

Work & Rest

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[0 : 00] The first couple chapters of the Bible are immensely important. If you don't know the beginning, where you came from and what you were created for, it's kind of hard to know actually what went wrong and where you're headed.

The first two chapters of the Bible and the last two chapters of the Bible are both creation accounts. Or we could say creation and new creation, right?

Where we came from and where we're headed. And in these first couple chapters, you know, the Bible, it's a front-loaded document. All of it matters, but in these first two chapters, there's so much packed in.

Before sin enters the world, we meet the creator God. And he creates this creation and puts us there for a purpose, right?

Before sin enters the picture, we need to see our role in creation. And so this evening, what we're going to look at is the topic from Genesis 1 and 2 of work and rest.

[1 : 11] You and I were created to work. Not just created to work, we were also created to rest. Got to have both together.

Before we look more closely at our passage, let me pray for the preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, you know that probably every single one of us struggle in some way with work and with rest. So would you show us your truth so that we may do the work you've called us to with joyful and glad hearts. Holy Spirit, would you stir in us a faith that rests in what Jesus has accomplished and what he calls us to.

May this be so in the name of Jesus. Amen. Let me take you to Reynosa, Mexico. Reynosa is a border town right on the border with the state of Texas in the United States.

It's right there at the northern point of Mexico. This is, the year is 2008. I'm in Reynosa, Mexico on a mission trip with the church that I worked for at that time.

[2 : 25] And Reynosa, Mexico, it's a city known for all sorts of awful things that happen in border towns. People cross the border to do all sorts of illicit activities.

So there's people exploited and all, there's this group there that's helping in all these different ways. And so our group goes with to help. And we had a large group and we were meeting up with a few other churches.

And they had various projects for us to work on. There was a kids outreach. There was some outreach to women who were exploited. There was a prayer ministry going on.

But apparently, I looked like I would be good at construction. They didn't know these hands. There's no calluses on these.

There's just paper cuts from turning pages in theological tomes, right? Oh, they made a mistake. So every day for this week that we were there, I got to wake up and I went to this construction project where they were going to build a school as part of the mission that they were doing.

[3 : 28] And so we got there and we saw at this site, they'd already done a lot of the construction already. There's different parts of the school constructed. And before we got going, the guy who led it kind of gave us a vision for what they were wanting to do.

This place to form young minds. To bring kids in off the street. To give them a vision for how their life could matter. This place where kids were going to learn and play and laugh and have a wonderful time.

And our part was we were trying to build a pad that was going to be one of the rooms of the school. And it sounded so, so great.

Then I found out my job for the week was to take a pickaxe and to dig a trench out of what I am sure is the hardest soil in the entire earth.

And after we dug that trench for footers, we had to tie all of this rebar and retie it because I did it wrong. To lay it in. And then the concrete, we didn't have a concrete mixer.

[4 : 34] We had to mix it by hand and wheelbarrow it over these like planks to pour it in over where the rebar was set. And the whole time it was a gajillion degrees.

It felt like I could like touch the sun if I just reached up. All of that talk, all of that wonderful vision of things quickly went away when I had this hard toil and labor that I had to do every single day.

We got two breaks a day. I look forward to those two breaks so much. The first one would be, you know, a fizzy drink, a soda break.

And it was probably mediocre soda, but let me tell you, it tasted like the sweet nectar from the gods when it touched your lips. It was just amazing. It tasted like the best drink in the world.

The other break that we would have was called prayer chair, where there was literally, you know, we're doing the construction over here, literally on the side. There was this school room chair, you know, like a little desk that had something you could write on.

[5 : 37] And you were supposed to go there because this was the spiritual component to the day. You would go and you would pray. You'd pray for the ministries that other people were helping with and you'd pray for the school that you were building all this stuff for.

And confession time, prayer chair was nap chair. You'd go over and be like, dear Lord. I love prayer chair.

Prayer chair was the best. Do you know the experience of work feeling like toil? Hard.

Of course you do. Live in this world. Like it starts out great, right? So much optimism of how, you know, you're going to change the world and how your work is going to matter and you're going to find so much joy in the work.

And by the end of it, you feel exhausted and worn out. Like there's not enough rest that you could possibly get to restore your body.

[6 : 42] You might even try at some point in the day to go pray a little bit and sit in your chair and your prayer chair turns into nap chair. And maybe you're even thinking to yourself, like why are we talking about this, Nate?

It is Sunday. Tomorrow morning I am going back to work. Can we just pretend for an hour like that's not going to happen? Instead of talking, no, I'm sorry.

Can't do that. Because Genesis 1 and 2 talk about work. But not just work, also rest. Have you ever thought about it? The vast majority of your adult life is spent doing what?

Working and resting. Like a lot. Not even close. It's not coming to church. Maybe you're a great prayer and you pray a lot, but I doubt it's more than you work and you sleep.

Right? It's not possible. It's not how much time you spend with your family. I hope you spend a lot of time with your family. The vast majority of your time is spent working and sleeping.

[7 : 48] The British author Dorothy Sayers, who wrote novels, she also wrote some works on theology. She wrote this interesting piece on work. It's about 65 years ago, 70 years ago.

It's kind of taking the temperature of the culture then and I think it speaks to now. She's kind of peering into the future. I want to read this quote to you. She says, There's a Gallup poll from a little while ago of Westerners and I think it was only 20% felt actively engaged in their work and that it was meaningful.

In the UK, it was up to 33%. So good on y'all. You guys like your work a little bit more than the rest of Western Europe. The United States, it's terrible.

Nine out of ten people do not find any meaning and do not like their work. There's ten percent. One out of every ten people actually enjoys their work and finds meaning and purpose in it in the United States.

In our passage in Genesis, though, what are some of the first things that God tells us? One of the first things he tells us is about the glory of work.

[9 : 40] Yeah, sin enters the picture in Genesis 3. You're like, glory of work? You kidding me? Wait, Nate, follow me to work from Monday to Friday, nine to five, right? No, no. Yes, sin comes in. We have to account for that.

But it doesn't get rid of the fundamental goodness of work. I mean, think about it. Sin enters the picture. The curse comes in. And there's a curse in childbearing put on the woman, right?

That there's going to be pain to bring life into this world. But we wouldn't say that the curse is children, right? I hope you wouldn't say that. But the pain in childbearing, right?

In the same way that there's a curse attached to our work. There's pain and there's toil and there's hardship in it. But that doesn't eliminate the goodness of work. God invented work as well as rest. And so we need to do both. And so that's the outline for this evening. It's just two points. The goodness of work and the need for rest. Goodness of work and the need for rest. First thing, the goodness of work.

[10:42] In chapter 2, verse 2, you know, God's act of creating. Did you see how it was described? It's described as his work. And the same term gets used for the work that men and women do.

So chapter 2, verse 5. There's a good creation, but what is missing? Verse 5. There's no man to do what? Work the ground.

Chapter 2, verse 15. God puts man in the garden to do what? Work it and keep it. We are workers who imitate God's work.

That's what, back in chapter 1, verse 26 and following, when it says that God creates man in his image. In the image of God, he created them male and female. He created them.

The very next thing that it says to describe what it means to be an image bearer in verse 28 is to do some what? Some work. Subdue the earth.

[11:46] Have dominion over it. This mirrors God's work. He ultimately is the one with dominion, who's bringing order from the raw materials of his creation, and then he tasks humans as his representatives ruling over his creation to do the same thing.

So it's all the way back at the very beginning in chapter 1, verse 2, it's described that God created everything and that the earth is what? Formless and void.

In the Hebrew, it's a little rhyming phrase, *tohu vavohu*. That's what the world is. It's described as *tohu vavohu*. And what God does in each day is he takes what is formless and void, the *tohu vavohu*, and what's the word after?

He's bringing life from it, and it gets described as *tov*. Good. It goes from *tohu vavohu* to *tov*, right?

That's the ordering and bringing life that God is doing. That is his dominion as he's subduing the earth. And that goodness has this connotation as things are described as *tov*.

[13:02] It's order, and it's beauty, and there's benefit. The creation is teeming with life that is creating more life. It's a beautiful description.

And when humanity is told to have dominion, there's not like a hint of negative connotation to that. You know, we don't talk that way. How many people, when you go home before the work week starts, before you hit your head on the pillow, are you going to subdue your email?

Are you going to wake up tomorrow, have dominion over your breakfast so that you can have a great day? Like, we don't talk that way, and so we think about it in negative terms, right? But here's an example to help us think about it.

Apple trees. Apple trees will grow apples in the wild. Do it on its own. Leave it alone. Maybe some birds might come and eat some stuff.

A drought might come and kill it. But on its own, usually, it'll grow some apples. Do you want to know what makes an apple tree grow way more apples than on its own? It's if you do something to it.

[14:07] It's if you prune it. It's if you subdue it, exert your dominion over it in order to bring life from it. *Tohu, vavohu, to tov*, right?

I don't know if you kind of scratched your head when you listened as we were reading, and it describes the Garden of Eden. I mean, paradise, right? Imagine paradise.

How does the Bible describe it? There is some gold there. And apparently not just any gold. Good gold, it says. You're like, is there bad gold? And then, like, there's onyx stone there. And you're like, *nuh-uh*, no way.

Onyx stone? That's amazing, right? There's a next sermon whenever we get to Genesis again.

There's this imagery that goes towards the temple.

But what I'll point out for now is the point that the author of Genesis is making is that the Garden of Eden is rich in resources. There's resources.

[15:05] There's things for man to do. There's work from the ground. There's potential from the Garden of Eden. And so there's no homes and streets and churches and chippies yet.

And yet man is put in the Garden to make those things come out. All the resources for man and woman to work and make a world for people to live there is there in the Garden of Eden.

And so God, he's not saying, hey, Adam, you know, like creation, it's kind of like your toy box. It's like a little sandbox. Here's some toys to play with. At the end of the day, you need to clean up your toys and put it back the way that it was, the way that I made it perfectly.

That's not the image in Genesis 1 and 2. Instead, it's a God, creation is a construction site. Where God, the creator, is inviting his vice regents to have dominion in the way that he does, to be creative in the way that he is, to work after his image in caring for and bringing out the fruitfulness of creation.

The garden is supposed to become a garden city, right? Which is, again, remember I said the first two chapters of the Bible, creation, last two chapters of the Bible, new creation.

[16:23] What's in the last two chapters? The heavenly city, right? Goes from a garden to a city. And so, you see, you need to understand the Bible's radically important and nuanced view of work.

It is unlike anything else that compares in any of the other world religions. So, for example, in Greek mythology, the first woman is named Pandora.

What does Pandora do? She doesn't take a fruit from a tree. Instead, she's given a little box and says, don't open that. And, oh, man, what does she do? She opens up the box. And what comes from the box?

All the evils. And that's how evil and death and suffering and all the things come into this world. Do you want to know what jumps out of the box when Pandora opens it in Greek mythology? Work. In ancient Mesopotamia, there was a creation account called the Enuma Elish. And those gods at the time, the chief god Marduk, they created the world.

[17:26] And then they're like, this is hard work. This is exhausting. We don't want to do this. So what do they do? They create people to be put in the world as slaves so that they don't have to work.

Is that the picture that you're getting here in Genesis 1 and 2? No. It's work as good. God is the first worker, and we're created in his image to carry on his work.

You know, God didn't create humanity to sip some sangria in a hammock. There is work in paradise. Work is there from the beginning. And even in God's rest, when he rests, that's not him going, well, I've done my part.

You guys go. No, no, no. It's an invitation to people not only to enter his rest, but to say, hey, listen, I've created you. Like, here's the car keys.

Take the car for a spin. He's still in control. He's still God. He's still sovereign over all things. But he invites his people, his creation, into his work in the world.

[18:33] And verse 9, did you notice that? Some trees, if you think creation, you're like, well, it has to be good. What's the purpose of it, right? And some of them, it's because they can feed people.

There's fruit. You can eat it. Oh, that's wonderful. But did you notice also some of the trees that he makes? What are they there for? They're just purdy to look at. They just look nice.

God's creation isn't this strictly utilitarian thing where it's only there to help the survival of the fittest, right? This dignifies the work of artists and artisans.

So a major problem in the history of the church, to be frankly honest, is this thing called dualism. Dualism is bad. Can you say dualism?

You can do better. Dualism? All right. It's a participatory thing here. Dualism is bad. And so even some very good theologians from the early church fall into dualism.

[19:36] What dualism says is there's two kind of things. There is the physical and there is the spiritual. Physical, which includes work, bad.

Spiritual, prayer and, you know, whatever else goes under that good. The inner life, right? Physical stuff, bad.

It separates those two things. And it doesn't come from the Hebrew or New Testament scriptures, but rather it inherits it more from Greek Platonism. I don't need to say anything more about that.

But some examples are helpful. So there's an early theologian in the fourth century named Jerome. And he says this, a merchant can seldom, if ever, please God. Augustine, great theologian, but he says this.

He says, business in itself is evil. Necessary evil, right? But not the higher calling of a Christian. I'm not trying to say that you're sitting there, you know, reading works by, you know, dualist theology.

[20:40] But that can creep into the church where we kind of make this two-tiered system of there's things we have to do kind of almost as a necessary evil. We just kind of get by.

But I guess that's something. God, I don't know. He kind of cares about it. Maybe you can pray at work. Maybe you can share your faith. But your prayer life and church when you come, that is like miles above all those other things.

And even if we do want to say the most important thing we do is worship God. But the problem is when we say it's not that this one might be a little bit less important, but that it's bad, that it's unimportant altogether.

So in the Reformation, there's these reformers who come by, and they're not just recovering the doctrine of justification by faith and a right doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

But you want to know what else they're recovering? Doctrine of work. That's why we have this thing called the Protestant work ethic. I'm not saying that all Catholics are lazy or anything like that, but it's just saying the Protestants, the Reformers, had this robust doctrine of vocation and calling and work.

[21 : 52] So, John Calvin. It's an ancient error that those who flee worldly affairs and engage in contemplation are leading an angelic life. We know that men were created to busy themselves with labor and that no sacrifice is more pleasing to God than when each one attends to his calling and studies to live well for the common good.

Hmm. Sounds different. Reformer Martin Luther, he points out that, you know, God cares. The Bible tells us that God cares for us. God feeds us. He feeds his people. And Martin Luther goes, hmm. How does he do that? The milkmaid. And her work. That's how he's feeding you. God cares for his people and he provides through work.

Through people's vocations. English Puritan William Perkins. The action of a shepherd in keeping sheep is as good a work before God as is the action of a judge in giving sentence.

Or a magistrate in ruling. Or a minister in preaching. The psalmist in Psalm 90, the song and the prayer is that the Lord would establish the work of his people's hands.

[23 : 04] Yes, establish the work of their hands. Well, that phrase, the work of their hands, is used three times in the book of Deuteronomy. Do you want to know what it refers to? It's not stuffing the bulletins before church or cleaning off the chair.

It's referring to your ordinary vocations. To your ordinary work that you do. The prayer is that God would establish the work of their hands. Paul writes in that Colossians passage that we read earlier. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men. Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You, in your work that you are doing, don't forget this.

You're serving Jesus Christ. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, 31. Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God. And the Savior that we sing to and glory in spends the majority of his life doing what?

Working in a small business as a joiner. Do you see your work as nothing more than a necessary evil? At best.

[24 : 11] Maybe a context for evangelistic opportunities. Or do you actually see it as a means of glorifying God through participating in his purposes for creation?

Therefore, your work has intrinsic value. Every vocation, every job has unique challenges to it that we need wisdom in.

But the point is that in every work you can glorify God. And sure, there are things that Christians shouldn't do if you can make a lot of money out of exploiting people.

There's different work that we should go away from, right? Just because the world tells you that you can make money on it doesn't mean that you should do it. We need to work with a clear conscience before the Lord.

And some of us might be simply taking a job not because it's like this wonderful thing. You're like, look at me, I'm producing and helping my neighbors and working towards the common good.

[25 : 12] You're like, I needed a job and my family needed to eat. That's a good thing. That's a good biblical motivation for it. It's a God-honoring thing to provide for your family through your work.

Or some of you might just feel absolutely stuck in your work. And it's hard. And the point I'm trying to make isn't to like sentence you to a life of whatever the work you're doing now, you have to do for the rest of your life.

That's not what I'm saying. There's challenges. There's toil. There's thorns and weeds and thistles in our work. Just trying to help us see. We have to start by seeing the dignity of our work.

That God has created you to work and you can talk to him about it. Now listen, I am a big proponent of more ministers needed in our churches.

We need guys who are raised up, who are ready to count the cost and pick up their cross and to shepherd the sheep. That is a vitally necessary thing if we are going to reach the lost in Scotland and if the church is going to grow.

[26 : 21] So don't hear what I'm not saying. We pray for that, but it's not a competition. It's not like God is only honored if you become a minister.

In fact, heaven forbid if you guys are all ministers. That wouldn't be fun. We need people in vocations of all sorts.

And so as we pray for God to raise up more ministers, we also pray for the mechanic and the maths instructor and the stay-at-home mom.

And none of this is to set aside the valued importance of gathered worship and evangelism and prayer and dedicating your time to serve and work in the church.

It goes alongside all of that. I'm just trying to get you to see the importance of your labor outside of the church. You don't stop being the church. The church gathered tomorrow morning.

[27 : 24] The church gets scattered. And you bear the name of Christ in your work. Okay? And this refers to people who are in uni doing their studies.

If you're a stay-at-home mom, if you're going into a regular workplace, if you're juggling a few different jobs. It's interesting, too. Maybe some people are sitting here going, like, well, I'm done with work.

I'm retired. I'm a pensioner now. Right? It's an interesting thing because there's not really a category in the Bible for that. And, in fact, in human history, it wasn't until after the Industrial Revolution that retirement as we know it kind of became a thing.

So, again, I'm not against retirement. Don't hear what I'm not saying. And especially as age goes on and physically you're able to do less and you need more rest.

It's a beautiful thing to enter into that and honor people. We don't need to be like, why aren't you in the workplace? But the point is this category of retirement where your life is like, hey, I did my work.

[28 : 24] Now it's time for me just to nap whenever I want. That doesn't really exist in the Bible. I'm not trying to say you have to work as hard as you did earlier. But there is still a work for you.

What is God calling you to do? Giving you opportunities to pray more, maybe. Maybe to participate and serve in the church in ways you didn't have opportunities before.

One of the wonderful things of living in an area with your family is being a grandparent who can help to care for your grandchildren. Aaron and I, with our three kids, we've never lived in the same city as either set of parents.

And we've watched as other people. What a blessing it is to be in the same town as your grandchildren. And as you retire and have more time, be able to work and help with that. But this idea of like your life, your work stopped and you still have vitality and energy and you're like, well, I'm just going to golf.

And maybe I'll show up on a Sunday and like sneak out right afterwards. That, I think we're missing the idea and the goodness of work that God calls us to do. Right?

[29 : 31] And again, that is going to change over time. I'm not trying to heap burdens onto people. But God has created you to work. Created for work. Created for work. Inherent goodness. Even though sin creates all sorts of problems with our work.

Stuff you can tell me about later. But God's goal is not to have a billion ministers. You know, my job and doctors, what are we going to do in the new heavens and new earth?

I don't know what my career is going to be. I'm going to have to figure something out. Maybe I'll get into baking or something like that. I don't know. But we need people who are called to many different things. But the glory of work.

But the second thing is the need for rest. You are more than your work. Right? Your labor is never meant to be your label.

The thing that defines you. In other words, God is the one you serve. You don't serve your boss at work. You don't serve your work itself. You serve the Lord.

[30 : 29] And so, while some of us might struggle with seeing the goodness of work, maybe others of us, we love it too much. So much that we give all of our allegiance and our time to our callings in the world.

It's wrong if we see work as a necessary evil. But it's also wrong if we see it as the most important thing that drives us. I'm not quite sure where Scotland is on this.

I've only been here a year and a half. So we'll figure it out as we go. But I talk to people about their work a lot. What I found out a few years ago, Aaron and I were serving in Vienna, Austria, is how American I was.

You're like, no kidding, Nate. No, no. We found out in a startling way. And it was through, as we went there, they were kind of teaching us about Austrian etiquette. And they said, you know, when you first meet somebody, it's kind of rude to ask them what they do for work.

It's a very personal question. And in my mind, I'm like, what do I talk to them about then? How much do you weigh? Mozart, he's good, right?

[31 : 37] Way to go, Austria. I didn't have kids at the time either. I'm like, I can't share stories about kids. We can't talk about work. What am I supposed to talk about? But it's interesting, what it kind of showed me, though, is that is my default.

As an American, we are defined by our work. Work is the most important thing. A lot of times, people put family and church and all sorts of things on the altar of success in their careers.

But the pattern in the Bible, in our story, is creation for six days and then resting on the seventh. It gets set as this creation ordinance to be patterned by God's image bearers.

I don't know if you know this, but I only found out a couple years ago. During the French Revolution, they tried to change the calendar. Why do we work six days and rest one? French Revolution, they're like, ah, off with religion.

You know, like, we're going to work. Our week is going to be ten days. We're going to work nine days and then rest one. And by 1806, it was an absolute disaster and they abandoned it.

[32 : 47] You go against God's pattern of rest and work and worship to your own doom. You were created to work, but you're also created as a finite human being.

You are not the creator. You are a creature. And so you're created to work, but not just to work, but also to rest. Verses two to three of chapter two, it repeats three times.

On the seventh day. On the seventh day. On the seventh day. And that's emphasizing the importance of the seventh day. The last day is the best day.

God blesses this day. He's blessed all the days of creation, right? He's called all of them good.

Tohu vavohu to tov, right? Formless and void to good. He's blessed all of these things.

But the seventh day, he sets apart as holy and special for special use. And unlike the first six days, there's a refrain missing on the seventh day.

[33 : 54] Right? It doesn't say, and there was evening and there was morning. And most commentators point out that the difference shows that there's this enduring nature of the seventh day of creation.

That there is a rest. And not just any sort of rest that happened once in the past. But there is an eternal rest. Does God get tired?

Does God need to take a nap? Oh, he did all this work. Oh, man, I'm so exhausted. I need to lay down. No, that's not the God that we know in the Bible. He doesn't need prayer chair, right? To make it nap chair.

No, the Sabbath is made for man, not man for the Sabbath. This is how God creates the world to flourish. Through work and rest.

And so God invites us then to participate in his work and rest. So when the Sabbath command gets given in the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20, what's the reason that Moses gives from the Lord for that?

[34 : 56] It's a creation ordinance. You need to rest. Because God did his work for six days and then rested on the seventh. But then the Ten Commandments actually get given again in Deuteronomy 5.

And that time the reasoning is, listen, you were slaves in Egypt. And you never got a break. You worked.

And your work was toil. It was so hard. You were in slavery. And you never got a rest. Things are different when God's in charge.

So you work. And then you rest. And my challenge is to you, if you do not know how to rest. How to set things aside.

To turn off the email. To come and to be with God's people. To be with your family. To literally sleep physical sleep. Then you're a slave.

[35 : 56] You're a slave to your job. And that is misery. A deep rest, right? Any new parents?

I remember being a new parent. New parents in the back. People are like, how long did you sleep? And it's like, well, I got a two-hour nap here. And then a two-hour nap here. And a two-hour nap. That two plus two plus two does not equal six hours of sleep.

It equals zero hours of sleep. It's what I found. Or if Aaron was here, it's like, it's what I found. Not you. What is not just to catch rest here and there, but to actually have deep abiding rest.

Colossians 3, again. Whatever you do, work heartily. As for the Lord. You are serving the Lord Christ. The solution for your work is not to say it's bad.

But to work for Christ. So that you can actually rest. You're not working to gain the acceptance of others. Not to pad your CV to prove that you're worth something to the universe, right?

[37 : 04] Oh, look at my grades. Oh, look at the job I got. Look at my career. Look at my house. Look at all my things. And here's the thing. You can do the exact same job. And outwardly the same thing.

But your heart motivation matters. You know this. It happens in church and it happens in your career. To work hard. But to work hard for the Lord. It allows you to have a different disposition towards it where you can actually rest.

Rather than just trying to prove yourself. In the same way, you can come here and you can sing the psalms the loudest. And you can pray the longest and be at every single activity. But if your heart motivation is just to prove your worth and your own righteousness.

And not actually to receive the righteousness of Jesus and the rest that comes from that. That is toil. That is misery. Jesus says, come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Your work. It's good if it's work. It's terrible if it's a boss. You know what's a good boss? Jesus. Jesus is a really great boss. That's what it means that he's Lord.

[38 : 09] That he's your boss. That he gets to define who you are and what your worth is. And what it looks like to serve in this world. I'm trying to think if I should share it or not.

Tim Keller passed away this week. And so I'm going to share an illustration. A few sermons I heard he used it in. To honor Tim Keller. He had a massive influence in my life. He would talk often, I think, in the sermons that I would hear about the movie Chariots of Fire.

It's the only movie that's ever been made, I'm pretty sure, about the Sabbath. Right? In Chariots of Fire, it tells the story of these men in the 1920s who are track athletes.

And kind of the two main characters are Eric Little, who's a Scottish minister, and this guy named Harold Abrams. And it's really interesting because, you know, Eric Little, what is his phrase that he uses when he talks?

He says, why do you run? He says, when I run, I feel the smile and pleasure of God. He does work in the ministry too, but he's also really good at running.

[39 : 18] And he's like, God created me to do this, and I feel his pleasure in it. Then there's the atheist guy, Harold Abrams, and he says, why do you run?

Why do you sprint in the 100-meter dash? And he says, I have 10 lonely seconds to justify my existence. And it's interesting because later in the movie, in one of the qualifying heats, Eric Little finds out that it's on the Sabbath.

And he's like, no, I got to rest. And he sets that aside. Later, someone gives him an opportunity to take their place, and he ends up running and winning the gold medal. Harold Abrams runs, and there's no satisfaction.

Do you know what it is to have a God who's created you to work, but not just to work, but to rest? To rest in him.

So many of us, we don't know who we are. We don't know why we were created. And so all of our life, our schooling and our efforts, and even our own parenting and our church life, you're trying to find out, can I justify my lonely existence?

[40 : 28] But God's created you to rest, to feel his smile, as we come in faith to the ultimate worker, Jesus Christ, who works on our behalf.

Let's go back to Reynosa, Mexico. The footers got dug, the rebar got tied, the concrete got stirred and laid, and I went home absolutely exhausted. And you want to know what?

It was only a week, and it sounds like boasting. Remember Nate in the prayer chair? I was like, I helped this much in the project. I haven't thought about it in a long time. I even Googled and tried to search and find pictures of this place. I don't know what's going on. But I would imagine somebody else came and did some work. And that school's there. And there's actually kids there learning and playing and running and laughing. And it's this wonderful reminder that sometimes we don't see the whole picture of what God is doing in the world. But when we believe that he actually has purpose and he calls us to something, that we can do our labor and rest and trust that he is going to bring fruit out of it. [41 : 33] So continue on, faithful laborers. Whatever you do. Whatever you do tomorrow. Work heartily as for the Lord, not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You, tomorrow, Monday through Friday, Saturday, and come back on Sunday. Everything that you do, you're serving the Lord Christ. Let's pray together.

Father, we ask that you would send us into your world as agents of your grace and truth. That we would be salt and light.

That we would work hard and we'd rest peacefully. That this would be our witness. That our work matters, but it doesn't define us. That we would seek to make money to provide, but that we'd also give it away generously.

But we need a vision of your kingdom and your presence for this. So, Spirit, would you be with us? And before we go, Lord, would you feed us with your grace at your table so that we would have the rest and the energy to labor for your glory with thankful hearts.

[42 : 41] We pray this in the name of our gentle and lowly Savior, Jesus. Amen.