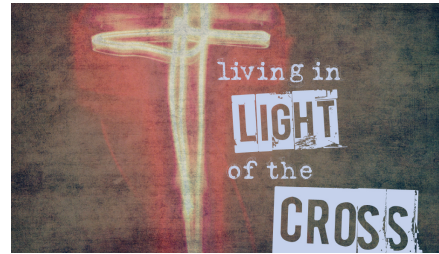


Living in light of the Cross #3

In this short series at MR we'll be considering what the cross says about our discipleship. Each week we'll consider a passage and how it relates to a different aspect of following Jesus.



Overview of Col 3v22-4v1...

Paul has spent the first half of his letter to the church in Colossae seeking to persuade them that Jesus is utterly sufficient. You don't need anything else as you seek to grow as a Christian. He now outlines how the utterly sufficient Jesus ought to effect everyday life. For us – in these verses that's the world of paid work, the principles are relevant for all kinds of 'work' though.

Before getting to Colossians we noted that Genesis 1-3 have much to say about work. We looked at 1v28, 2v5, 2v15 and 3v17-18. We noted that work is necessary – it is how God designed the world, it is good and yet, because of the Fall in Gen 3, it is hard. So we experience 'Gen 2' days of satisfaction and joy at work and also 'Gen 3 thorns & thistle' days of frustration and disappointment.

We split the passage into 2:

1. Jesus is your true boss: that effects how you relate to employers (3v22-25)

We said the key thing to note is that Jesus is your ultimate boss, not earthly masters, not 'the firm' or the people who pay us. Your ultimate allegiance is to him. Which means you work to please him – not your boss (v22) and you work with all your heart rather than in bitter obedience (v22 and v23). It also means that any kind of work can be transformed (however mundane) because Jesus cares about the heart with which it is done. Anything can become either sacred or secular.

2. Jesus is your true boss: that effects how you relate to employees (4v1)

The truth that Jesus is boss does not just impact how we relate to those above us, but also how we relate to those below us. People are not just 'delegation fodder' there to fulfill our purposes, but we are to treat them rightly and fairly because that is how we are treated by our master. We noted that the temptation is simply to copy the culture, rather than being different and so we have great opportunities to witness.

Here are some possible thoughts and questions.
Please be selective and adapt them for your group:

Possible Questions

Look at Gen 1v28, 2v5, 2v15 and 3v17-18.
What do we learn about the purpose of work?
How would you define work?
Why do we experience the mix that we do?

Do you find it easy to be a Christian at work? Why? / Why not?

√3v22-25

How does Paul call slaves to work (and not to work)? Why?
What might that look like?
What does that mean for you in your workplace? How does it challenge the work culture?

What does it mean for those in non-paid employment?

√4v1

How are masters to treat their slaves? Why?
What might this mean in your workplace for Christian bosses?

What 2 things can you take away from this study? Share them with the group and pray for each other.