

## Part 2

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Preacher: Matthew Landeck

[ 0 : 00 ] Because we left something on the table and I don't want to leave it there. If you've been with us these past few months, we have been walking alongside Jesus in the book of Matthew and his earthly ministry.

! We saw in Colossians chapter 3 verses 22 to 24 that we in some sense work for God and not for our boss.

And we asked, what does that mean? And we looked back to Genesis, the first book of the Bible, when God first made his people. That was part of his design originally for us, was to be workers. And so we fulfill part of his design for us, that we be productive. And even more so, that our work, the work itself, the things we do as students, as engineers, as teachers, as parents, mirror God's priorities.

And the work that he does, either through creative and developmental work, or preserving and redemptive work. But we're back to Colossians chapter 3 because we left something on the table.

[ 1 : 29 ] There's still the substance of a sermon here and I don't want to let it go. Because God's word is an inexhaustible probe of the treasure of his truth.

And so last week when we looked at that question, the work itself, does that honor God? Does he care about it? We spent most of our time in the second verses, verses 23 and 24.

This week we're going to devote our attention to verse 22. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

Not by way of eye service, as people pleasers. But with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Last week I wanted you to see your work with new eyes.

This week I want you to have your work shine a light on your heart and expose it to you. I want you to see who you are and what you're after.

[ 2 : 34 ] And with that I want you to lean hard on God. Friends, let's pray. Lord, will you open our eyes to see your truth in your work?

Will you expose sin and death in our lives? And will you grant us newness of life in Christ?

We pray these things in his name. Amen. Our verse begins. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

And we spoke briefly last week about this. Uh-oh. Not getting in. I know. Oh. We spoke briefly about that last week. That word, bond servant. Some of your translations might say slave.

The slavery of the ancient Roman world is a different institution than what we have in our minds when we're thinking North American slave trade in 17th, 18th centuries.

[ 3 : 38 ] It was not based on race. It was not permanent. It was something where a slave had legal rights to some extent. And in fact, bond servants made up most of the workforce in ancient Roman cities.

Like Colossae, which is the book of Colossians, is written there. Or to them. And that's why it applies to employees today. And obviously, it's still far from ideal.

And Paul is not in any way endorsing the institution of slavery. In fact, he's quite against it. One of the books of the Bible is his letter to Philemon asking for Onesimus' freedom.

Onesimus is a slave. And he's asking, will you release him in the name of Christ? So, Paul is not supporting slavery. But what he's doing here instead is saying that Jesus is even for you.

The lowly, the downtrodden, the disempowered. And he is concerned for even your work. And so this passage helps us understand our work.

[ 4 : 42 ] Again, last week we saw that he cares about the tasks, the things we do in our work. And this week, we're going to say that God cares about how we go about our work.

There is a distinctly Christian way to approach our work. And he says that it is not by way of eye service as people pleasers.

What does that mean? What does he mean by those two phrases, eye service and people pleasers? It's like people pleasers. Talk to us too. At the heart of both of those phrases, it is a focus on other people.

You know, we obviously in our work should be considerate of other people. We should love, we should care for them, we should put out their interests first.

But Paul is steering us away from the negative side. And of an unhealthy focus on other people. Not just unhealthy, but sinful.

[ 5 : 49 ] You can focus on other people in your work and in your life in a way that crushes your joy. And dishonors Christ. And even if at first glance you don't think you're a people pleaser, I bet this strikes closer to home than you think.

And I bet your heart and my heart are on display in this passage. And before I show you that that's true, how your heart has this problem, how my heart has this problem, I want to encourage you and equip you with the antidote.

Because both of them are in this one verse. He's exposing what is wrong, but he's also giving us the solution when he concludes, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

And so Paul is here introducing a contrast. When you go to work, when you go to school, when you do the work of parenting, when you live every moment of your life, which extends past our work, you can concern yourself, chiefly, with one of two audiences.

You have to peck. You can live your life by what other people think, or you can prize what God thinks. One is sincere, one is not.

[ 7 : 15 ] Paul wants us to fear the Lord. Most of the time the Bible uses that phrase, fear the Lord, including here. The phrase means to revere, or respect, or honor, or privilege, or value Him.

And so Paul is saying, if you're working by way of eye service, as people pleasers, we're going to unpack that more in a moment, you have made people your main audience.

God's not at the center. you are respecting or revering Him. And this idea of fearing the Lord becomes the antidote to our soul sickness.

How? Well, it's simple, really. If you're working by way of eye service, as a people pleaser, you are fearing, respecting, revering the men and women around you over and above Jesus Christ.

And that means your eyes are set, are fixed on those people, rather than Christ. So how do we get to a place where we fear God instead of those around us?

[ 8 : 25 ] Well, we simply tear our eyes away from pleasing people and set them on God. If you look back just a few verses to the beginning of chapter 3, Paul explains it. He says, If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are above. For you have done, and your life is hidden in Christ in God. That's not just what I'm saying.

He's saying, when you go to your work, you can choose to set your eyes, set your mind, on other people and how they perceive you. Or you can set your mind above on Christ, where he is seated.

You will be a different person, one way or the other. Now that sounds great, in theory. But what does it look like?

How do you do it? If I leave this here for you, as a general principle, well, that's not going to be very helpful. So let me show it to you in a few different situations.

[ 9 : 38 ] I think there are three broad ways that we, as people, are working by eyes, or as people pleasers, as Paul would put it.

This is where our hearts come in. I can't imagine that you don't struggle with one of these. I really cannot imagine it. I struggle with all three, from time to time.

And I can't imagine, not only that you don't struggle with it, but I can't imagine that it doesn't hurt you. That it doesn't drain from your life. And I can't imagine that it doesn't dishonor God.

So there are three ways we seek to please people rather than God. Three ways that we serve only for the eyes, rather than with sincerity of heart.

I'm going to name these people the slacker, the actor, and the achiever. First, the slacker. This is probably the most obvious way to read this verse.

[10:45] when we see someone who lacks diligence, when we see ourselves lacking diligence in their work. You know, Paul here is talking to bond servants, right? The work isn't theirs by choice, and maybe you feel like you can relate to that.

Their work likely isn't very inspiring to them, and maybe you can relate to that. Their work likely isn't very glamorous, and maybe you can relate to that. How do people generally work in a situation like that?

Work hard when the boss is around, but, you know, as soon as he slips out, as soon as you're unsupervised, you know, what? One pastor put it this way, there are people who work just hard enough to not get fired.

Right? You might know people like that. You might be people like that. This was one of my first tests as a Coast Guard officer.

I used to be in the Coast Guard, and my first tour was in a sector, and my supervisor was out for like a week, just a few months in, and I was then in charge of our whole shop.

[12:04] And I remember that the division's senior most enlisted member, and this guy had a lot of influence. It exceeded his rank. He had influence by his personality among the crew.

I remember him saying to me, well, when the cat's away, the mice will play. And what he wanted me to do then was to say, okay, everybody, we're just not working today, or maybe even this week, I'm not exactly sure.

Like, just cut out early, everybody take off. And so, he worked hard only when the lieutenant's eyes were on him.

He didn't think he needed to work hard when my eyes were on him, or when no one's eyes were on him. That's by way of eye service. That's exactly what Paul is talking about. So if you ask the question, do we work for that lieutenant, or do we work for someone else, maybe the citizens of the United States?

what's going on in this person's heart, in my heart, when I'm acting like that, in your heart, when you're acting like that?

[13:09] What is going on? Because Paul says he wants us to work sincerely from the heart what's going on in our hearts in that moment. The slacker, and maybe that's you or me, isn't fearing the Lord.

Not even considering the Lord. In fact, that's common to all of these three people. The slacker, the actor, and the achiever. Not fearing the Lord. Not considering the Lord. Instead, the slacker probably has his or her eyes set on ease and comfort.

As the great saying goes, don't put off till tomorrow what can be put off till the day after. And maybe put on a good show of looking at this or the boss's work.

That part attitude does not honor God. It doesn't even have God in view. And it doesn't even prioritize other people's good. Paul says, serve with sincerity of heart.

And the slacker sincerely values ease. Oh. And has insincerely turned the people around him into marks to be duped.

[14:22] I pretend like I'm working hard, hard enough to not be fired. But they are just his marks, people he can fool into thinking he's diligent enough.

What happens to this person? Honestly, not much. I recently was speaking with a retired Navy officer. His career advice to young officers is this, work hard and love people.

That's it. That's how you build credibility. But the slacker isn't working hard and that demonstrates no concern for others. They don't build credibility.

And so slackers are rarely influential people. They're rarely respected because they aren't respecting others and they aren't revering and respecting God. And so what does it look like for the slacker to fear God?

Not just to modify their behavior, but to serve with sincerity from the heart. Hearing the Lord. It means don't rely on a new productivity gadget.

[15:29] That has nothing to do with the heart and you can hide a gadget in a desk drawer. It will be quickly forgotten. Don't try to turn over a new leaf.

I bet you've already tried it and found that you don't have the strength to make it stick. Because it hasn't addressed the heart. Your heart hasn't been changed.

Don't rely on a new productivity system. That has nothing to do with the heart. Now it might be helpful once the heart has changed but it cannot by itself change the situation.

All these things are how you fail in your efforts to stop being the kind of slacker that has this type of eye service work. The first step is actually conviction letting the Holy Spirit through the scriptures like this scripture show you what's wrong with your heart.

That you aren't sincerely fearing the Lord in this aspect of your life. You're respecting and valuing and fearing your own ease and comfort.

[ 16 : 39 ] You need to see that for what it is. False worship. God isn't taking the highest priority in your life and your work.

Ease and comfort are. And that conviction needs to turn into confession. And after conviction of sin comes confession. The Lord commands that we confess our sins to Him and there are also frequent commands to confess our sins to one another.

Not for condemnation but for help, accountability, community. And then comes the most important step of all. To actually fear the Lord.

We need to stop actually worshiping our ease and to fear God instead. How? How do we do it? Well Paul's already told us in verse 1 the slacker spends a lot of time thinking as his eyes set on, as his mind set on, leisure and ease.

His eyes are set on. And so the fear of the Lord begins with setting our eyes on Christ. Seek the things that are above, Paul says, where Christ is.

[ 17 : 56 ] Set your mind on things that are above. Will you walk with Christ? Christ? What's the question? Because I can guarantee you from my own experience, that when I'm slacking in work or in family, it's probably not because I'm so diligent in my spiritual life.

They tend to go hand in hand. Practically, what does it mean to set our eyes on Christ in this way? What do you do? Practically, it looks mostly like prayer. As you go to the workplace each day, will you pray, Lord, show me the idol of my own ease in my own heart.

Will you show it to me? And will you show me how it stands against true worship to you because it's worshiping myself?

And will you kill me? And it looks like more prayer when you find yourself actually slacking. Lord, will you help me to fear you even in this moment?

And go through this day with the recognition that I'm living before the living God. And it looks like more prayer from your brothers and sisters in Christ who will help you along this journey.

[ 19 : 25 ] That's what it looks like. Now, slacking off is probably the most obvious way we can serve by eye service as people pleasers, but there are a lot of diligent people in this room who still have a problem.

They tend to work hard, but that doesn't mean they aren't serving by way of eye service. We just looked at the slacker. the next way this takes shape is in the life of the actor.

The actor is a performer putting on a production before the world. This is the classic people-pleaser. The actor cares a great deal about other people's opinions at eye service.

They care about how others perceive them more than God's opinion. opinion. Or even their own opinion, honestly. And this is also a worship disorder.

It just looks different. Because you want people to praise, honor, speak well of you. Who's Lord in that situation?

[ 20 : 38 ] Not the King of Heaven, but us. And I don't know any kind of work that's immune from this temptation to desire other people's praise.

So Paul wants to say to a mom not to be a people-pleaser. Do you raise your kids based on what other people might think? Whose will is honored there?

Not God's. And the Lord wants the engineer to work hard, not for accolades, but because, as we saw last week, the work itself promising. This is probably you if you find yourself evaluating people, other people, by their moments, rather than who they are.

Or if you spend a lot of time wondering, why doesn't someone so like me? Or if you spend a lot of time coming out with a perfect plan, this will impress them, and then I will be celebrated in my life. Where the slacker lives in a disconnected sort of ease, the actor never gets any ease. The slacker turned people into marks, but the actor, oh, the actor, see, if you want people's approval, you have turned everyone into your judge.

[ 22 : 12 ] And you will never run out of judges. And you will never know peace. And all the while, as you work endlessly to appease those judges, God is on the sideline because you put it there.

That's a conviction you need is you need to humble your heart and let the Holy Spirit convict you that your need to perform, even though it feels like it's a stress that has been placed on you, is actually a sin coming up from out of you.

It's worshiping something other than him. And your confession, just like the slacker, you need to turn into confession, confession, and as you do this, I hope when you say, Lord, I am making judges of the world around you, I hope that you feel a great freedom from this self-imposed burden that God never meant for you to carry.

What does it look like to fear the Lord for this kind of people? Look back again to Colossians 3 verse 1, If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Constantly looking for approval, other people mocks the cross. Because it was on the cross that Jesus won your approval with God.

[ 24 : 08 ] You have died. Your life is hidden with Christ in God. And if the God of heaven, the Lord of hosts, the one who orders the stars, calls you beloved child, it is foolish, insulting, and useless, always be looking for a better woman.

You will not disgrace the Lord as you try. Practically, that means that in the moment when you feel like you have to perform for someone, real or imagined, turn your eyes to Jesus.

Look full on His wonderful things, on the things of earth, will grow strangely down in light of His glory. And when your in or out status with someone is keeping you up at night, that's the moment to open up the Bible and read John chapter 1.

To all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. Friends, there's nothing better than that. when someone else thinks of you, makes of you, cannot shake that, cannot change it.

This is life, not pleasing others. When you make your plans and your vision of how people receive it, dominate your preparation, ask yourself, who am I and who should I respect or fear here today?

[ 25 : 50 ] I hope it is liberty for you. I hope it's sanctification. So, the slacker only gives eyes service and the actor is a people pleaser waiting for an audience.

And they are followed by what I at least see as the last kind of heart that doesn't fear the Lord, the achiever. The slacker's eye service looks like doing just enough to keep their supervisor's watchful eye off of them.

The actor's eye service looks like doing more and more to keep everyone's eyes on them. The achiever's a bit different. The achiever cares about his own opinion of his achievements.

And that means that his eye service looks a little bit different. The achiever's eye service looks like impressing people to the extent that that is useful to achieving his goals.

He may not care one way or another how people feel about enemies, like or not, so long as they are helpful and useful to them. Now this might be you if you have a list of people in your head and you always know how you measure up with them and how they measure up with you.

[ 27 : 14 ] If you have a very distinct pecking order in your head, if you think in terms of classes and rankings, if you have a task mentality to the extreme, if you have lots of interactions but view friendships, because to you people are functional, not friends.

And your environment might coax you into this way of thinking. For instance, every cadet has a number attached to them. In most colleges, class rank isn't that important in the grand skating course.

But the academy is a temple and class rank is its incense. You're told about it all the time. It's held up as the chief virtue. And it determines what assignments you get, both at the academy and when you graduate.

My time at the academy, you can probably guess where I was in class rank. My first summer, I got to go beyond a ship that was stationed out of Honolulu.

And guess where I was class rank wise. My last summer, I was on a ship called Diego. Awesome. And guess where my class rank was.

[ 28 : 35 ] Now, not every cadet turns into a backstabbing competitor. That's not at all what I'm trying to say, but what I'm trying to say is that you have an incentive to. What is going on in the heart of someone like this, the achiever?

In his heart, the slacker turns others into marks to be deceived. In her heart, the actor turns others into judges that must be pleased. In his heart, the achiever turns others into competitors or stepping students.

And just like before, this is a portion of the problem. It's not enough to simply say, stop acting this way. We have to say with Paul that this is a heart issue. Serve with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

And so the achiever also needs to come under conviction. And this is probably the hardest part of the three. It is a miracle of God to break. And the achiever needs to confess, Lord, I am not God, but I have been living as if I am, as if the world exists to serve me.

And then fearing the Lord for the achiever looks like well. See, here's the thing about this, right, the heart of this.

[ 30 : 04 ] The person who treats others as stepping stones, generally isn't in desperate circumstances, right, financially, relation, whatever. Financial peril often breeds just the opposite reaction, humility.

But the person who's treating other people as competitors and stepping stones is probably driven by pride, not by need, to achieve a goal that you don't actually require for survival.

This is a trophy. your goals are something like a trophy. And so the gospel confronts this.

Fearing the Lord confronts us. We ask two questions. What can you achieve that will be better than what Christ has already achieved for you?

that thing you're chasing that you're stepping on other people's heads for? Is it as awesome and impressive and world-breaking as walking out of a tomb?

[ 31 : 14 ] You don't be so easily impressed with yourself for us. And then asking, because you're looking, your goals are trophies, essentially, right?

Have you realized that you, you are in Christ, are a trophy of grace? One writer put it this way, every saved sinner is a trophy of grace for the praise of God.

The grace of God gives God alone all praise. honor and glory for his saving work. I've invited those who overvalue their ease to fear the Lord.

I've encouraged those who overvalue other people's opinions to fear the Lord. I've confronted those who use people as stepping stones because they overvalue trophies to fear the Lord.

And now I want to invite one more group to do so. if you've never begun the relationship with Jesus Christ, you might not really get this idea of fear the Lord or how that's a good thing.

[ 32 : 28 ] I hope today you have seen how he aims to change his people from the inside out. How he is for their good people.

Because he frees the slacker from slavery to ease. Because that's actually a cruel task in this way. How he frees the actor from a world filled with judges.

How he frees the achiever from a cold, cool world that they have constructed for themselves. All on performance. And he frees all of these people as they fear him.

And why? Because it really looks like the practical end of this, the fearing Lord looks like mostly prayer. And meditating on our own hearts and where we are and who we are.

And so I hope you've seen that Christianity is not first about following rules but about holding God as our highest good. And that our will change the way we live. So we aren't captives to our own designs for leisure, captives to a world full of judges, captive to a cold, cruel performance world that we might create for ourselves.

[ 33 : 53 ] But fearing the Lord, well, if you're apart from him, it's the other kind of fearing the Lord. Hebrews 10, 31 says, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Because we stand before him condemned by our sin. Not just about things we've done, though that is true, but it's even deeper. We've seen today how all of these things are symptoms of the worship of false gods.

That's what we've seen today. And if you are separated from Christ, there is a different kind of fear. It's the fear of wrath and justice. Because a holy God cannot suffer simply people like us.

Except Jesus bore that penalty for us in his place. And paid the way to heaven. Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sins.

God's yet we esteem him not, stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions.

[ 35 : 17 ] He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. and with his means we are as if you don't know what Christ is.

I'm not super concerned about eye service and people peace. I am concerned that you know this Christ who does want to set you free from sin and death and has died on a cross for your sins and offers you life with himself.

Free from the burdens and the traps of being held captive to our own whims and desires to a world full of judges and to an old cruel world of performance that we create in our own lives.

Run to be free. Run to Christ. Amen. We run. Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord, thank you that you have made a way for those who repent and believe that we need not fear your wrath but that we get to revere you in all of life so that you have reconciled and redeemed us.

And Father, will you help us to walk in the fear of Christ so that we aren't held captive by our own desires, so that we aren't held captive by a world full of judges, so that we aren't held captive in a twilight world of performance.

[ 37 : 10 ] Lord, that we walk constantly and always before your things for your glory and our great joy. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who made all this possible.

Amen. Would you stand with us? Amen. Let remain inside the light of inward shame.

For Fix our eyes upon the cross. And run to Him who showed great love.

And live for us. Freely you live for us.

Christ is risen from the dead. Rippling over death by death. Come away, come away. Come and rise up from the grave.

[ 38 : 44 ] Christ is risen from the dead. We are one with Him again. Come away, come away. Come and rise up from the grave.

We are one with the weight of all our sins. We bow to none but heaven's will.

The scheme I've held, the scoffers crown. The burden great can pull you down.

Christ is risen from the dead. We are one with Him again. Come and rise up from the grave. Come and rise up from the grave. Christ is risen from the dead.

We are one with Him again. We are one with Him again.