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### Everyday Ministry in a Broken World of Work—Reimagine Our Work in Light of the Cross

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Imagine this: You clock in at the factory, day after day, year after year. The work is almost robotic. You assemble tiny components for electronic devices, devices that, you realize, are fueling unhealthy addictions in countless young people.

And the wage? Barely enough to put food on the table for your family of four. The only escape you have is scrolling through your phone, but even that offers a bittersweet ache. You see friends posting pictures of vacations, of meals at fancy restaurants, of lives that seem worlds away from your own. Hope feels like a distant dream.

You're caught in a system that seems designed to crush your spirit. Is there any meaning to be found in this kind of work?

This is the question that haunts countless souls today. And it's a question we, as followers of Christ, must grapple with. We often forget that we are entrusted with a Gospel that speaks to the depths of human experience, a Gospel that offers genuine hope and empowers real change.

#### **Identifying the Gaps that Need to be Bridged**

We live in a time of deep spiritual hunger, a time when many, especially young people, are walking away from the Church. Why? I believe it's because they often see a disconnect between the faith we proclaim and the realities of our daily lives, particularly in our workplaces.

The world of work, for many, is deeply broken with corruption, injustice, and inequality. And if we, as the Church, only offer a sanitized version of faith, focused solely on individual success stories, we risk further alienating those who are struggling in the trenches.

The need for authentic, lived-out faith in the workplace has never been greater. Sharing the Gospel isn't just for missionaries in far-off lands; it's for each of us, starting from right where we are.

#### **The Key is Discipleship**

So, how do we do this? The key, my friends, is discipleship.

But here's the crucial point: discipleship isn't merely about tweaking our individual behaviors or advocating for surface-level reforms. It's far more radical than that. Authentic discipleship calls us to confront the very ideologies that shape our world, the desires they fuel, and the distorted ways we try to find fulfillment.

Think about Jesus, a Jewish man living under Roman occupation. He didn't just offer band-aid solutions or call for superficial change. He challenged the very operating system of the world by embracing the cross.

The world told us to grasp for power, to achieve greatness to earn worth and acceptance. But Jesus, rooted in the Father's love, embraced weakness, vulnerability, and ultimately, death on the cross. His life, death, and resurrection exposed the utter bankruptcy of the world's logic and unveiled a far more compelling way of being and living.

As Lesslie Newbigin so powerfully wrote, "The model for all Christian discipleship is given once and for all in the ministry of Jesus. His ministry entailed the calling of individual men and women to personal and costly discipleship, but at the same time it challenged the principalities and powers, the ruler of this world, and the cross was the price paid for that challenge." (The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society)

2 Corinthians 13:4 reminds us, "For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God."

Jesus calls us, His disciples, to embody this alternative way of living. We're called to be a counter-cultural community marked by sacrificial love and radical hospitality, even, and especially, when it means embracing our own vulnerability.

This means challenging the relentless pursuit of power and dominance that infects our workplaces and replacing it with sacrificial love for God and our neighbors. It means questioning the world's obsession with achievement and recognition and embracing a life of meaning and purpose grounded in the Gospel—the radical truth that we are broken, yet loved and accepted by our Heavenly Father.

This doesn't negate the importance of individual and systemic change, but it calls for something deeper, something that can only come from the transforming power of the Gospel. And how do people encounter this transforming power? Often, it's through witnessing it lived out in the communities of disciples, the Church.

### **Reimagine Work Under the Light of Holistic Mission**

We, the Church, need to allow God to unleash our imaginations! We no longer work for recognition or acceptance anymore; but embrace the divine revelation that we are already loved and accepted by God through the work of Christ, we work to create goodness, to love those God brings into our lives, and to invite them to follow Jesus through our words and actions.

We need to reimagine work itself through the lens of the holistic mission given to all of us: the Cultural Mandate, the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission.

The Cultural Mandate reminds us that we're called to be stewards of God's creation. Genesis 1:28 calls us to be fruitful and multiply, to cultivate and create. We're called to create good and beautiful things that reflect the goodness and beauty of God. So, let's ask ourselves: How can we create tangible and intangible goodness that reflects God's redemptive power in a broken world?

The Great Commandment calls us to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. In the workplace, this means treating everyone with dignity and respect, advocating for their well-being, and helping them experience the abundant life Jesus offers. So, let's ask ourselves: Who are the neighbors God has placed in our paths? How can we love and care for them as fellow image-bearers of God?



The Great Commission in Matthew 28 calls us to make disciples wherever we go. Our workplaces are mission fields. We share the Gospel through our words and actions, demonstrating what it means to follow Jesus. And when those God-ordained moments come, we confidently invite others to know and follow Him.

When we embrace these three aspects of our mission—the Cultural Mandate, the Great Commandment, and the Great Commission—as interconnected parts of the holistic mission, living out our faith at work naturally leads others to encounter and be invited to follow Christ.

### **Concluding Story**

I'm reminded of a story my friend (Ricky, who is also here today,) shared with me. Couple months ago he gave a talk in Macau about living out Christian faith in the workplace and met a Christian woman who worked as a casino dealer. She was deeply conflicted about her job. How could she, as a follower of Christ, be a part of the gambling industry? But in Macau, it's almost impossible to avoid. The entire city's economy is built on gambling.

This woman needed her job to support her family. She felt trapped. You might not agree with her choice to stay, but her story reveals the often-messy complexities of living out our faith in a broken world.

But here's what struck me: Even in that environment, she found ways to live out her faith. When she saw gamblers losing control, squandering their money, or making reckless bets fueled by alcohol, she would quietly intervene. She'd remind them to save enough for a return ticket home, or she'd find subtle ways to help them step away from the table.

This woman, working within a system distorted by sin, found ways to bring light into darkness. She embraced an imperfect job, a job many would consider ethically questionable, and through it, she found ways to provide for her family and to protect the vulnerable.

Friends, we need to reimagine our work in light of God's Kingdom. Our workplaces may not be perfect, our jobs may come with compromises, but we can still be agents of God's grace and truth.

### **Call to Action**

Through our work, we can create good and beautiful things, stories, and even cultures. We can nurture life-giving relationships, restrain evil, and build environments where others can flourish. We can cultivate lives marked by sacrificial love, reflecting the very heart of God.

And in the end, let's never forget the ultimate picture of beauty and the ultimate act of sacrificial love is: the cross of Christ. May we reimagine our work in light of the cross, bringing God's redemptive power to bear on a world desperately in need of His transforming grace.

Thank you