

First Friends Church
“Gospel Partnership When Work is Hard”
3-25-18

Serenity Prayer - *God grant me the serenity To accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And wisdom to know the difference.*

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world As it is, not as I would have it;

Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; So that I may be reasonably happy in this life

And supremely happy with Him Forever and ever in the next.

QUESTION: How does the Gospel Good News transform the suffering in our WORK for our good and God’s glory?

I. Define “Work” - Mental and/or physical effort intended to accomplish something. **“Job”** is a specific part of work, a duty, responsibility, or place of employment.

II. Review: The Gospel is Good News About Work

* *Work is Gospel PARTNERSHIP with God!* **Genesis 1-2**

A. “Work” – Hebrew **“avodah”** translated *“work, serve, and worship”*

B. Work is: Good because God Works, God’s Divine Design, Productive, Relationship Building, Rewarding, Worship, and Witness.

III. The “Bad News” About Work – *Work is hard and filled with the “thorns” of trial & suffering!*

IV. TEXT: Genesis 3:1-19 Why?

A. “Thistle” ISSUES: Overwork/Underwork, Failure, Unemployed, Futility, Pressure, Conflict, Jealousy, Ambition, Stealing, Lying, Criticism, Gossip, Money,

Emotional “Roots” of Thistles – depression, anger, fear, anxiety, stress, worry, etc.

B. Sin’s Consequences Plant “Thistles” - Separation from God results in pain and suffering in our WORK.

1. **Vs. 1-6 – TEMPTATION** – Evil tempts to us to be discontent and disobey God’s instructions.
2. **Vs. 7-8 - SEPARATION from God** – Sin causes shame, fear, hiding, and cover up.
3. **Vs. 9 - CONFLICT in Relationships** – Blame, division, selfishness, pride, and power struggles.
4. **Vs. 19 - DEATH** – Final consequence: *dust to dust.*
5. **Vs. 15 - Gospel Good News PROMISE** – God comes with discipline and a prophetic promise: *“He (Jesus) will crush your head and you will strike his heel.”*

V. Gospel Good News: *Through Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection God defeats evil, rescues us, and redeems all our work for our good, and His glory.* Romans 8:14-18, 28-29

A. “Gethsemane” means “olive press” – Jesus was *pressed* in agonizing mental and emotional suffering for us before he endured the physical suffering of the cross. He sweat drops of blood and wore a crown of thorns for our sin.

B. Suffering *presses* us until the oil of the Holy Spirit flows.

VI. YIELD to God’s Plan to Redeem Work - I Peter 3:8-18

B. – Begin Each Day with Prayer – Serenity Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, PRAY Scripture. Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you.

L. – Look and Listen for God to show you openings for to bless others with words and actions.

E. – Enter into the openings God provides with confidence. *Make the most of every opportunity.* Ephesians 5:16

S. – Serve like JESUS - meet the needs of employers, supervisors, employees, co-workers, and customers.

S. – Story (witness): Be ready to give your “God Story” when the questions come about your life. 1 Pet. 3:15

Theme Verse: Colossians 3:²³ *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,*²⁴ *since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*