

Thursday, September 9

The message dealt with the fact that many of us struggle with trying to find our self-worth outside of our work. The holiday we celebrated this past Monday – Labor Day – grew out of laborers’ desires to be valued beyond their jobs and to have lives beyond their work. When we meet people, one of the first things we learn about them is what they do for a living. When people are introduced on the news or even on a game show, one of the first things we learn about them is what they do for a living. Of course, on the news, people are usually interviewed for their expertise which is connected to their work.

Take some time today to meditate on your “other identities” that define your life and self-worth; are you a parent, a sibling, a child? What are your interests and hobbies? What relationships do you have outside of work? What relationships, outside of your family, are important to you? Consider these questions and pray a prayer of thanksgiving that your self-worth is not entirely connected with your work. Write some of your ideas here.

Friday, September 10

Yesterday, we considered our self-worth outside of our work place. Today, let’s consider your self-worth in terms of your service to God and Jesus the Christ. Do not limit yourself just to work in a particular church ministry. What do you do in the world that builds up other people? What do you do that enables others to learn about our loving Creator? What do you do that instills hope in others? How are you trusted to provide information about your faith and the importance of discipleship – that is, living out our faith in service to others?

The possibilities are endless and the blessings you provide can make a huge difference in the world. Pray for God’s guidance as you seek to be of service with others for the benefit of others!

Message Notes – September 5, 2021

*Making Yourself Useful**

- I. No _____ denies that Philemon is the work of the Apostle Paul, and in this letter Paul makes the point that he has written it by his own hand.
 - A. In this short letter, we're introduced to Philemon, a _____ owner, and his runaway _____, Onesimus.
 1. Onesimus found his way to _____.
 2. It is nearly unbelievable to our 21st Century sensitivities that Paul never addresses the _____ of slavery.
 3. Paul actually has a much deeper, even _____, agenda in writing to Philemon.
 - B. Paul, as a Roman Citizen could have appealed to Philemon on _____ grounds.
 1. Paul chose to appeal to Philemon not on the basis of law but on the basis of _____.
 2. Onesimus is _____ solely as a slave.
 3. Then Paul refocuses Philemon's view by pointing out how Onesimus is now useful to both of them, not as a slave, but as a fellow _____.
 - C. Paul's appeal that all human beings are of inherent _____ may seem an obvious one today.
 1. In the time of Paul, however, it would have been considered _____.
 2. While most of us have probably not had to struggle with the radical changes that Paul is writing about, many do struggle with trying to find our _____ - _____ outside of our work.
- II. The history of Labor Day traces back to _____ by the Central Labor Union on _____

*Philemon 1-25

Tuesday, September 5, 1882.

- A. Congress passed legislation creating Labor Day in _____.
 - B. The eight-hour workday and the 40-hour workweek did not become the standard we know today until _____.
 - C. Many of us still struggle to find a _____ between our work and the rest of our lives.
- III. Labor Day is an opportunity to think about what brings _____ to our lives.
- A. We are full of use as _____ of Jesus Christ, called to serve him in our everyday living.
 - B. We are more than our jobs. We are full of use for Christ and his _____.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, September 6

Today is Labor Day. As mentioned in the message, Labor Day has roots in a demonstration by the Central Labor Union in New York City on September 5, 1882. Labor Day was created in 1894. The eight-hour workday and 40-hour workweek did not become standard until 1940.

That's some general history about the Labor Movement in the U.S. What's your personal "Labor History?" What jobs have you held of the span of your life? Which jobs did you enjoy most? Which jobs did frustrated you most? From which jobs did you learn the most? Why not write down your personal work history here and then pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the work you've had over the years. Give God thankfulness of your usefulness in the workplace. You can write your thoughts here.

Tuesday, September 7

Read Philemon 1-25. Twenty-Five verse. You've just read an entire book of the Bible! By now, you know that Philemon is actually a letter from the Apostle Paul to Philemon, a slave owner. Paul is attempting to reconcile Philemon with a run-away slave, Onesimus. It is nearly unimaginable to our 21st Century sensitivities, that Paul doesn't address the institution of slavery.

While slavery can never be justified, we should understand that institution from its first-century perspective. First, slavery in ancient Palestine is that it is not based on the subjugation of another race as it was in Colonial America. Second, Roman Law actually provided protection for slaves. Remember, Paul could have legally provided advocacy for Onesimus in dealing with Philemon. However, Paul was more interested in reconciling Philemon and Onesimus as fellow followers of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." In Jesus, many categories of human interaction and self-worth melt away. How do you understand that statement? Write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, September 8

Read or at least skim Philemon 1-25. Paul makes the plea to Philemon that Onesimus was of no use to him while away from him. But now, as a fellow follower of Christ, Onesimus is of great worth to both Philemon and Paul as together the three can work for God's kingdom on earth. The old categories of slave owner and slave melt away and the transformed lives of these three men can make a difference in the world as they are faithful to the work of the early church.

This seems very improbable today in our very divisive society. Not only today, but think about what it took to end slavery in our nation – a Civil War! What does it mean to be truly transformed by Christ? What does the process of that transformation look like? Consider these questions, pray, and write your thoughts here.