

Your Job Is More Than A 9 To 5

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Ephesians chapter 6, verse 5 and following. Look there with me. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ.

Not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

Masters, do the same to them and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven and that there is no partiality with him.

[1 : 18] This is the word of the Lord. Amen. You know, many people who are unexpectedly born again begin to ask the question, what do I do now?

Conversion is so sudden, so surprising, so dramatic, that it seems as if every area of life needs to be reconsidered. And of course, it does.

When I was unexpectedly converted in the summer of 2001, I knew I was converted, but I knew very little else. I had very little clue what it all meant.

I was raised in the church, but I didn't really know what it all meant. Had very little idea of how to follow Christ or how to live for him. So thankful, one of my friends took me to Walmart to buy a study Bible, and I did know to open up the Scriptures.

Well, the same is no doubt true in the city of Ephesus in the first century. The Apostle Paul, as we've recalled as we've gone through this series, planted that church in the early 50s A.D.

[2 : 25] Ephesus was a large, spectacular city with over 200,000 residents, but it was a hotbed of all sorts of spirituality. And you see that in the New Testament.

Emperor worship, just worshiping the Roman emperor. Spirits, magic, gods and goddesses, pantheons of gods was so common in the Roman world.

They also had a massive temple to Artemis, a pagan goddess. There were Jews who worshiped there in the synagogue. And so when the gospel came to town, people were born again.

They began to ask, what do I do now? Now, wonderfully, Acts 19 says they realized they should no longer worship idols. Step one, they burned all these expensive books on the magic arts.

They stopped buying the trinkets at the temple of Artemis, and it caused no little disturbance in the town. Led to a riot. But they were asking years later when the Apostle Paul wrote this letter, What do I do now?

[3 : 30] How do I live now? In this section of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he's been talking about how to live now for Christ.

Getting very, very practical. Very, very in your face, you might think. The Apostle Paul tells them how to live in marriage, in that most fundamental relationship.

He tells them how to live in the family, in that most fundamental building block of any society. How children are to relate to their parents, and parents to their children, as Gil taught us well last week.

In our passage this morning, if I could put it this way, the Apostle Paul tells them how they are to live in the world. When Paul addresses masters and slaves in this verse, he's addressing a reality that all of the people in Ephesus experienced in one way or another.

Nearly one-third of the Roman population in Rome was in slavery. No doubt the number was high in Ephesus as well.

[4 : 36] Slavery's been a part of basically every human society since the creation of the world, so it's no surprise that we find it in first century Ephesus.

Numerous New Testament passages written in the Roman Empire observed this and call slaves and masters to how to relate in that relationship.

But when addressing how to live in the world, how slaves are to relate to their masters and masters are to their slaves, why doesn't Paul do what we want him to do? Why doesn't he just say, the gospel has come, free your slaves?

That's the \$64,000 question one of my friends likes to say. I want to address that question head on before we get into the body of this message. These verses and the rest of the New Testament do not explicitly overturn slavery.

Now you need to listen to what I say here, because you pluck something out of context, I could die. Some say these verses do not overturn slavery, because Roman slavery was much more kind and gracious and empowering than the slavery that was experienced in the African slave trade in our country, that was cruel, barbaric, and demonic.

[5 : 59] But that doesn't work, I believe. There are certainly examples of kind, gracious, and empowering slavery in the Roman world. There are examples of that in the African slave trade as well.

But there's lots of abuses. Seneca, one of the philosophers of those days, said, all slaves are enemies. Doesn't sound kind and gracious to me.

Oftentimes, slaves were treated like tools to be discarded when they no longer worked well, you know? So when you're racked and set no long words, you just throw it away and buy a new one at Arbor Freight.

That's the way slaves were treated at times in the Roman world. So I don't think that will stand up. Rather, the New Testament authors realize that slavery is an established structure of the Roman society protected by the legal system.

It would not work to call for freedom. There were laws. But how many slaves could be released in a year? And how many could be freed at a certain time?

[7 : 08] So these verses and the rest of the New Testament encourage born-again slaves to focus on what they can change in this structure. And it is their heart, their attitude, their behavior.

The Apostle Paul captures this tension in 1 Corinthians 7. This is a difficult reality. But 1 Corinthians 7, you see what the Apostle Paul says. He's talking about people that have been born again.

And he's talking about where did they find themselves when they were born again? He says, were you a bond servant? Were you a slave when you were called? Do not be concerned about it. What? But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

So obviously he's not opposed to you gaining your freedom, but he wanted you to realize there's something more significant going on. But, so while the authors do not explicitly overturn slavery, they clearly undermine it.

They clearly undermine this institution, unlike when he's building up the authority of the husbands and fathers that are rooted in creation and rooted in redemption, he doesn't root the authority of slave masters over their slaves in the same way.

[8 : 17] Instead, he undermines their authority by talking about the gospel. So in these verses, and through the New Testament, he says, slaves stand on equal standing before God.

Slaves are heirs of the grace of God, recipients of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3.28 says, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free. There is neither slave nor free.

There is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. What is that saying? It's not saying, it's not obliterating the distinction between the sexes, like some people say. It's instead saying, before God, none of these things matter.

So it's undermining something that says a slave can only be a slave because of how they are, or who they are born to, and how they are raised.

It also says slaves are brothers and sisters in the household of God. So right now in this verse, we get slaves where Paul addresses them face to face. But he's already said, you are fellow members with the saints, members of the household of God, no longer strangers and aliens.

[9 : 20] You are a brother and sister. Strikingly in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul, again and again, probably the command we most disobey in the New Testament, he says, greet one another with a holy kiss.

I was in Texas visiting a friend of mine who pastors a church down there. He is from Greece. So he's just this wonderfully affectionate man. He kissed me! Like, get away from me!

Though he does say humorously, I don't kiss on the first date. So he doesn't kiss complete strangers. But what was he doing? That's the command. Why? In that context, in the first century context, greeting one another with a holy kiss reserved for family.

But now it's reserved for the church of Jesus Christ because all are brothers and sisters. It also says both slaves and their masters have a master in heaven to whom they will give an account.

So the New Testament authors chose not to encourage an overturning of slavery that would never work, but rather they call for Christians to be a new people, a new race that loves one another and relates differently to the world.

[10 : 32] That lives this out before a watching world in a different way. And so in clearly undermining slavery, in addition to all that, and calling Christians to live differently, I believe the New Testament is calling for a gradual transformation of the institution of slavery from the inside out.

And it worked. That's the reality. While slavery was a part of basically every society since the beginning of the world, it's largely eradicated in an institutional way.

We could talk about slavery that is not institutionalized in the same way. Joe Rigney sums this up when he says the spread of the gospel in the Roman Empire was a key factor in the ending of slavery in Christian lands.

The decline of Roman military conquest cut off the supply of slaves and led to an economic transition to free labor. Theologians like Augustine and Lactantius argued that slavery was not a natural institution, as Aristotle had said.

The Christian emperor Justinian revised the Roman law codes to allow masters to set their slaves free. By the high Middle Ages, slavery was largely eradicated in Christian Europe, though it did persist in Africa, Muslim lands, as well in areas of Spain, Portugal, and Italy that had significant contact and conflict with Islamic slavery.

[12 : 08] One more thing, though. But wait. Weren't these verses used by American slave owners to defend American slavery?

Weren't these verses in the slave Bible? Yes. But when they did so, they were doing something deeply wrong.

Why? Because in first century Rome, slavery was a pagan institution founded on pagan laws which said some people were only fit to be slaves. But this country was founded on Christian principles of life, liberty, and freedom of conscience.

So to take up these passages in American society was deeply wrong and undermines the gospel. So, kind of close parentheses.

All that said, though slavery is an institution has been eradicated in our country, these verses still have many implications for us.

[13 : 16] And that's what I want to spend our time on. Many implications for how to live in the world, how to live in the marketplace, how to live in the workplace. The authority we studied in the home is meant to prepare people to relate to authority outside the home.

Whether it is authorities of political leaders, law enforcement, teachers, pastors, bosses. The Christian life is not anti-authority. It's not anarchic.

It's a life of learning to relate to authority. And in fact, the authority structure you will likely encounter most often each week is in the marketplace. Whether you work in a school or a hospital, a factory, a branch of the military, or a family-owned farm market with three employees, you will encounter authority.

These verses help us to answer the question, how do I work? How do I work now? How do I relate to those over me in the workplace? How do I serve those under me in the workplace? What if my boss doesn't fear the Lord?

Lord doesn't serve the Lord. What if my employees don't? These verses want us to realize something fundamental has changed about us. We are stamped in God's image in the beginning and now we've been bought by Him by the work of Christ and that reality changes.

[14 : 38] Everything in the world where we're going is you belong completely to Christ. Regardless of who you are, where you work, or what you do each day, work in everything unto Him.

I know that's a mouthful, but you belong completely to Christ. Regardless of who you are, where you work, what you do each day, work in everything unto Him.

Point one, you are a slave of Christ, freed from slavery to sin, unto slavery to Christ. You are a slave of Christ, freed from slavery to sin, unto slavery to Christ.

As I said in these verses, the Apostle Paul is clearly undermining slavery and we see that right out of the gates in verse 5. He begins by addressing them slaves or bond servants.

Though it was uncommon, as we pointed out, to address those under authority in these household codes, the Apostle Paul does it again and again. He addresses wives first, he addresses children first, to say something very significant, but none of them are more significant than when he addresses slaves.

[15 : 42] In that context, where it says that a Roman slave is only fit to be a slave, the Apostle Paul is saying when someone is born again, they are a brother and sister in the household of God.

Paul addresses them directly because he's speaking to them directly. This letter would have been read first in a congregational gathering. So he's addressing slaves because they're fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

And so, he undermines slavery in that way. Then, these verses kind of continue with what we would expect. Look down there in verse 5. He says, Obey your earthly masters.

These words of submission have run through this passage. Submit to your husbands and the Lord. Honor and obey your parents. And so, you see, obey your earthly masters is what we've come to expect.

With fear and trembling, we see that also when it says, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. It says also to the wife to respect her husband in a reverential way.

[16 : 50] And so, that is not surprising. Again, he says, as you would Christ. We've seen that throughout. He's saying, in your obedience to this person, it is as if you are obeying Christ.

But inside these two verses, something is completely unexpected. Look in verse 6. He says, first clause, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but as servants of Christ.

This word translated, servants, there, is the same word in verse 5. Slaves. This word group, *doulos*, is used five times in these verses, though they're translated in different ways.

Slaves, bondservants, servants. The reason is meant to underline a powerful spiritual reality. When someone is born again, they are a brother and sister in the household of faith, but when someone is born again, there is a dramatic change of ownership.

ownership. No longer do you belong to an earthly master who you can see, but to a heavenly master who you cannot see. Look in verse 5.

[18 : 13] He says, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling. But look in verse 9. Masters, do the same to them, stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven.

So there's this dramatic change of ownership in which you've been transferred from an earthly master to your heavenly master. Now, over the centuries, slaves were no doubt used to a transfer of ownership.

Slaves were purchased, inherited, or taken as prisoners of war, but this transfer of ownership is unlike any others. It's a transition from an earthly master who you can see to a heavenly master who rules over all.

As the Psalms tell them, he set his throne in the heavens, his kingdom ruled over all. That is your king. There's a wonderful play on words running through here.

This master word is the same word used in reference to a slave master, but also to the heavenly master who has all authority. Also, the bond servant used to refer to obedience to an earthly master, but much more importantly to your obedience to Jesus.

[19 : 22] Jesus Christ. But it's better than that. Look in verse 6. Again, he says, you must no longer serve by the way of eye service as people pleasers, but as servants of Christ.

So, no longer by eye service. You must no longer, literally this is, you must no longer be an eye slave. The smart guys think Paul invented a word here, a compound word of, I slave.

We all act differently when we know someone's watching, aren't we? We're kind to our sister when the neighbors are over, focused on our work when the boss walks by. We're more patient with the students, when the supervisor's in the classroom, but it's not just the way we work.

That phrase is provocative because so often our lives are lived in this reality of being an eye slave. How much do we do?

How much of what we do, what we wear, what we purchase, what we pursue is shaped more by what others think than by anything else? Several nights ago, Friday night, I was reading the second book called Paralandra and C.S. Lewis's Space Trilogy.

[20 : 44] It's kind of crazy stuff. I'm not so into fantasy, but it's just a fascinating book and tells a story about Ransom visiting Paralandra, which is Venus, if I got that right.

And Paralandra is a land that is still innocent. So it's this land, this planet, this planet in which sin has not invaded. It's a water world, I guess.

So it's just a fascinating thing he's describing. But C.S. Lewis meets a beautiful lady who does not know fear and shame. She does not know what it means to be afraid.

She does not know guilt. It's just a fascinating conversation to imagine interacting with someone who hasn't personally experienced the invasion of sin.

But another character arrives, this wicked man, Weston, arrives and he tries to corrupt her, he tries to deceive her, he tries to leave her. He is the serpent slithering into the paradise world of Paralandra.

[21 : 51] And the evil character tells her she needs clothing to be more beautiful. So they make up these feathers to be more beautiful, to dress up. The evil character tells them to perform, so to speak.

Don't I look great? She's never thought about the way she looked. And then this character, Weston, finds a mirror that he brought with him from earth.

A little pocket mirror and he gives it to her. And it's the first time she's ever seen her face. So she immediately looks at this mirror and her heart begins to beat hard.

And can you imagine first seeing your face and what would immediately begin to happen? She begins to feel afraid. She begins to feel worried. She begins to think about her appearance.

Well, the truth is we live in a world of mirrors. You know, real mirrors into which we look into and as you get older you just look into that mirror to assess the damages from the night before.

[22 : 57] How are things, is the hair still there, you know? but we live in a mirror in so many other ways and that's what an eye slave is getting to. We live, the acceptance of others is a mirror into which or before which we labor.

The applause of others is a mirror before which we perform. The approval of others is a mirror before which we strive to succeed or fear of failure.

Can you imagine the insidiousness of the introduction of sin in our relationship to other people in the way we serve?

Call it fear of man or FOMO, fear of failure. Whatever it is, whether you are 14, 49, or 67, it is a sin that clings far more closely than you think.

But the Apostle Paul is saying he came to set you free from that. came to set you free from the bondage of the opinions of other people.

[24 : 02] You belong to Christ. I love the way he says it in 1 Corinthians 7 right after we led. He said, For he who is called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freeman in the Lord.

You were bought with a price. Do not become bondservants of men. In so many ways he's saying do you want to get off the hamster wheel, off the treadmill of trying to please other people?

This is the only way to do it. So it's wonderful reality. You've been set free from people pleasing, from being an eye slave. You've been set free from self pleasing.

Those who live no longer live for themselves, 2 Corinthians 5 tells us, but for him who died. You've been set free from slavery to the law. You've been set free from slavery to the fear of death. You've been set free from slavery to corruption and purity and sin.

As the Lord Jesus says in John, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin, but the Son, if the Son sets you free, you are free indeed. So here is the precious reality.

[25 : 08] If you are a Christian, you are now a slave of Christ. Now my guess is you still bristle a bit at that word.

One Romanian theologian and speaker who had been arrested in prison and exiled for his faith preferred to be introduced as Joseph's son, a slave of Jesus Christ.

So he'd say, what do you want me to include in your introduction? He would say, Joseph's son, a slave of Jesus Christ. He said, and I quote, there aren't many people who are willing to introduce me as a slave.

Why? We don't like it. In our individualistic, independent, autonomous society, we don't like to think of ourselves being owned.

Murray Harris, in his book, *Slave of Christ*, which is an excellent, though tedious book, he said, in 20th century Christianity, we have replaced the expression total surrender with the word commitment.

[26 : 14] And slave with servant. But there is an important difference. A servant gives service to someone, but a slave belongs to someone.

We commit ourselves to do something, but when we surrender ourselves to someone, we give ourselves up. You know, far too often, I feel like Jesus Christ can just become one of the things we're into.

We're into business success, adventurous vacations, vol sports, fishing, fitness, good food, and Jesus.

But that gets wrong-headed quick. It quickly becomes, I'm into Jesus as long as he doesn't get in the way of all the other things. I'm into Jesus as long as he stays tucked away in an optional weekend commitment.

But that is not the talk of a slave. That's not the talk of a Christian. Who belongs to who when Jesus is just one among many on the list? Who is setting the terms?

[27 : 19] Rather, a true Christian is not someone who's just committed their faith to Jesus Christ. A true Christian is one who surrendered their life to Jesus Christ. Not someone who's merely committed their faith, but surrendered their life.

Is Jesus a commitment among the many? or do I belong to him? Can he tell me to do something? Or is he just a little bobblehead that's in the dash?

A little cross I wear around my neck. I must say when I think as someone who lives or a couple who lives like they belong to Jesus Christ I quickly think of Buddy and Judy.

They're 75 years young or at least Buddy is. Judy's younger. Working circles around most of us. They're disciples. That's what I love about Buddy and Judy.

75. They're like Aquila and Priscilla. You want a fascinating Bible study for the afternoon? Read about Aquila and Priscilla and all that they did to help the ministry of the apostles.

[28 : 34] They're like that. Over 50 years of marriage all the major decisions of their life have been shaped the most by the question what does this job mean for worshiping Jesus Christ?

What does this opportunity mean for worshiping God? Serving in the local church? They viewed their life like a slave. They don't think about it as my time my money my career my talents my goals my life you don't have anything nor do I.

The earth and the fullness thereof is the Lord's. All of it's on loan to which we will give an account for what we do. So be careful what we put that possessive pronoun before.

So thank you. Point two all your work whether you are in charge or not whether your boss is godly or not is to be wholeheartedly and enthusiastically done unto Christ.

All your work whether you're in charge or not whether your boss is godly or not is to be wholeheartedly and enthusiastically done unto Christ. Now you remember we said Jesus does not say there Paul does not say break every chain he does not say that here he says rather change what you can change change yourself but I love this while he says you're set free from being an eye slave he doesn't say just do you now he doesn't say just live free do what you want he doesn't say that rather he says work hard with all of your heart enthusiastically for others now isn't that fascinating it captures the paradox of Christian life on the one hand he says you're freed from pleasing others on the other hand he says devote your life to pleasing others Martin Luther said it so well in his book on Christian liberty a Christian man is perfectly free perfectly free lord of all subject to none a Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all subject to all that captures it perfectly free lord of all subject to none

[30 : 45] Christian man perfectly dutiful servant of all subject to all some get the first part but that's not enough and so I want us to keep our focus on the marketplace as we break this out but he's saying work hard for others whatever you do whether you're in charge or not whether your boss is godly or not all your work should be done wholeheartedly that's what's running through these commands look back at verse 5 he says work with fear and trembling with a sincere heart verse 6 not doing the will of god from the heart so it's this idea that the greatest offering I'm doing in my work comes from my heart I'm serving with a sincere heart you see that in verse 5 with a sincere heart verse 6 from a from the heart from a sincere heart so the idea is your work should be freed of emptied of any impure or polluted motive your work should be done with integrity of heart your work should be honest now you can imagine why he's saying this in this context many slaves were used to fear and shame being used as a goad to get you to do what this slave master wants they'd be tempted to scheme behind the master's back to deceive their master to undermine their master and so he's saying you should be doing it with sincerity of heart sincerity of heart and though we have never had a boss that wields a whip we're no less tempted to scheme and deceive in our work when we're not recognized for the hard work for a presentation we resolve to never waste that time again when we don't get the credit we deserve we begin to cut corners when we're treated as a cog in the wheel a small part in the machine we only do the minimum when we're passed on a promotion we scheme and sabotage behind the boss's back you know but our work is to be wholehearted it's to be honest and pure and sincere it's to be good work done with a sincere heart even if your boss is ungodly even if you think some of his demands or her demands are crazy 1 Peter 2 says servants be subject to your master with all respect not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust

I mean what would set you apart as a Christian if you just were good or just worked with a sincere heart to the one who's good and gentle you wouldn't be any different so work for others with all your heart work for others for their actual good whatever you do whether you're in charge or not whether your boss is godly or not all your work should be done enthusiastically for the actual good of others I love the way it says this look in verse 7 again kind of describing the way we are to work you know verse 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man with a good will with a joyful enthusiastic attitude the happiest person at the workplace should be you and me coming in you know Christianity has a lot more to say about our work than show up on time and don't cuss it has a lot more to say work with a good attitude you know in so many fields of work you're permitted to be rather onerous as long as you're good if you're a grump but a good mechanic it's okay if you're an arrogant but excellent doctor it's okay if you're a self-absorbed but talented artist it's okay but if you're a Christian none of those things are okay it's not okay you must serve the Lord with gladness you must serve enthusiastically joyfully what a difference it makes we're supposed to experience this in more places than Chick-fil-A we're supposed to experience it all over the place it's a vital part of what makes our work actually good work but our work should be done for their actual good as well

Martin Luther once said God does not need your good works but your neighbor does your neighbor does work for the good of others work to serve others work to bless others now this is so counterintuitive in our culture our culture beckons us go into the work world make a name for yourself pursue success that can be managed measured and maintained buy the house get the salary so that everyone knows it fight for it prove it to everybody there is no end and no satisfaction in that pursuit except death that's the end there was a way that seemed right to a man in the end it led to death don't work like that refuse to work as a way of chasing power or merely amassing wealth instead find something worth doing and do it with all your heart for others it doesn't matter what you do for a living if it is done for the good of others and unto God it is good work and I love the way he says this he says to the servants he says you should serve this way but look at verse 9 he says masters do the same to them what's he saying yeah you got some position you got some authority well you do the same what's meant to mark your work enthusiastic joyful wholehearted work it's not about climbing up the pyramid with your direct report rather it's about serving in this way because you're a Christian now and you're owned by Christ so serve unto him enthusiastically but how could

Paul say this to slaves who are in the world how could he call them to work with all their heart for the real good of others even for the good of their masters whether they're wicked or not whether they're good or not because they belong to Christ you know all through these household codes he's been saying wives submit to your husband in the Lord children obey your parents in the Lord well here is where it's clarified most clearly most pointedly look in verse 6 doing the will of God from the heart rendering service with the good will as to the Lord and not to man why can you do this regardless of who your master is because in whatever you're doing you are serving the Lord Colossians 3 puts this in a parallel passage even more pointedly when he says whatever you do work heartily as to the Lord and not for men knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward you are serving the Lord

Jesus Christ so what does that mean where do you work do you work for a jerk you're serving the Lord Jesus Christ do you work on the line where you feel like what you do doesn't matter just a cog in the wheel you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ do you work in sales where you're pushed to late nights and long hours you are serving Lord Jesus Christ if you work in business where you feel the weight of it all as often more than you can bear you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ do you work multiple jobs just kind of kind of pull it all all together to provide you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ do you work in home and feel like you're frittering away all the hours changing diapers and washing dishes again you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ it's meant to transform everything transform the way we work all through the day such that this wholeheartedness this joyfulness and not defined by the person we're serving humanly speaking but by the

[39 : 02] Lord that we belong to it's these truths that led to what was called the Protestant work ethic exploded after the Reformation because serving the Lord one of the greatest lies the devil ever told was the only person who served the Lord was the pastor on Sunday morning and so the Protestant work ethic blew that up and people all throughout society began to think I'm serving the Lord right here as a mechanic as an engineer as a teacher as a line worker like engineer I mean an electrician whatever it is mom serving the Lord Jesus Christ if you get man the penny drops on that everything changes you'll quit doing the tit for tat you know so often we'll serve everybody as long as they serve us you know we'll scratch their back as long as they scratch this will explode that instead you'll love those who love you but most importantly you'll love those who don't and serve them thirdly all you do unto

Christ will be rewarded by him in the final judgment as if these verses couldn't get more incredible the apostle Paul continues and says knowing that whatever good anyone does is who will receive back from the Lord Paul's alerting us to the reality of the final judgment the word receive there is to refer to what will happen when all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the recompense to receive reward and blessing or receive judgment and condemnation all will stand on level ground look at the way it says it in verse 9 at the last clause there is no partiality with him so there's no special favors there's no VIP access there's no status you have gained before the holy God because of what you've attained in this life there's nothing that will matter except the way you've lived before this king on that day and so all who stand before the judgment seat of the

Lord Jesus Christ because of sin that invaded our heart invaded this world are worthy of damnation worthy in and of themselves only of the furious wrath of God that's what we offer to you this morning flee the wrath that is to come there's a day coming very soon where all the wrath that has been stored up for those who refuse to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ will be poured out I call on you flee the wrath to come and come to Jesus Christ but for those who trust in Jesus Christ there will be great reward we see this all throughout the New Testament and we see it right here in verse 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does I love that whatever good anyone does so it's whatever good whatever it is whatever you know cup of cold water whatever it is to that anyone does so not just the high and mighty not just the slave masters or whatever it is anyone gets in on this it's the reward reserved for those what he's saying is don't work for the eyes that see you now don't work for the temporary applause don't work for the passing promotion don't work for the corporate ladder don't work for the paycheck the car the house don't work for the status work for the audience of one work with all your heart for the actual good of others because you want to please!

the audience of one the Lord Jesus Christ who loved you and gave himself for you and when you get to heaven you won't regret a single sacrifice you made in serving this king instead I hope you'll stumble over the line exhausted I don't want to go to heaven any other way except exhausted I want to collapse finally and you won't regret it it will be worth it don't run for the wrong prize run for the Lord Jesus Christ several years ago Bible scholar Don Carson wrote a simple biography on his dad called

Memoirs of an Ordinary Pastor I've been reading it the past couple months with a group of men in our church that have been studying pastoral ministry trying to understand what it's about Tom Carson is D.A.

[44 : 17] Carson's father and he was by all accounts an ordinary pastor he labored and served only very small churches in Canada in the early part of the 20th century and a day when the ordinary is overlooked Dr.

Carson D.A. Carson Don Carson wrote this book to tell his dad's story of heaven's perspective of ordinary faithful work and I quote Tom Carson never wrote a book but he loved the book he was never wealthy or powerful but he kept growing as a Christian yesterday's grace was never enough he was not a far-sighted visionary but he looked forward to eternity he was not a gifted administrator but there is no verse that says by this all men shall know that you are my disciples if you are good administrators his journals have many many entries bathed in tears of contrition but his children and grandchildren remember his laughter only rarely did he break his pattern of reserve and speak deeply and intimately with his children but he modeled Christian virtues he was not very good at putting people down except on his prayer list when he died there were no crowds outside the hospital no editorial comments in the papers no announcements on television no attention paid by the nation in his hospital room there was no one by his bedside there was only the quiet hiss of oxygen vainly venting because he had stopped breathing and would never need it again but on the other side all the trumpets sounded dad won entrance to the only throne room that matters not because he was a good man or a great man he was after all a most ordinary man but because he was a forgiven man and he heard the voice of him saying to him well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your lord work in such a way that makes sense on that day you belong to christ regardless of who you are where you work what you do each day work in everything unto him father in heaven cast ourselves completely to you we need you we love you we hide in you this day pray that you would do this wonderful work deepening our understanding of the reality that we belong completely to you set free from the dumb games of chasing applause to serve you god help us we pray in jesus name amen you've been listening to a message given by walt alexander lead pastor of trinity grace church in athens tennessee for more information about trinity grace please visit us at trinity grace athens dot com athens