

CALL to PRAYER- Pray for Israel - their success & salvation. (financially, militarily & spiritually)

Ephesians 6:5-9 - S.L.A.V.E. Labor for the Lord

Intro - "Jesus Christ is LORD" is the most basic Christian confession. By this we mean that Jesus is God...He is the Creator & the King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules over the nations and is the world's only option for a Savior. He is the Lord of life & death. We mean all that...but we also mean more than that. Jesus is Lord both *ultimately* as well as *personally*. Jesus is Lord in the life of the Christian. His word & His ways rule in our lives. (Luke 6:46) We are to obey whatsoever He has commanded us and His lordship is applied to every area of our lives. Jesus is Lord not just of our church-life, but also our home-life & work life. All of life is to be lived under Jesus' lordship. Ephesians has already shown us how to live as: husband/wife, parent/child ^{Eph. 5:22-6:4}. Now it transitions from family relations to work relations. Jesus is lord on SONday but also on Mon. - Sat. We are to be Christians at church...at home...and at work. We display our faith by the way we do our work just like we show our faith by how we interact with our families. The way we work can adorn our faith or bring scorn on our faith. Today we will use the acrostic S.L.A.V.E. to remind us Christians how Christ has commanded us to engage in our work-life.

S - SUPERIOR / SUBORDINATE DYNAMIC

- A hierarchy of authority is woven into society.
 - Any organization, business, family, military, government, school, church, etc., operates on a hierarchy of authority. Somebody is the leader/superior...somebody is the subordinate
- Hierarchy is good because hierarchy & patriarchy reflects the Trinity.
 - All 3 Persons are co-equal & co-eternal but there is hierarchy within the One God
 - The Father is first. The Son submits to Father. The Spirit submits to Father & Son
- Eph. 6:5-9 addresses the slave/master dynamic in work-life
 - Slavery was (is) a common arrangement in world history. (may address next week)
 - Application to superior/subordinate relationship in our work-life
 - If Christian slaves were to submit...how must more employees? 6:5

L - LABORING FOR THE LORD

- Jesus is Lord of our labor, and we are to labor for the Lord. Jesus is our ultimate boss
 - 6:5 - "as to Christ" 6:6 - "slaves of Christ" 6:7 - "as to the Lord"
 - Col. 3:23-24
 - Understanding our *Ultimate Boss* should spur faithful service for earthly boss.
- Eph. 5:21
 - We serve our earthy superiors out of service to our *Ultimate Superior*.
 - The fear of Christ should make us faithful and fruitful at work
- All work is *sacred work* when you are working for the Lord.
 - Every Christian is in full-time ministry. We all have a Christian vocation
 - God has given you a job in: teaching, security, food, finance, healthcare, childcare, tech, art, admin....
 - Walk worthy (4:1) and work worthy of your calling as a Christian working for Christ.

A - ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

- An attitude of Obedience 6:5a "*Slaves, be obedient...*"
 - Titus 2:9 no sassing the superior
- An attitude of Respect 6:5b "*...with fear and trembling...*"
 - Eccles. 10:20. (bosses are not to be bad mouthed)
 - We ought to respect those God has gifted in business and given us a job
 - Recent strike by dockworkers. (greedy works railing against greedy bosses)
- An attitude of Sincerity 6:5c
 - Not half-hearted. We are not to be lax in our labor. (lackadaisical)
 - Eccles. 9:10 Col. 3:23
- An attitude of Productivity 6:6-7
 - Not a brown-noser then a loafer
 - Some people only work hard when being watched by the boss (not worthy of their hire)
 - Prov. 18:9 (dishonest gain destroys the one who gives it and the one who receives it)
 - My first big test as a foreman - (I wouldn't cuss 'em but I would cut their pay)
 - It is God's will for you to be worthy of your hire - 6:6 (a productive worker)
- An attitude of Adornment
 - The way I work as a Christian reflects upon my faith as a Christian. (good or bad)
 - Titus 2:9-10 1 Tim. 6:1

V - VALUABLE, VIRTUOUS & VALIANT IN OUR VOCATION

- Joseph was a model worker in: the family with flocks...as a slave...prisoner...Prime Minister
 - His circumstances didn't change his service or his work ethic
- We are to work hard for bad bosses. (Be the best worker in the worst circumstance)
 - 1 Peter 2:18-20 (A bad boss is a big opportunity to live Christianly)
- We are to work hard for good bosses
 - 1 Tim. 6:1-2
 - Having a Christian boss doesn't entitle the Christian worker to slack off.
 - If a believer benefits from your labor....work all the harder
- The Protestant work-ethic (Wikipedia definition - Protestant/Calvinistic/Puritan work ethic)
 - Diligence, discipline and frugality
 - Enabled the rise of capitalism
 - Not just the clergy (and "professionals") but every vocation is a calling from God
- We are to walk worthy and work worthy of our calling as Christian workers.

E - ETERNAL REWARDS FOR OUR TEMPORAL WORK

- What does your retirement package look like? (SS / 401K / Pension / ??? / full coverage)
 - Some Christian workers (slaves) seem to get the short end of the stick.
 - One purpose of work is to reap a reward
 - Some get theirs here ^{Psalm 17:14}and some get theirs later.
- God has a great benefit package - Eph. 6:7-8
 - Col. 3:23-24 Matt. 25:21 Luke 12:37-38
 - If you work for the Lord, then you will get rewarded by the Lord. Rev. 22:12-13