

Christ and the Workplace

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Reggie Sanchez, Gospel Community Church, 10/22/2017

Text: 1 Timothy 6:1-2

1 Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants[a] regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

Introduction:

1. A Man's Employment

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said that his people are, "...the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

As we live out our life in Christ before others, if we are living in step with his truth, his Gospel, his glory, his standards, and his ways, then his life in us will shine to others who are in darkness and will be a helpful guide to them that they might come to Christ and be reconciled to God through his Gospel, have their sins forgiven, and find life in Him. If we are a light, and we are, where does our light most often shine? If we live into him in all things, which is our calling, then our light is not only to shine while we are at church, but in every area of our lives. So if that is true, and I am assuming for the purposes of this sermon that you hold to that view, which is the biblical view, then the answer to the question of where does your light shine most often should be the place where you spend most of your time. For kids that will be in their place of schooling, whether that is at home or in public, for many adults that place is our place of employment.

Jesus said all authority in heaven and earth is given to me, therefore go and make disciples of all nations. He is the one with all authority, he is the one who rules over every square inch of all creation, his dominion covers all of planet earth, every drop of water, every grain of sand, every molecule of oxygen, every inch of land, every ocean, river, lake, pond, and stream, every mountain, beach, forest, desert, plain, hill, garden, marsh, swamp, and any other place you can imagine. His supremacy is over all creatures from the tiny mosquito to the giant elephant. His Lordship is over all humanity, and there is nothing over which he is not the exalted Lord who as all authority and he has commissioned us to fill the earth with the knowledge of God through the preaching of the Gospel.

Despite these truths some misguided Christians think that even though Christ is Lord of all creation, somehow their workplaces are exempt from us explicitly, in word and deed, shining the light of Christ to those around us that they might come to know the Lord. It makes sense Satan would blind us and convince us that the sharing and living out of our faith should not take place at work, because that is the place many of us spend most of our lives and if he can convince us that our faith doesn't belong there, then he can snuff out the light of Christ during most of our adult lives! Do not believe the American comfort-loving, persecution-avoiding lie that your faith is off limits in the work place. It is not off limits, Christ has all authority, and he has commissioned us to exalt him in every place. For sure, as with all other labors for Christ, our shining of our light in given situations requires wisdom, but our desire for wisdom should be unto how to most effectively shine for Jesus, rather than claiming that "wisdom" means not speaking up on the Gospel or living it out

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in the work place. That is wisdom from below that is the devil's wisdom. Some Christians are just genuinely misguided in thinking they can't share Christ at work, while others are just desperate to find every excuse under the sun to stay in their comfortable, man-pleasing cowardice at work, and they get very angry at sermons like this one. I pray though that you will not have that response and that you will instead allow God's Word to inform your walk that you might win souls at work.

I personally was saved at work because a few men were not afraid to speak up for Jesus while we were at the workplace. I was 22 at the time and had never heard the Gospel and I will spend eternity being grateful that the men who shared with me were not too scared to obey God and they preached Christ to me. Had they held to the contemporary lies that say you can't share Christ at work I would not have been saved there.

I personally have also seen multiple people whom I have worked with come to know the Lord including two managers I have worked for. I have seen persecution against us for preaching Christ at work, I have seen how that persecution did not harm us, but rather, gave us great joy and grew us in Jesus and God proved to be more than able to provide for us. I have so many wonderful memories with Jesus at work that are precious and glorious. I have been a part of many prayers, Bible studies, seen many wonderful acts of faith by God's people, have seen Christ be greatly glorified, and have seen the power of God to bring life out of death, all in the work place! To this day there are many souls who are precious to me as I have seen Christ move in their lives at work! Some of your co-workers, like me at age 22, are not going to go to church and their only exposure to the glory and supremacy of Christ is going to be through your witness to them at work.

There is so much of Christ to enjoy, magnify, and proclaim at work, and I have personally encountered many times the reality that even if I had a difficult time enjoying the job I was at, when Christ showed up God began writing the people on my heart and made difficult jobs a place of obtaining true and lasting joy! But Christ is the key! His glory must fill your heart, you must give the aroma of him, you must share him, you must look for him at work, you must seek him there, you must praise him there, you must thank him there, you must suffer for him there, you must live for him there, and you must die a thousand deaths and more for him there! Yes, there are some foolish ways to do this, but just because that is true, that doesn't mean we should stop proclaiming him. Instead, we must seek the most effective ways to get it done.

He is at the workplace even if your HR department does everything they can to keep him out. But they cannot succeed because he is the King and he reigns and he is everywhere and he told his people, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age!" He didn't say, "All authority in heaven and earth is given to me, therefore make disciples of all nations,...and I am with you always even to the end of the age, except when you are at work because I don't belong there and the work place is no place for my glory to explicitly radiate! So be wise and don't share me there!"

2. Slavery became employment

In our work environments, depending on our roles, there are ways the Bible tells us to carry ourselves to maximally adorn the Gospel, our God, and the truth that the Bible assumes we are proclaiming at work. The passages in the NT that speak of how slaves are to relate to masters and how masters are to relate to slaves in light of the Gospel are the

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passages that guide our understanding of how to carry ourselves as employees and bosses in the specifics of the work place.

Before diving in to this I think it is important to say a few words about slavery here. There is much more to say about slavery than what I will say, and more needs to be said, but this sermon will not speak exhaustively to the issue. Nevertheless, saying something is worthwhile here. The presence of slavery in the history of the U.S. is an awful blemish on our nation and it must be confessed and acknowledged as sin and there is no biblical justification for it.

To prove this, I would begin by saying that when the Gospel first penetrated the World in the first century A.D. it came into a world wherein the institution of slavery was prominent in many places. When the Gospel broke into this world there did not emerge explicit statements made by biblical writers saying to abolish slavery. The absence of this has led some to wrongly think slavery is condoned by God. Rather than explicitly calling for the end of slavery, the Bible tells slaves and masters how to relate to each other in such a way, that if obeyed, the only possible outcome would be the end of slavery. Speaking of the commands given to slaves and to masters in light of the Gospel John Piper helped me so much when he said this, "The commands that are given, and their context...contain all the seeds for undoing anything like what we had in this country, for example, with the owning of human beings and its racial basis."

That is so helpful to me because I think it is absolutely true. Slaves are called to respect and obey their masters and masters are called to stop threatening and abusing slaves and to regard them as dear brothers in the Lord. Masters are called in Ephesians 6:9 to love their servants, render good will to them unto the Lord, to stop threatening them, and I believe it is the threat of abuse that Paul has in mind, and to realize that their master is the Lord, who is also the master of their servants, and having a common master who will not show partiality levels the playing field and they must love each other. In Colossians 4:1 masters are called to treat their servants, "justly and fairly," again, knowing that they have a common heavenly Master. Paul told the Galatians that believing slaves and masters are equal sharers in Christ and his promises through the Gospel in Galatians 3:26-29. In addressing Philemon, who was a slave owner who had been wronged by his servant Onesimus who likely stole from him, ran away, and then was later converted under Paul's ministry, Paul sends the repentant Onesimus back to Philemon and exhorts Philemon to think of him and treat him, "no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother...in the Lord." (Philemon 16) How does an abusive slave system survive such commands?

Piper, in observing this, went on to say this about masters and the way God commands them to treat slaves, "...If you don't threaten, what do you do? You win by love, and that transforms slavery into employment." I so agree with this. Even if the Bible operates within the reality of slavery, that in no way means it condones slavery and we can see that in how it commands slaves and masters to relate to each other, whose interactions will inevitably undo slavery. Paul even exhorted slaves to gain their freedom if possible in 1 Cor. 7:20-24.

I would also add to this issue the fact that 1 Timothy 1:9-10 lists a group of men who will be condemned by the Law whom Paul describes as, "lawless, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy, and profane." Now among such people who fit this description, according to verse 10, are slave traders.

Furthermore, in Revelation 18 we read about the final judgment of Babylon, a great city that embodies all of the values, ethics, idolatry, sin, and wickedness of Satan's reign on this earth. It is the capital of worldliness! When this city is judged

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all who mourn the judgement of this city are other wicked people who participated in her sins and who lived by her Satanic values. In Rev. 18:11-13 we read that the merchants of this city are weeping because the business done in this vile place can no longer be carried out. Part of the wickedness of this city in verse 13 is that there were merchants there who were selling, “slaves, that is, human souls.” Slave trading merchants love this evil city, they do business in this city, they are themselves evil like this city, and along with this city they too will be judged. So I think there is sufficient evidence in God’s Word to show that God in no way condones slavery. So having dealt with that, I want to work through texts on the relationships between masters and slaves and how God says each person is to live in relation to the other in order to maximally exalt the name of Jesus and his Gospel, which God assumes is being shared in the slave and master relationship.

II. Slaves Rightly Relating to Masters

1. 1 Timothy 6:1-2

Our main text for tonight is 1 Timothy 6:1-2 (read). The first call of how we are to regard our masters, or employers, managers, or bosses, is to regard them as worthy of all honor. Some commands are hard to obey, and depending on your particular boss, this may seem easy or very difficult. Regardless of how we feel when we read this, this is God’s command and he wasn’t shortsighted when he made it. He knew every boss that was coming, and knowing that, in his perfect and infinite understanding and wisdom he calls us to count our bosses worthy of all honor.

God takes it even further in verse 1 by telling us that the reason we are to honor our bosses is, “so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.” Not honoring our bosses brings a reviling on the name of God and the teaching of his Word. This assumes that the masters know the slaves are Christians, that the Christians have named Christ to their masters, and at some level have shared the teaching of the Gospel and the Word of God. If the slaves made no explicit Christian witness or bore no explicit Christian testimony to their masters, then their disobedience wouldn’t cause the masters to revile Christ’s name or the teaching. But, having rightly made an explicit Christian witness, if in that witness the Christians become disrespectful and dishonor their boss, they become the cause for the reviling of the name of Christ and the Word of God. What boss is going to look at a disrespectful employee and say, “Give me a reason for the hope that is within you?” It will not happen. Instead, to the cantankerous, disrespectful employee who doesn’t honor his boss, all that happens according to the inspired Word of God is that the boss, and possibly even co-workers, look at this behavior, they revile the name of Jesus and the Word of God. They may say, “Jesus is a joke, the Bible is a joke, this guy tells us about Christ and his love and then he is the most disrespectful employee in all the company. This is all lies and Christians are a bunch of hypocrites and their Jesus is fake.”

When that happens in response to our disrespectful conduct, some of that is on us. So that is what is at stake in being respectful to our bosses. Sometimes, in honoring authority whom we struggle to honor, we have to look past the person and to the God who has placed the person there, and it is God’s wise, good, and loving heart that we trust while we show honor to bosses who maybe are not the most honorable. In doing this, we bring no reproach on the Gospel or the name of Christ. Everybody complains and dishonors authority, and when we do not do that, we bring great glory to God.

If we are working for believing masters, sometimes it may be much easier for us to show them honor. However, there is also a unique temptation here. We might presume on the graciousness, love, patience, and mercy of a believing boss

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and therefore be tempted to be slack in our work because we don't fear the cruel consequence that would come if we offended an unbelieving boss. So to combat against that Paul says (read vs. 2). We are much more likely to be disrespectful to those whom we see as peers, and when we work for a believing boss, we are peers in the Lord, and that can tempt us to disrespect. But this must not be so. Instead of being disrespectful, we must serve all the better, because they are our brothers, they benefit from our service, and in love to our brothers, our hearts should be that they maximally benefit from how we work for them, because they are beloved of God. How horrible of a witness is it if two believers in a boss-employee relationships can't even get along? That is awful and we must demonstrate that we, as Christian employees, will honor our bosses, especially Christian ones, and it should make us glad, not jealous or envious, that our Christian bosses benefit from our service. I mean what is the point of serving someone if you don't want them to benefit from it? So whether our bosses are believers or unbelievers, we are to show them honor, and we are to be glad that they benefit from our labor. So what does this look like? For answers to that we will examine some of the other NT texts on this relationship so turn to Colossians 3:22-25

2. Colossians 3:22-25 (Read) Ephesians 6:5-8 parallels

Let's break this down one piece at a time. The first observation is that our obedience to our bosses is to be, "in everything." The exceptions to this would be if your bosses command you to sin against God or embrace false teaching. In such scenarios the principle of we must obey God rather than men from Acts 5:29 applies and we must not obey our masters in these situations. In

Acts 5:29 the disciples refused to yield to man's command to stop preaching the Gospel because it directly contradicted God's command to preach it. So whether it is the command to stop sharing your faith, or the command to sin in any other way, we must not submit to commands to sin if they are given by our bosses or any other authority.

Having made that clarification, we are called to obey in everything else, even if we strongly disagree with the wisdom of it, even if we think it is foolish or if it is something that we do not prefer. Unless it is sin, we must obey. So obedience is the first practical manifestation of honoring our bosses.

The next piece we glean from this text is that we are to obey our masters in a specific way, namely, "not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men..." So in obeying our bosses, whether in something we think is a great idea or a terrible one, whether it be in a task we enjoy doing or a task we hate doing, we are called to obey them with a sincere heart and not begrudgingly while we put on a charade in front of our bosses when they are watching. So much of our obedience in the work place is Cain-offerings. We obey when our boss is watching, we smile even though we hate them, and we resent carrying out our tasks. This is not what God calls us to. We are to obey with sincere hearts. How do we do that when we don't want to? I mean we can't change our hearts!

I think God gives us the key to it in the rest of the text. Notice at the end of verse 23 our work is to be done for the Lord. Think about your most disliked task at your job and picture your boss asking you to do it for the sake of his selfish gain. How eager would you be to do that task? Now, picture Jesus himself coming down from heaven in all of his glory. He walks up to you, you tremble and fall at his feet, and he lovingly places his hand upon you and tells you not to fear. He hugs you, looks you in the eye, tells you he loves you, reminds you that he bought you, tells you he is so glad to be with you, and then he asks you to do the same task for him that your boss just asked you to do. How would you feel about

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doing that task? Would you not engage it with all of your heart? Would you even be thinking about your boss at that point? No, your heart and mind would be so enraptured by the presence of your precious Christ and your realization that you are doing it for him, that you would not be able to contain your joy and you would do it with all eagerness! If you have eyes to see, this is the reality all of your work is done in. When you struggle to obey, when you are stumbling towards your boss, look past your boss, to the Christ who has called you and sent you to your job, and imagine him smiling upon you, commissioning you to clean toilets, or do whatever task it is that you don't like. Pray and ask him to come near to you in the completion of your task, then no matter what you feel, do it by faith, and seek the presence of God in your task and I bet you will find him in a tangible and sweet way more often than not, and you will work in the joy of the Lord regardless of who your earthly boss is. So knowing whom you are really working for is one key to sincere obedience to bosses.

The next key to sincere obedience at work is found in verse 24, and that key is to think about heaven in relation to your work (read vs. 24). As you labor for God with a sincere heart, you will receive a reward from him. Sometimes that reward is keeping your job, getting a promotion, having good relationships at work, or getting a raise. God orchestrates these things and he rewards his faithful servants who work unto him with a pure heart. He knows so many creative ways to reward his servants and he is generous and gracious to lavish us with those things. But what if you do not receive any earthly reward? What if you are taken advantage of by your boss and your company and there is no reward in human form? Is God not with you?

I believe the answer to that is, "no." I believe with all of my heart that God has a heavenly reward for you as a result of your faithful work for him. Everywhere we read about the reality of heavenly rewards in the New Testament, whether it is the Sermon on the Mount, Philippians 4, or the wedding garments of the saints, the NT is replete with promises of heavenly reward for God's people, and they are meant to motivate us. Whatever they are, they will not lead you into sin when you are in heaven, and they will somehow serve to enhance your joy in Christ for all eternity. When fulfilling your job duties with a sincere heart, even if you don't get the raise, benefits, promotion, or recognition you deserve from your earthly boss, reward is coming to you in heaven. You will hear, "Well done good and faithful servant! You worked for me, not for men, and though you were not compensated fairly in your earthly life, you still endured with patience and worked for me! Enter into my joy forever!" How awesome is that going to be? What difference would being regularly focused on that in your heart and mind make in your attitude at work? Do not set your minds on earthly things but on heavenly things is Paul's call at the beginning of Colossians 3 and it has an outworking even in the work place!

The final God-centered appeal to sincere obedience to our bosses comes at the end of verse 22 and all of verse 25. Verse 22 tells us to work for God, "fearing the Lord." I believe the specific fear of the Lord Paul has in mind is what he articulates in verse 25, "For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality." If you wrong your master at your job, if you wrong your co-workers, just because you didn't get caught by man, that does not mean a reckoning is not on the way. God saw it, he knows, and he will deal with you, and there is no partiality with him. Even if you are an oppressed worker who is mistreated, who is not appreciated, God still calls you to serve him faithfully, and if you do not, he is watching, he will repay you for this wrong if you do not repent, and he will show you no partiality, including the partiality of lifting his standards for you due to your specific work environment. His standard remains no matter what and he will reward your good and repay your wrong.

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Sometimes your wrong is repaid with a demotion, a decrease in pay, getting fired, or the awful feeling of knowing you have undermined your witness with complaining and disobedience, or many other things. God knows how to discipline his children, and just as he is creative in rewarding our obedience, so also he is creative in knowing how to render repayment to the sinner. Fear God. He is patient, merciful, and gracious, but if you are unrepentant, he is not playing, he will discipline you, you are always known by God, and being sinned against does not justify your sinning. There is no partiality. There is great reward to gain in sincere obedience, and there is real discipline for disobedience, so fear God and obey your boss from the heart.

3. Titus 2:9-10

As we seek to understand the practicalities of honoring God at work, we must know what honoring God is, and also what it is not. Titus 2:9-10 is very informative by way of showing us what it is not, so let's turn there now and continue to gain insights for work. (Read vs. 9). The first thing to glean here is that as workers we are to be well-pleasing to our masters and not argumentative. I don't believe that this means we can't ever question something, address a concern, or share an issue we think could use improvement or attention from our bosses. But what it certainly means is that our attitudes, the way we carry ourselves, and our conduct towards are bosses in doing this and all other things, are to communicate that we care for them, we care for the business, and we care for the honor of the Lord and so in our communication we are well-pleasing and not argumentative.

We are not to be contentious in interacting with our bosses. We are not to blow things out of proportion, turn everything into a fight, have a violent or cantankerous attitude towards our co-workers or bosses, or be someone who can't ever be pleased and is always nagging and nit-picking our bosses. The Scripture says there are people in the church who are a burden to shepherd because of how they treat their pastors, and similarly, there are also workers who are a burden to employ because of how they treat their co-workers and bosses. All of our comments, input, suggestions, questions, and even pure-hearted challenges should communicate that we love and honor our bosses, our co-workers, and the company. When we carry ourselves with that heart and attitude, according to verse 10 it adorns the doctrine of God our Savior.

As a leader when you feel someone is challenging or suggesting something because they are impossible to please, are immature, are blind, or are just all about their thing, it is difficult to go through that. On the other hand, when you believe the person is well-intended, genuinely cares, is not out to exalt themselves, or destroy anybody, even if you disagree with their input, you still value the interaction. Workers who carry themselves in such a manner are refreshing to their bosses, their bosses see them as someone who cares about them, and someone who really wants to help the company do well. On the other hand, when a contentious and immature spirit builds a reputation of being a constant problem over every little issue, you ruin your witness and your boss and co-workers do not see the doctrine of your God as being adorned by your life, but rather, as something that they don't want anything to do with, in part, because of your wrongly argumentative life. You don't want to be in that boat. Ask God to fill you with love for your bosses and your company in place of poison and bitterness towards them. Your adorning of your savior is at stake here.

The last specific way we are to carry ourselves to adorn the Gospel from this text is found in verse 10 (read). To pilfer is to steal, which is one of the most common ways employers are wronged by their employees. The idea of pilfering is that not only is it stealing, but it is stealing in small quantities. Perhaps this is the most common type of theft in the work

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place. Most pilferers aren't ripping off thousands of dollars at a time, but instead steal a little here and a little there and justify it by thinking it is not that much, or the boss underpays you so it's okay to steal, or the boss is wealthy so he won't be hurt if you steal a little. There is no justification for this sin that will stand before our God. It is vile, it is wrong, and if you carry yourself this way as an employee you are telling everyone around you that you don't trust God, that you are not satisfied with God, and even though you claim a savior who gave everything for you so you could receive the free gift of eternal life, you must steal and wrong others.

Rather than stealing the text says we must show all good faith to our employers. What that means is that we should be able to be trusted to act with integrity to the point that whatever our bosses set us over, they do not even have to entertain a second thought about us stealing. We are to be like Joseph, who though a slave and a prisoner, was a man of such character that he was put over Potiphar's house, the prison he was in, and Egypt itself. That is to be our reputation in the work place. Such a reputation adorns the Gospel whereas being a thief hinders it greatly. We must obey, honor, and respect our employers with all trustworthiness.

4. 1 Peter 2:18-25

As an employee, you might be thinking that if you had a boss who would fulfill his calling to lead the way he is supposed to, then you will fulfill your calling as an employee. But, if he isn't going to do that, then you will not obey him because he isn't doing his job. Many people justify themselves in their dishonoring of their bosses with that kind of thinking. But what does God's Word say? Please turn to our last text in 1 Peter 2:18-25.

Verse 18 stops that thinking in its tracks right away by saying, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust." This is a very clear verse and it is very simple. The question is whether or not we will try to confuse it because we don't like it. Even unjust masters are to be respected. How are we going to do that?

First we have great help in verses 19-20 (read). God considers it a precious and gracious thing when, mindful of God, you endure mistreatment. When you are being wronged, but because God is filling your heart and your mind, you press on, refusing to sin against God command here, that is something God looks upon in your life and declares to be "precious and gracious." Knowing this is something that is meant to motivate obedience. In other words, realizing that you have the smile of God upon your life, gives you strength to endure with joy. Nothing is more life-giving to an oppressed soul than this kind of sweet communion with God. It is better than immediate justice. However, if you are suffering because of your sin, there is not this sweet communion with God as you endure injustice, you are actually under the discipline of God and you forfeit the peace and joy of joining Christ in being mistreated without cause. What good is it to suffer as a lawbreaker? Even unbelievers do that and this text tell us it is not profitable.

God gives us in the times of being mistreated, the incredible privilege of following Christ in displaying the Gospel to our work place. Where do I get that? It is in verse 21 (read). Notice the wording when it says, "To this you have been called..." God calls us to this. Is that part of your theology of work? Sometimes God will call you to an unjust boss so you can follow the example of Christ's suffering. If this is not part of your thinking, it needs to be, because it is wonderfully liberating and will richly bless your soul and help you. Despite whatever human elements were involved in you landing the job you were in, overarching all of it is the sovereign will of God, who placed you there, and is calling you to endure

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suffering for him with Christ as your example. What specifically does Peter have in mind in relation to Christ's suffering that is exemplary for Christian employees who are being wronged? I think there are 3 things.

(Read vs. 22-23). The first observation is that Christ did not suffer for his own sin, but rather, was persecuted in his innocence. Second, when he did suffer, he didn't revile in return or repay evil with evil. So in following this example, our suffering in the work place is that we should be suffering as those who are not sinning against the company or our boss or co-workers. Then when they mistreat us, and this will likely happen, we are not to repay such evil with reviling in return, or with threatening, instead, we must continue to entrust ourselves to him who judges justly. Thirdly we also know from Christ's example in suffering that God justly judges, he is taking every word and deed that is wrongly done against us into account, and his judgment will be just. When our souls are entrusted to his judgment, we can be put at ease knowing God will set things right in his timing. Sometimes it happens in this life and other times it awaits the final judgment, but it is coming. The justice we desire will be done, and it is God who will do it. God vindicated Christ at the resurrection, and he will do so again at the 2nd coming when every knee bows and confesses Jesus as Lord. So Christ has been vindicated partly now, and will be fully when all things are set right. So it is with us as well. Some vindication comes now, but much of it awaits the final judgment and we must trust that and be content with it. So the three things we are to imitate in Christ's suffering is that we should be innocent in our suffering, we must not repay evil for evil in our suffering, and we must entrust our souls to him who judges justly.

Closing out, we see in verses 24 that the specific suffering of Christ in context is the Gospel (read). He bore our sins on the tree so that we can die to sin and live to righteousness. In context the sin we are to die to is repaying evil with evil, and the righteousness we are to live into is respecting our bosses, even the unjust. We have all sinned in our work places haven't we? For those of us who will deal honestly with it, for those of us who will bring our work sins, and every other sin to the one who bore them on the tree, the last statement of verse 24 is true, "By his wounds you have been healed." Our disrespect, our gossip, our slander, our pilfering, our insincere obedience, our laziness and unfaithfulness behind our boss's back, our contentious spirits and unbridled complaining have been placed on Christ at the tree and his wounds heal the repentant.

Verse 25 (read). We have strayed from God our entire lives, but because he bore our sin on the tree, because his wounds at the cross have healed us, and because we have come in faith and repentance, we have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. He shepherds and oversees us. He cares for us and walks with us. He considers it precious and gracious when we trust him as a just judge, when we have him in our thoughts, when his glory and obedience to him is driving us, when we long to obey his Word, he is so pleased with that, and he comes near in a special way. He has even called us to such suffering. Why? Because when his people live out real life examples of the suffering of Christ before a hostile and sinful world, it has great power to save souls.

The way of the cross is our calling at work. We endure wrongs and persecutions and in so doing display the Gospel of Jesus, which can save them. Part of the reason this is so precious to God, is because it displays the most precious thing that has ever happened, namely, the innocent Son of God being persecuted unjustly and dying for sinners to heal them spiritually and restore them to God. There's nothing greater or more precious than that in human history and the one who lives it out faithfully, is a continual precious offering to God and ongoing powerful display of the Gospel to those

Christ and the Workplace

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Reggie Sanchez, Gospel Community Church, 10/22/2017

around him. From the cross Jesus cried out, “Forgive them Father for they know not what they do,” and such should be our heart towards those who mistreat us at work.

IV. Conclusion

1. Summary

So, what we can glean from all of this is that God is the one who has called us to our workplace for his glory. He calls us to sincerely respect and obey all bosses from the heart, refusing to steal, and not having a contentious spirit, even if we are being mistreated. We are to entrust our souls to God, work heartily unto him knowing he will reward us and we must fear him knowing he will not show partiality and will discipline us if we are unfaithful. The smile of God will be upon us, we will enjoy his peace, we will be effective for him, and we will display Christ’s Gospel at work and I believe we will see the power of God as we live into Christ’s example at the cross for all to see.

1. This is War

This is really difficult to live out. I don’t think it is any coincidence that in Ephesians 6:5-9 Paul talks about the relationship that is to exist between slaves and masters and then the very next thing he says in verse 10 is his introduction to teaching on spiritual warfare and the armor of God found in verses 10-20. It is war and it’s supposed to be difficult, it is supposed to have opposition, it is supposed to be heart-wrenching at times, it is supposed to make us cry out to God in desperation. The forces of hell, the world, and your own sin are fighting you and they are capable of fighting very effectively! So without God, without his Word guiding us, without his Spirit indwelling us, without the encouragement, prayers, and support of our brothers and sisters in the Lord, we have no chance. The forces of darkness know that God’s people are the light of the world and they will make war on us to smother our light by choking it through leading us into deeds of darkness.

If you are in the war and it is difficult, it doesn’t mean you are fake. If you have scars, wounds, and have failed and made mistakes it doesn’t mean the war is over or that it is hopeless. It means we should be humbled, we should be desperate for God, and we should fight hard to put on his armor everyday. God grows and matures his people. He doesn’t leave us, he makes us more like Jesus, he will keep molding and shaping us, but we must not give up, nor make excuses for our sins. If we will deal honestly with God’s Word, honestly with where we are at, and if we fight with his weapons, we will have progress in this great war and battle. There are many souls to be won in the work force, much praise for Jesus to be gained by those who have yet to praise him, and much sweet communion to be enjoyed with Jesus as we walk in the way of the cross.