

## Sermon Notes

# WORSHIP SERVICE -

10.23.2022

## THE DILIGENT WORKER

### I. INTRODUCTION

- God's Word has a lot to say about work.
  - Solomon praises the industriousness of the ant in Proverbs 6:6-11
  - He contrasts the sluggard with the ant. The ant works diligently during the summer to gather enough food for the winter.
  - The sluggard refuses to work hard during the growing season so he has nothing to gather at harvest time.
  - The sluggard's only commitment is to their sleep and their leisure.
  - Inevitably, the sluggard's lack of diligence catches up with them, they are impoverished and brought to ruin.
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- Hard work, industry, and diligence are praiseworthy qualities in Proverbs.
  - Laziness and slothfulness are seen as the epitome of folly.
  - Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, admonishes those who were walking in idleness.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:6-15**

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9 It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

13 As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

- Diligence rewards here and in the hereafter.
- The goal isn't just to be busier. Diligence and hard work isn't about having a frantic, unbalanced, hectic life.
- It's about a peaceful, rewarding, and satisfying life. One in which you know you are doing what you're supposed to be doing as you walk in the path of wisdom.

## II. A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF WORK

- Most people see our work as merely a means to an end, to get what I need and want.
- To understand work we need to go all the way back to the beginning.

### 1. WORK IS GOOD

- Genesis 2:7-8, 15 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
- God places man in Eden and he gives him work to do. All of this happened prior to the Fall.
- Work is not a result of man's rebellion, it's not a result of sin.
- It is part of God's original design for humanity!
- We were created for work.
  
- Adam was given work but there was a greater purpose to that work.
- Gen 1:26-28 reveals that God gave man dominion that was to expand outward from the garden to all the earth.
- The creation mandate to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it was a plan for dominion over God's creation.
- They were to have godly offspring, teach them the work of cultivating and keeping, and they were to subdue all of creation.
- Work is God's good design for us.

### 2. WORK IS HARD

- The Fall negatively impacted work on many levels.
- Gen. 3:17-19 And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
- Work was cursed because of Adam's rebellion. Good work becomes really hard work.
- Man is going to have to work hard for the ground to produce.
- The only alleviation from hard work would be death. That's when we will get relief from the painful toil that is work.

### 3. WORK IS REDEEMED

- Christ's work of redemption isn't just about individual salvation but the restoration of the entire cosmos.
- When God redeems us in Christ, it's not just our eternal destiny that is transformed. Our entire way of thinking and living is transformed.
- Redemption affects every single part of us, and that means it also transforms our view of work.
- Work takes on a whole new spiritual significance.
- Through our work we have an opportunity to glorify God.
- 1 Cor. 10:31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- We don't see work as most unbelievers do, we see it infused with great purpose and glory, regardless of our vocation or profession.
- How you view work and how you work says a lot about you.
- Do you work to honor the Lord, bring him glory, and do you perform it with thanksgiving?

### III. A PORTRAIT OF THE DILIGENT

- Two Portraits are presented throughout Proverbs concerning work ethic—the diligent and the sluggard.
- We'll look at the diligent person today and the sluggard next time.

#### 1. DEFINITION OF DILIGENCE

- Proverbs 10:1 A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.
- Proverbs 10:4,5 A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame.
- The wise son is the one who is diligent.
- Diligent in Proverbs means to be industrious, it is a person who is characterized by care and perseverance in carrying out tasks.
- The diligent approach work in a decisive and intentional way
- That's how we are to seek after wisdom, with all diligence (Prov 8:17).

#### 2. THE DILIGENT PERSON WORKS HARD

- In an agrarian economy, the connection between hard work and the outcome of that hard work is easy to see.
- Prov 31 gives a picture of the woman who fears the Lord.
- Look how her industriousness is described:
- Prov 31:13 ...She works with willing hands,
- Prov 31:15 She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household...
- Prov 31:16 ...with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.
- Prov 31:18,24 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. She makes linen garments and sells them.
- Prov 31:27 ...and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- All of this adds up to a lot of hard work.
- We were meant to work hard and go to bed tired. Would that describe you?
- Do you work hard at your job or are you laid back?
- Do you put in maximum effort to the tasks that are before you or do you like to take short cuts?

#### 3. THE DILIGENT PERSON THINKS AND PLANS FOR THE LONG-TERM

- Proverbs 27:23-27 Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds, 24 for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations? 25 When the grass is gone and the new growth appears and the vegetation of the mountains is gathered, 26 the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field. 27 There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your girls.
- The wise person makes appropriate efforts to ensure the continuation of blessings.
- He has to think and plan years ahead.

- Wisdom teaches us that we need to make decisions based on their long-term consequences.
- Proverbs 24:27 Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.
- The fields need to be worked in order to produce so that you will have the funds to build your house. Otherwise you may not have enough to finish constructing it.
- Long-term financial planning is in view here.
- Luke 14:28-30 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’
- The diligent count the cost. The diligent plan with the long-term in mind.
- The diligent know they must do the right thing in the right season in order to prosper.
- The diligent gathers information, assesses the situation, formulates a plan, all the while thinking about future impact of their decisions and labor.
- We are like God when we think and plan for the long-term. God planned for the long term.
- Unlike God, we don’t have the ability to make sure that 100% of the things we plan come to pass.
- So we approach our planning with wisdom and humility.
- Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.
- James 4:13-17 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— 14 yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. 17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.
- Our planning should not be presumptuous. We don’t know the future.
- We trust that God has sovereignly ordained all things so we plan and trust that our desires align with his will.
- Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.
- Proverbs 16:3 Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.

#### **4. THE DILIGENT PERSON IS REWARDED**

- Hard work pays off! This is generally true though it is hard sometimes to see the connection between hard work and our success.
- However, the general promises in Proverbs are still relevant today.
- Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, while the soul of the diligent is richly supplied.
- Proverbs 14:23 In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty.
- Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.
- Proverbs 22:29 Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.
- Oftentimes, over the course of a working life, the wise, diligent worker will be recognized, promoted, get pay increases, more responsibilities and opportunities than a lazy worker.

- In tough economic times, the diligent worker is more likely to keep their job than a lazy one.
  - People who add value to an organization are generally prized.
  - The parable of the Talents in Matthew 25.
- That's why if we work for someone else we should seek to add value wherever the Lord has us.
  - We should strive to be the best worker because that honors the Lord.
  - And that should be our chief motivation for being diligent in our work, not personal prosperity, awards, or recognition—but the glory of God.
- We work to the glory of God when we put our whole selves into our work; seeking to please God and not our manager or boss.
  - Colossians 3:22-24 Bondservants, 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. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.
- We work to the glory of God by avoiding the grumbling and complaining that normally characterizes a work environment with unbelievers.
  - Philippians 2:14-15 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,
- We work to the glory of God when we treat our co-workers with kindness and respect.
  - Romans 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.
  - Colossians 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
- We work to the glory of God when we rest from our work, acknowledging our dependence on God for our daily provisions.
  - It's a command from the Lord to rest one day in seven—Deut. 5:12-15
  - It does not honor God to burn yourself out through your work, that reveals a heart that lacks trust and dependence on the Lord; a heart that does not believe the gospel concerning Christ who is our Sabbath rest.
- Diligence is a virtue that extends to all of life.
  - We are to be diligent in our work, in our spiritual walk, our relationships, our marriage, our parenting, our seeking the Lord, and studying His Word.
  - That same diligence that has a pay off in our work, when applied to your spiritual life, will bring rewards as well.
- Diligence is what characterized our Lord's work.
  - He was the wise, faithful, prudent, and diligent son.
  - John 17:4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
  - He is the example we follow.
  - His diligent work is what enables us to work diligently to the glory of God.