

SERMON OUTLINE Ecclesiastes 2:18-26

The Two Gifts of God

TOIL UNDER THE SUN

I Hated All My Toil (18, 20, 22)

Eventually, Everything Ends in the Hands of Another (18, 21)

Sometimes it Ends in the Hands of Fools (19)

Sometimes it Will Be Managed by a Fool (19)

THERE IS NOTHING BETTER FOR A PERSON (24A)

WE NEED TWO GIFTS, NOT ONE

The First Gift (24a)

The Second Gift (24b-26)

TOILING WITH AN ABOVE THE SUN PERSPECTIVE

1. God is always working (Genesis 2:1-3, summarizing Genesis 1; John 5:17).
2. God delights in his work (Genesis 1:31; Psalm 149:4; Jeremiah 9:24).
3. God's work is primarily to create (Genesis 1-2), order (Genesis 1-2), and care for (Psalm 145:14-16); and then it is to rescue (2 Timothy 4:16; Colossians 1:13) and restore (1 Peter 5:10; Revelation 21:1-5).
4. God invites us to join him in His work and His delight in it (Genesis 1:28, 2:15; Psalm 127:1).
5. We work at creating (Gen. 1:28), ordering (Gen. 2:20), caring for (Gen. 2:15), rescuing, and redeeming (Matt. 28:18-20).
6. Whenever we work like God our work has value and dignity.
7. Because God is always working for the good of the world, so should we (Matthew 5:45).
8. Because God calls us to join in his work and his delight, work is not something we do primarily to make money but to glorify God.
9. We are representing God in all our work (2 Corinthians 5:20; Colossians 3:23-24; Ephesians 6:5-6).
10. Our work can and should be as much a part of our worship of God as Sunday morning (1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 12:1).
11. We must see work as an opportunity to show and speak the good news of Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15).
12. The Holy Spirit is living in us to empower us for good work (Ephesians 3:16).
13. We were made for work, but we were also made for rest (Genesis 2:1-3; Matthew 11:28-30).
14. Work is harder and less fruitful because of the fall (Genesis 3:17-19).

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

MAIN POINT

In our passage, the Preacher tried to find meaning and significance through his work. The big idea we see in it is that work for its own sake can never provide the kind of meaning and significance we long and are made for. The main takeaways are to look first to Jesus and then to work as unto Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were your thoughts on the text/sermon? What most stood out? How was it helpful? Confusing?
2. If you had to pick one word to describe life under the sun, what would it be?
3. Is there anything on earth that, if you had it, you're pretty sure would make you happy for the rest of your life?
4. How would you describe your relationship with work?
5. Is there a scenario in which you can imagine finding genuine satisfaction in life from work?
6. Can you relate at all to the Preacher's conclusions on work (hatred, despair, sorrowful, vexation, restlessness, vanity)?
7. Which of the Preacher's reasons for his conclusions is most frustrating to you?
8. How do you finish the sentence, "There is nothing better for a person than that..."? Can you see why Pastor Dave said that our answer is everything and that it has eternal consequences?
9. What do you think of the idea that we need two gifts from God in order to find genuine satisfaction in life? How have you experienced this to be true? Are you at all guilty of seeking first gift happiness?
10. Which above-the-sun principles on work stood out to you the most and why? Can you think of any ways that living more fully in light of them would dramatically change your experience with work?
11. In what way/s did the sermon help you see the greatness of God?

AREAS OF APPLICATION

12. Pick one aspect of your work that you are struggling to fully commit to the Lord and ask someone to join you in praying for it.
13. Identify one way you can grow in your discipleship of your kids so you will be able to leave your stuff to the wise.
14. Identify one thing that you should stop working for since you know it cannot truly satisfy and will not last.
15. Work hard to produce something excellent this week for the glory of God and the good of someone else.
16. Finish the sentence for your life, "There is nothing better for a person than...".
17. Pick one or two of the above-the-sun work principles and dig deeper into it this week.
18. Ask two different people in your family or DG (1) One thing they got from this sermon, and (2) How you can pray for them.
19. Pick one specific thing you mean to do differently, with the Spirit's help, as a result of the things you heard in this text/sermon.

PRAYER POINTS

20. Adoration. Praise God that He is always working, that He delights in His work, and that His work is to create, order, care, rescue, and restore. Praise God that He is the giver of two gifts. Praise God that there is no mystery for Him.
21. Confess. Confess ways in which you have been working apart from God's design and command. Confess ways you've been looking for work to give what God alone can. Confess any ways you've tried to find satisfaction in the first gift.
22. Thanksgiving. Thank God for giving you good work. Thank God for working in your work. Thank God for the ability to provide for your family, glorify God, and bless the world through your work. Thank God for His first and second gifts in your life.
23. Supplication. Ask God to help you work as unto Him. Ask God to help you answer the question of what you believe is best. Ask God to help someone find a good job. Ask God to help you a second gift in an area you currently lack it.