

WORK • REST •
SERVE •



FAITHFUL

IN ALL OF LIFE

**small
groups**
LIFE TOGETHER

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OUR SERIES AIM

To know and experience more deeply the way the gospel transforms our work, our rest, and the way we serve God and others.

STUDY ONE

WORK - Created to Work under God's Rule

THE BIG IDEA: God made us to work as part of ruling his world under him, but sin corrupts work. In Christ, work is redeemed as a way to serve God.

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 1:26–31

Humans made in God's image to work and rule over creation.

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 6:5–9.

Work wholeheartedly, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

KEY POINTS:

- Work is not a curse; it is a good part of creation.
- The fall frustrated our work (Genesis 3), but it didn't make work evil.
- Now, in Christ, all work (whether "spiritual" or "secular") can be done for God's glory.

Getting Started

Who has ever found work hard or numbing? What contributes to those feelings?

Who has found work deeply fulfilling and exciting? What has contributed to those feelings?

Read Genesis 1:26–31

What is the task that God gives to the man and the woman at creation?

What does that look like in practical terms?

How has this been impacted by sin? Does this make work bad in and of itself? Why/why not?

Read Eccl 2:4-11

If we look at verses 4-10 what does the Teacher gain from his work?

What is his final assessment of his work in verse 11? Why is this the case? Does this feel true to your experience?

Read Eph 6:5-9

What is Paul's teaching to slaves in this passage? How does it reframe the work that they do?

What is his command to masters? How does that reframe how masters oversee the work of their slaves?

What would it look like to work like this in our day to day?

Read Eph 2:8-10, Eph 4:28, 1 Thess 4:11-12, 1 Tim 5:8

What do these verses tell us about work?

What is the significance of community in these verses?

How do reconcile these verses with Eccl 2:11?

Wrapping Up

What does it look like to honour God and work for His glory in my workplace?

What are the challenges that I have in my daily work that can make this a struggle?

Digging Deeper (Optional extras)

In *Joined-up Life*, Andrew Cameron suggests that “modern people have become poor at articulating the primary purpose of their work...most can offer its secondary outcomes of fulfilment, reputation and consumption. Few consider how their work relates to created or social order”¹

Thinking about your work, would you agree or disagree with this statement?

He identifies work as having two primary outcomes. The first is the care of created order that is linked back to the creation account we looked at earlier. The second is to promote communities of caring as pointed to in the New Testament verses we studied.

¹Andrew Cameron, *Joined-up Life*, IVP, 2011, p. 272

How would you finish one or both of the below statements from *Joined-up Life*?

1. 'I use and care for creation as I ...'
2. 'My activity enables caring community by...'

These are questions that we can find hard to answer. Partly because we are often not thinking about how our work is an integrated part of our life.

There is a third outcome for work.

Read John 6:26-29

What work does Jesus call his disciples to?

We are all called in different ways to be part of this. Some are called to be pastors, evangelists, etc. We all participate when we live and work in a way that honours God and points towards His coming Kingdom. All our work can be done for God's glory

STUDY TWO

REST – Resting in God’s Salvation

THE BIG IDEA: True rest is not just ceasing from work, but trusting in God’s finished work – rest now can be enjoyed spiritually and one day completely in the new creation.

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 5:12–15

Sabbath remembers redemption from slavery.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 4:1–11

Strive to enter God’s eternal rest.

KEY POINTS:

- Sabbath points beyond physical rest to the spiritual rest found in trusting God’s salvation.
- In Christ, we rest from our slavery to the world.
- Physical rest still matters now, but it is a sign pointing us to ultimate rest in the new creation.

Getting Started

How do you understand the concept of rest and how is it viewed within our culture?

What are the things that get in the way of embracing rest?

Read Genesis 2:1-3

What does God do when he has finished his creative work?

Read Exodus 20:8-11

What are the people of Israel commanded to do? Why are they to do it?

Read Deuteronomy 5:12-15

What are the similarities and differences from the fourth commandment in Exodus 2:8-11?

How do these passage contrast with our general idea of rest?

Read Joshua 1:13-15, 1 Kings 8:56

What is the rest referred to here? How is it the same or different than what we read in the earlier passages?

Read Lamentations 5:1-5

What has happened to the Israelites? How does Joshua 1 and 1 Kings 8 help illuminate what is happening here?

Read Matthew 11:28-30

What does Jesus promise? How do the Old Testament passages we have looked at help us understand what Jesus is promising?

Read Hebrews 3:12-4:11

What is the writer of the Hebrews warning the readers about? How does the backstory of rest in the Old Testament help us understand this warning?

What is the rest that is being referred to in 4:1 & 11? How can people enter into that rest?

Read Hebrews 4:14-16

Recall Matthew 11:28-30. How does this relate to Hebrews 4?

Wrapping Up

How have you been challenged and called to rest?

What can you do to be more intentional about rest?

STUDY THREE

SERVE - Freed to Serve Like Christ

THE BIG IDEA: Salvation frees us to serve others, following the example of Jesus, not seeking status but gladly giving up our lives for God's purposes.

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 42:1–9

The humble servant of the Lord will bring justice.

New Testament Reading: Philippians 2:1–11

Have the attitude of Christ, who humbled himself to serve.

KEY POINTS:

- God's servant (Jesus) served to bring salvation.
- We now serve others not to earn God's love, but because we have received it.
- Service is humble, sacrificial, joyful - modelled on Christ.

Getting Started

How do you feel when there is a call from the front of Church to serve?

Read Isaiah 42:1–4

How is God's servant described? What is it that God promises he will do through his servant?

Read Ephesians 2:8–10

In verses 2:8–9 what is Paul establishing? Why does that matter?

In verse 10 what picture of the Christian life is Paul presenting? Is that a reality that we feel in our day-to-day life?

How does this challenge and clarify our thoughts and feelings around serving?

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

What is the purpose of the roles Paul highlights in 4:11?

What is the focus of our works of service?

In 4:15 we are called to speak the truth in love in order to build up the body. Can you think of good examples of this in your life?

Read Philippians 2:1-11

In verses 1-4 what is Paul calling the Philippians to do? What does that look like?

Looking at verse 5-7, what does Jesus do? What would it look like in practical terms for us to have the same mindset?

In verse 8 Paul describes Jesus as humbling himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross. We often think of humility as passive or powerless but here it is active. Jesus chooses to humble himself for others.

When we consider this reality how does it shape the way that we serve?

Wrapping Up

Who are we serving?

What is the goal of our service?

How should we serve as a community at St Paul's?