

Pastor Tom Mortenson

Grace Fellowship Church, Port Jervis, New York

August 21, 2022

Ecclesiastes Revisited - Work

Ecclesiastes 2:17-23

Prayer: Father, I just again, I thank you for your grace and your goodness. I thank you for the old rugged cross, Lord, that's the reason why each of us can be here. It's the reason why each of us can stand before you and we're just so grateful and thankful for it. Again Lord, we just are looking this morning once again into alternatives to that cross and how Solomon embraced them and how awful they truly were, and so we just again thank you, Lord, that we have this incredible gift. And this morning as we open up your word, I again want to pray for the ability to take it in, for the ability to not just to hear it but to make it a permanent part of our lives. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, as most of you know we've been spending this summer looking at God's wisdom in Solomon. God chose Solomon to have more wisdom, more wealth, more power than any other man of his time, and he used those resources to explore living his life in a way none of us could even imagine. And so we've been following Solomon this summer as he embraced laughter and then wine and then folly,

amusement and sex, all which he put under the category of pleasure. And again he experienced these things as he put it -- quote -- "with his eyes wide open." And we've seen as we've examined them that each of them failed to deliver what they had promised and as Solomon put it, *"everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind."*

This morning we're going to take another look at yet another area that Solomon examined. It's an area far more substantive than pleasure itself, it's an area that most of us willingly dedicate our hearts, our energy and our time to. It's the area that Solomon referred to as "toil." And call it toil or labor or occupation, career, Solomon was an expert at it. When it came to putting money to work, Solomon was the Donald Trump of his day. His wisdom forced him to see what toil was ultimately about and that is absolutely nothing. And that truth sucked the life out of Solomon, the master builder.

This is how he describes the curse of the wisdom he was given in verse 17 of *Ecclesiastes 2*. He says: *So I hated life, because what is done under the sun was grievous to me, for all is vanity and a striving after wind. I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he*

will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity.

Well Solomon's wisdom made it painfully obvious that the one enemy that he could never defeat, that enemy was time itself. He knew that time was the great equalizer. And for all of his wisdom and wealth and power, he was in the end only capable of controlling his own time. And as soon as that time was over, he understood there's no telling who's going to control what he poured his life into. As it turns out when Solomon did die, his kingdom was torn in two, it was divided between Rehoboam his son and Jeroboam, one of his former subjects. And as it was Solomon lived long enough to have deep regrets over the way he had spent his time because just as he feared, his spectacular achievements were all destroyed and they were destroyed by time.

So God gave Solomon this sacred task of writing down his regrets when it came to examining his life's work so we could all benefit from that. And if we look carefully we can see God's wisdom in Solomon's regret and we can learn from him the right way to approach our work. The right way to approach our work by understanding that meaning comes not from work itself but from the what, the how and the why of doing work itself, no matter what that work may be. Solomon's life and his regrets can teach us about work itself. First what it is we are called to do; secondly, how we are to do it; and thirdly, and perhaps most importantly why.

So first let's look at the what of work. And the first notion we need to dispense of when it comes to work is this notion that there are some jobs that are sacred and there are some jobs that are secular. That's simply not the case. *Colossians 3* says: *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.* Whatever you do. I mean that covers every legitimate type of work there is. And again that's not to define pastors and clergy down, rather it is to define all other work up. For sure for a time there was clear and hard division between priests and people. That was the way it was in the Old Testament but there was a purpose in that and the purpose was the holiness of God. God was emphasizing that he was set

apart, that he was holy and unapproachable and only the high priest had access to him. God was perfect; his creation was not. It had lost its perfection when its federal head Adam had rebelled, and the only way to approach God was through the means he provided: the shed blood of an innocent animal as mediator through a high priest. And those who thought that they could get around that, those who thought they could ignore those warnings, they died in their efforts because God is nothing like us. God is holy and perfect and we are not, and you violate his holiness at your peril.

The entire Old Testament priesthood pointed to the need we have of someone to stand between God and man, of a mediator, and the high priest did just that, but he was just a man. He was an imperfect representation of the perfect mediator that Jesus Christ was. Jesus came to earth as God in the flesh, lived out his life perfectly then went to the cross to exchange that life of perfection for our sin when we by faith trust him as our Savior. He was the second Adam, the first one having failed miserably, selling his perfection and yours and mine for a bite of forbidden fruit. Adam alienated all of humanity from a perfect God by saddling all of us with imperfection from birth. As the psalmist declares in *Psalm 51*: *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* And it was Jesus who was able to restore my standing with God by giving me his righteousness. I

mean, I and neither you -- none of us are perfect. We've had our sins paid for by Christ. So when God looks at me, he sees my account as paid in full not by what I've done but by what Christ has done in me. So now in Christ we can freely approach a holy God because we too have the perfection of his Son by faith in his sacrificial death. And so the result of what God intended for us from the start. Because of Christ we now have a purpose in living. And it's described by the first question the Westminster Catechism asks of us and that question is: What is the chief end of man? What are we here for? And the answer is: To glorify God and enjoy him forever. Well that glory, that glory definitely includes our work.

Glorifying God is just another way of saying that we are God's billboards, we are God's means of expressing himself, we are here to display the attributes and character of God. We are here to show the world what God is like and how he responds, and he reveals it through us, his children. That's why Jesus said in *Matthew 5*, he said: *let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.* Now that puts our work into a very different context. I mean there's a reason why Solomon's work was so empty and so meaningless, that in spite of all of his spectacular successes, he hated it. I mean it's the same reason that all of our work done

that way will ultimately fail. Solomon says in verse 17: *So I hated life because work that is done under the sun was grievous to me!* And again, remember what "under the sun" means. Under the sun means naturally, outside of the kingdom of God, whatever occurs outside of God and his kingdom. It's a work with no greater context than that which this life can give it and it's just not enough. We all know deep down that time is going to render it meaningless. And it doesn't matter what work you do, like Solomon you'll find that time is going to make a mockery of it regardless how noble and worthwhile it is.

I've talked about Dr. Albert Schweitzer before. He was this brilliant philosopher, musician, theologian, physician. He lived only 60 years ago. He died in 1965. In 1913 he gave up everything in order to go to Africa to minister health to the poorest of the poor, and he saved many, many lives. But the question that I asked the last time we talked about Dr. Schweitzer was for what? Schweitzer saved many, many lives 75 years ago. Virtually all of those lives that he saved, they're now ended. And all those that Schweitzer saved are now in their own graves, and that's just a fact. So ultimately he didn't really save anyone from death, he just postponed it for a little while. And now time has claimed those lives anyhow. So you tell me without a connection to a living God, without a connection to something that transcends time

itself, what's the point? What's the point of even a noble life like Dr. Schweitzer's? For that matter what's the point of anything that we do? Eventually just as it did to Solomon, time is going to claim everything we do and render it absolutely pointless, meaningless, and a chasing after the wind. That's what the curse of wisdom forced Solomon to see. It basically stripped away from him the illusion that what he was doing was meaningful. And even he acknowledged that without an eternal context, there's really no point to anything, even the noble deeds of a Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

This is what Solomon said in *Ecclesiastes 2:14*. He said: *The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool!*

I mean Solomon says what's the difference if you spend your life saving others or if you spend it playing the fool? In the end the ultimate result is exactly the same. This is what he says in verse 22. He says: *What does a man get for all the toil and anxious*

striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless. You know why it was all meaningless to Solomon? Because it was all work done under the sun. It's work done without any connection whatsoever to God and to any eternal kingdom of God. Solomon's pain and frustration at the end of his life was the direct result of the wisdom that forced him to see what we refuse to see, and that's virtually one hundred percent of what we do outside of the kingdom of God is going to be reduced to absolutely meaninglessness.

Here's a little exercise. Just take a moment to try to think of -- try to capture the most loving, careful, thoughtful and sacrificial thing your great great great grandfather ever did for you. What does that mean to you today? I mean, you don't even have a remote clue who they are or what they did. So in the end, how did it matter? So what's the answer? Well, CT Studd was a British missionary in the 1800s. He was someone who served the Lord in China, in India and Africa and there's a line from a poem that he wrote that sums up perfectly what the answer is. It sums up perfectly where meaning actually comes from. The line is this -- quote -- "Only one life so soon it will pass." I bet you know the rest of it. "Only what's done for Christ will last." Now that one statement does two things. First it separates all work that's done

under the sun for work that is done for the glory of God, number one. Secondly, it also makes every kind of work potentially sacred. It's why we say anything, I mean even taking out the garbage can be a sacred thing. You know, evangelicals we often get locked into this pietistic mindset, you know, pastors and missionaries, they do the sacred work, everybody else does secular work. I've done both and I know that is not true. There's a much better way to see it from God's perspective, and from his perspective it's not the what of work that defines sacred or secular, it's the how, it's the how of how we do it. I mean there are pastors and missionaries who do their jobs worse than any pagan around. And there are farmers and teachers and lawyers and students and housewives and hundreds of others who understand exactly what *1 Corinthians 10* is saying. It says: *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

See, God wants you and your perspective, your vision, your insight and your understanding of his kingdom to penetrate every single aspect of this world and that includes every single part of the work that we do. And so the real answer to the what of work is not sacred or secular, the answer is actually whatever. *Colossians 3:23: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.*

See, God wants to redeem all of his creation not just the so-called spiritual parts. It was C.S. Lewis who said: "There is no neutral ground in the universe! Every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan." And unless and until we see all work in general and our work in particular as part of that contested ground, we will be forced to see what only the world's view of why we work and that is one endless, pointless cycle. I've said it many, many times, we work to make enough money to support our spousing and our children long enough for them to get an education so that they can get married, make enough money to support their spouse and their children so they can repeat the cycle on and on and on. As Solomon put it in *Ecclesiastes 1:2*, he said: *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. He says: What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.* You see, that endless cycle drove Solomon to despair because his wisdom wouldn't let him pretend that it was otherwise.

And you know what keeps most of us from that same despair that Solomon had? It's the distraction of the pleasures that Solomon could never be satisfied with. By and large we live out the same

cyclical life that Solomon hated, but laughter and wine and folly and amusement and sex, that distracts us enough not to notice how empty life itself really is. Take all those distractions away. What do we have left? I mean you all know that famous beer commercial that says: "Guys, it doesn't get any better than this." Trust me, it has to. I mean there's a reason why we need those distractions, why work is simply not enough. And once again it was Solomon's wisdom that sees it. This is what he said in *Ecclesiastes 3:9*. He says: *What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.*

You see, there's a reason why Solomon in all of his wisdom was so unhappy and I call it the burden of eternity. The burden there is that we were made for far more than what we have settled for. I mean it's God's intent that you and I should rule and reign with Christ forever and deep down we sense that because God has put that same eternity in our hearts. Because of Adam's fall we're not the glorious creatures we were meant to be and we can't fully fathom what God has done. Paul says, we see through a glass darkly. I mean it's like you got a beer bottle up to your eye and you see all of life through that same dark prism. We see dim reflections of

the life that we were meant to live. And the result is that most of us live not for life itself but for life's distractions.

C.S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*, he points out how we aim our hearts way too low. This is what he says. He says: "Indeed, if we consider the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are halfhearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."

See when it comes to work, when it comes to work we also have to ask ourselves what is my deepest desire about my work? I mean what are we seeking? Is it a raise, is it a promotion? Maybe it's a new job altogether. Well, maybe the answers don't satisfy because we're asking the wrong questions. What will genuinely satisfy us? Well the answer is only God and God alone. I mean if the "what" of our jobs is whatever we do, then the "how" of our jobs has got to be for the glory of God. *Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* And glory, again, it's simply God's character and attributes revealed in me. So as I said, what you do isn't nearly as important as how you do it.

And how you do it is our second point. The how of our work is directly connected to how connected you are to Christ. I mean we think when it comes to work what really matters is, you know, it's intelligence, it's education, it's degrees. You know, Solomon had all of that in spades and it failed him utterly. See, when it comes to work what we really need is not -- it's something that is actually available to everyone. It's something that glorifies God and it also makes me a co-worker everybody wants to hang with. We call it the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It's none other than loveliness of Christ that grows out of each of our lives.

Galatians 5:22 says: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

You know, a while back, Janice was explaining this to one of our girls. She was feeling like she was nothing special, there was nothing special at all about herself, she wasn't a top athlete, she wasn't a top scholar, she was just a normal kid and that was just starting to get to her. And I remember my Janice saying, do you think in the end people really care how smart or how athletic you are or do they really care about how loving, kind, gentle and thoughtful you are? You see, you can't control your intelligence, you can't control your athletic ability but you can control who you are as a person, and you do that by bearing the fruit of the

spirit.

Okay. So how do I do that? Do I go out and get a bunch of books? Do I start reading about all of these new things? Do I go to conferences? What do I do? How do I learn how to be loving, kind, gentle and thoughtful? Well, we all know that stuff doesn't work. So how do I do the how of my life in my work? I'm afraid the answer is so obvious, it's incredibly easy to overlook. How you do the how is you draw near to Christ. Jesus makes it crystal clear in John 15 that the fruit of the Holy Spirit comes specifically from a relationship with him. He says in *2 Corinthians* the more we behold him, the more we become like him. He says: *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.* And in *John 15* Jesus actually describes the process. He says: *I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

So we know from *Galatians 5* what the fruit of the Spirit is, those nine qualities that actually define the character of Christ. They also become the character of his followers through the power of his Holy Spirit. You see, the vine and the branches expresses the fact that when you come to Christ you get grafted into the vine, so his

Holy Spirit takes up residence inside you. And you know, the proof of his presence is not -- you can't see the root or the branches, you can only see the fruit. I mean how do you know if someone is actually a believer in Jesus Christ? How can you tell if the relationship is real? Well Jesus made a very simple analogy. He said a tree is known by its fruit. In *Matthew 7* he said: "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*"

You know, a wild grape and a Concord grape, they're fruits that both grow from a grapevine but they are vastly different in quality. They both also reflect the internal power that governs each vine. You can't see where the vine's roots go and so you have no idea what kind of resources that vine has tapped into. And you can't tell by looking at the vine which nature it is, whether it's wild or domesticated. The only way you can judge a vine's nature and power is by looking at the grapes that it produces. I mean it's the fruit that tells you what power has been flowing through

that vine. It's the fruit that tells you what its nature is as well. And so it is the fruit of the spirit. I mean I can't tell by looking at you whether or not you're rooted in God's Holy Spirit, whether you are the living water of Christ's Holy Spirit flowing within you. I can't tell just by speaking to you whether or not your nature has been changed by an encounter with the living God. I mean there are lots of folks who mastered the vocabulary and characteristics of Christianity without actually experiencing the new birth that makes you a new creature in Christ. But I can do what Christ did. I can look at the fruit that your life produces. I can look for evidence that Christ himself through the Holy Spirit is now flowing through the unseen parts of your life because when he does flow through you, you will begin to produce the very characteristics of the loveliness of Christ. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, gentleness, self-control, they will begin to supernaturally grow out of a life that is now tapped into the very power of God himself. And that's why I always say by far the loveliest people on earth are supposed to be Christians. They are the ones who reflect the fact that Christ now lives within them.

And Jesus goes on to say that the closer we draw to him, the more this fruit will become part of our lives. I mean he compares our lives to those branches on the vine and He goes on to say: *I am*

the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. And there it is again: By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. And again glory is just God revealed in us and God says whatever you do, do it to reveal me to your particular world. Our venue might be carpenter, businessman, housewife, doctor, lawyer, laborer, maybe even a pastor. But the what is not nearly as important as the how and the how depends entirely on how much we abide in Christ.

Understanding that all work is ministry can transform work, because it fixes my eyes not on this world but on the kingdom of God. I mean Solomon said, *"What does a man gain from all his labor which he toils under the sun"* and the answer that shattered at Solomon was: Absolutely nothing. I mean if you're a brain surgeon or a nuclear physicist or perhaps president of the United States, you might get the appearance of something, but time's going to destroy it all. It's God alone who can redeem it. God says in *Hebrews 6:*

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. And Jesus tells us in Mark 9: For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.

Again, only one life so soon it will pass, only what's done for Christ will last. And it's all a matter of the what and the how you aim your life at. The what of work is answered by whatever, whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. The how depends entirely on how much we choose to abide in Christ. And finally what about the why? You see, you can't really do the what or the how of work itself until you truly buy into the why. And for that I want to go back to a story that Joni Eareckson tells in her book *When God Weeps*. She describes two different scenarios and they both involve a hundred pound weight that you're required to carry on your back. In one sense you've been given the weight in a complicated series of directions that gets you from one point to another and you're not told what the weight is or even why you're carrying it, you're just told that it's absolutely necessary. Well in the other scenario you're told that that hundred pound weight is actually your son who's been severely wounded and the directions are to the nearest emergency room. Now you got to understand, the labor in both cases is exactly the same. You have to carry a

hundred pounds of weight a set distance. In one scenario you grit your teeth and you start to work. But in the other one you become a person possessed. You become unaware of the weight that you're carrying and your determination to get there as fast as you can. And the only difference between the two scenarios is that one of them answers the question why. I mean in one exercise the point is uncertain; in the other it is the driving force. Well Solomon's curse was that his wisdom demonstrated in no uncertain terms that all of his work done under the sun was ultimately pointless. And he understood that it may take months, years or even millennia but time will render everything we do under the sun as null and void. It's something that deep down all of us know because God has put eternity into our hearts. I mean, you all know the old cliché that says, "Aim and nothing and you're bound to hit it." And deep down we all know that all work done under the sun aims at absolutely nothing.

But what if you know the why of work? That there was a God who saw right through all of our giftedness and talent and blessing and leveled the whole playing field of our work to one thing and one thing only, and what if that one thing that God cares about in my life and work didn't even have to do with money or status or power or work, and that God gives not a fig whether I'm a CEO or a Shop Rite bagger, a Ph D or a high school graduate, a five-star general

or a buck private? What he cares about this one question that defines why we do what we do. The question is: Are you faithful? You see, faithfulness cuts across all the strata of status when it comes to work. It enables me to find the point of an essentially pointless endeavor because what really matters for eternity is not the what of my job, God says whatever you do, it's the how and the why of my job that matters. I mean the how is accomplished simply by drawing near to Christ. God said: *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.* And the answer to the question of why do I do what I do is to be faithful to whatever task I've been given. You see when you see faithfulness as your venue for displaying the fruit of God's Holy Spirit within you, it can transform your work, whatever it is. And when you fully begin to grasp that faithfulness is the ultimate, ultimate measure that matters, then the ultimate approbation that gives life meaning for eternity is God saying well done, good and what? Faithful servant. And faithfulness is available to anyone.

In *1 Corinthians 3* Paul deals with factions that had arisen in the church and interestingly enough they seem to be the very same factions that plague the average workplace. There's jealousy, there's backbiting, there's gossip, there's people taking sides. This is what Paul wrote. He said: *What then is Apollos? What is*

Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw -- each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Understand what God is saying here. He says -- quote -- "and each will receive his wages according to his labor." He says everything we do in this life is going to be judged on the basis of his foundation. Was it done to reveal the character and attributes of Christ in me? If so, it's gold, it's silver, it's precious stones. Was it done on the basis of any other foundation? Then it's wood,

hay, and stubble. The fire of God's judgment is going to burn it up. Quote -- *"though he himself will be saved but only as through fire."* And notice this judgment is for believers in Christ. This is for those who have been saved not by their good works but by the blood of Christ. You can have all of your works destroyed and you will suffer loss but you will be still saved because we are saved not by our works but by Christ's. The most meaningful work that was ever done was the work that Christ did for us on the cross. And his work frees us up to pursue a life of meaning that escaped Solomon.

Do you get what God has done here? What he's saying is Christ has laid the foundation and we get to build on it. And do you see how that answers the why of work? You see, why I should care about my job? Why I can still triumph through faithfulness no matter what my job is? Why I can still trust that God will reward what my boss may never see? I mean do you see why my relationship with my boss, my co-workers matters? God is insisting that what we do by faith here now today matters not just for now but for eternity. Because what you do now is the venue that God has given you to reveal himself to the world. And because faithfulness, not success, is the measure that God measures us by. Because Jesus tells us in *Matthew 6: Your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.* Because God tells us to *"let our light so shine among men that they*

may see our good works and glorify him!" Because glory is what we were created for. It's all about revealing the character and attributes of God wherever it is he puts you. And that applies to any legitimate work we do.

And so the what is whatever we do, the how is through the fruit of Christ's spirit, and the why is for his glory. Solomon hated his life and his work because it had no ultimate meaning. He knew time was going to undo all that he did and fool or wise man made no difference at all. We have the answer that Solomon desperately sought and it's still captured by these same two lines: "Only one life so soon it will pass, only what's done for Christ will last." Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you that we have a life with meaning. I thank you that you have supplied that hidden part. I thank you, Lord, that the ultimate measure for every single one of us is faithfulness. What has God given me to do and am I doing it faithfully. That's the matter that measure -- that's the measure of the matter that works, Lord. I pray that you would give us the idea, the insight, the wisdom to seek out what it is you've given each of us to do and to do it to the very best of our abilities. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.