

St Martins C3 – May 18, 2025

God at work – Opportunity for growth

Sermon Summary:

Over the next few weeks, we are exploring how we best integrate our faith into our work life. By work life, we mean our purposeful expenditure of energy to achieve something productive. This may include paid employment, raising a family, volunteering for our church or wider community. We will be exploring how God works in the “work” area of our lives.

Read: Genesis 1:26-31

1) God has a work life.

God created and sustains the universe. (Big job!) His work is an expression of his creativity, power, goodness and beauty. If, God values work, then we ought to value work as well.

2) God created us (in His image) to do meaningful, fruitful, work.

God is a purposeful God and what God creates achieves that good purpose. That includes creating us. Adam and Eve were to grow into a working partnership with God, where they would work together to accomplish good things in the world God had created.

3) We learn from the third chapter of Genesis that because we separated God from our lives, our work became harder and less meaningful.

The fallen world we are in means there will be times of meaningless, unfruitful, hard work, but that ought not lead us to the conclusion that work is bad. God can redeem a bad work situation, by helping you learn and grow through it. If you already

do purposeful, fruitful work, God will use that to fulfil more of His purposes through you, and grow you further into all He has called you to be. God always intended us to be purposeful, fruitful stewards of the world He put us in.

4) There are responsibilities, which God wants us to work with Him (and with others) on. (Genesis 2:19)

5) When we integrate our faith and our work, we grow into the person God has called us to be.

God is very intentional about your growth and He will use opportunities in your workplace to achieve that growth. For that to happen, our inner world and our outer achievements need to grow together. Or, at least, our inward character has to grow ahead of what is required of us in our working life.

The best way for God to grow our Christlike character in preparation for expressing that inner growth in our working life, is to take some time and REGULARLY REFLECT on what we are learning from God, both personally and professionally.

- Try journaling your thoughts and reflecting on them.
- Try sharing these thoughts, if it is appropriate, with someone you are in a discipling relationship with, or with your Connect Group.

What is God using in my work life at the moment to grow me into the person God has called me to be?

Resources for Connect Groups:

Main points:

- 1) When we are doing purposeful, fruitful work, we are living out the life that God has for us.
- 2) An important thing God can use our work life for is using it as a context to grow Christlike character in us.

Possible questions:

What purpose does our work serve in our lives?

What are some non-Biblical attitudes that Christians may have towards their work?

When thinking about your work, is it a positive or negative thing in your mind? Why?

In what ways have you previously integrated your faith and your work?

Why does God want us to integrate our faith and our work?

What is God using in your work life at the moment to grow you into the person God has called you to be?

Monday's Devotion – Growing in faith

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

This week, we are exploring in more detail some ways God will use our work context to grow Christlike character in us.

Consider for a moment, how many decisions you have to make in your working life. From big decisions as to which job you do, to small decisions like how to do a certain aspect of your job. Wouldn't it be great if, in all those decisions, you knew God's leading.

This scripture gives us some guidance as to how to do that. Firstly, we commit our whole lives to God. We choose to trust His judgement, rather than our judgement. Secondly, we seek His will in ALL that we do. There are many times where I have trusted my own judgement, and to be honest, sometimes it worked out well, sometimes not. However, like this scripture says, when I have been more intentional about asking God to guide me in my decision making, even in the day-to-day things, it has worked out a whole lot better.

God calls us to put our trust in Him, in EVERY area of our lives. That includes our working life. So, consider today, what are some decisions that are coming your way, which you could process with the Lord? Where He could show you which path to take.

Tuesday's Devotion – Growing in moral character

Galatians 5:22-23

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

In your working life, the strength of your moral character will be tested. From your integrity through to your care for others and everything in between. Our work life involves working with others and often serving others in some way. Wherever there is human interactions there will be virtues, like those mentioned above, that need to be developed.

We will have many moral choices to make in our work place. Will we allow the values and ethics of our workplace to shape us, or will we bring Christlike values and morals to our workplace? If our work place holds many values that are the same as Biblical values, then we reinforce that which is good. However, when there is a conflict, it becomes more challenging. We can either see this challenge as a threat, or an opportunity for growth. If we make a wise moral choice in our work context, God will use that to strengthen the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, so that we are even better prepared for the next moral challenge.

Consider today, what are some of the values and morals expressed in your work place? Which ones could you endorse and reinforce through the way you conduct yourself? Which ones will be a challenge for you to stand against?

Wednesday's Devotion – Growing in knowledge.

Matthew 10:16

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

The context of this passage is Jesus sending out His disciples into various contexts, which were likely to be new to them. I like how Jesus appreciates that they will need to grow in their knowledge of the context they are stepping into. As they grow in that knowledge, it will help them in their life and in the mission Christ was calling them to fulfil.

I have had the privilege of working in a lot of people intensive jobs over the years. I have also had the privilege of traveling a bit and meeting people from all over the world. The great benefit of this, is that it broadens your knowledge of people and the world we are in. This knowledge enables you to relate to people better and may even help shape a healthy worldview in your own mind.

Let us not be arrogant and approach others with the assumption that we have all the knowledge needed and they just need to listen to us. Let us approach the world around us with openness, but also with discernment. Openness to God to show us what He might teach us through our interactions with others, but also discernment to work out what knowledge to integrate into our lives and that which we are to reject.

In your interactions with those you are in contact with at the moment, what are you learning from them, and how might God be wanting to use that knowledge?

Thursday's Devotion – Growing in gifts and skills

Daniel 1:17

To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

The context of the passage above is Jewish young men who have been taken away from their home in Israel to serve King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. (Modern day Iraq). God gives them an aptitude for reading and learning. Or another way we could describe it, is a God-given academic talent or strength. However, they needed to add to that gifting intentional effort, in order to grow greater skills in those areas. Even though their work environment is not where they wanted to be, it was still an opportunity to serve God and an opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Likewise, we may or may not be in our perfect role or job at the moment. Our context is not as important as our attitude. Our attitude ought to be one of intentionally growing into the person that God has called us to be, through developing the gifts that He has given us and honing skills that complement those gifts to grow even further in our abilities to serve Him and others.

Consider today, what are some gifts that you have been given by God? What are some things that come naturally to you, that other people find more difficult? Are you making use of those gifts? What skills could you put around those gifts to shape a work life, that is not only honouring to God, but fulfilling the way He has wired you?

Friday's Devotion – Growing in your life purpose.

1 Corinthians 9:16-18

For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

This is the Apostle Paul speaking about his life purpose. Paul had come to realise that preaching the gospel was the purpose of his life. However, this was not always the case. At one time he thought his job and life purpose was the very opposite. He thought it was his God-given mandate to stop the gospel of Christ spreading. However, Paul met Christ in a vision and started on a very different course, which in turn shaped the rest of his working life.

As we go on our journey through our working life, and on that journey stay open to God refining our life purpose, he will do exactly that. God will lead us into a job and a purpose that serves us well and His purposes well.

On our career journey we ought to become increasingly clearer on why we do what we do, and how we are serving God's purposes in our current role. Consider today how God is refining His purpose for your life, as you have learnt how God uses you in the various roles that you have filled.