwardly hate your work and your employer?
3. Do you live to please your boss?

B. What is your management style?

1. Are you oblivious to the fact that the people working for you are...well...PEOPLE?

C. A Practical Exhortation

1. How do you treat:

- a. a slow cashier?
- b. a forgetful waitress?
- c. an incompetent customer service rep?

D. Who Cares? What's at stake?

Closing ILL: "I worked hard and then I went home."