

What Is a Good Work

by Art Katz

Art Katz emphasizes the importance of understanding and performing good works as defined by God's righteousness, alongside the necessity of waiting on Him in Sabbath rest.

Duration: 53:47

Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-7, Isaiah 58:12-14, Matthew 5:10-12, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Good Works"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the concept of pleasure and how it can lead people away from total obedience to God. The speaker shares a personal experience of being distracted by children playing outside his window and realizing that it was a reminder of his lack of fellowship with God. The speaker and his community had discussed setting aside a day for spiritual renewal, but they kept putting it off due to various excuses. Eventually, they reached a point of desperation and surrendered themselves completely to God, spending thirteen hours in silence before Him. The speaker acknowledges that waiting on God with the expectation of receiving a reward is not true waiting, but rather a form of corruption. The sermon ends with the speaker acknowledging the complexity of these ideas and not attempting to reconcile them with other perspectives.

Transcript

Answer your saints, precious God. Lead us exquisitely by your spirit and word for word. From heaven, give us a divine communication that shall be recorded in the annals of God as historic for the Church of Jesus Christ in New Zealand and for the earth.

Let it be an hour in which a time has come and a word is to be born, my God. Give us a word of release, something utterly consequential. We wait upon Thee, Lord, and we thank Thee for such an hour.

Give us hearing ears and an understanding heart and an obedient will. Let there be a consequence for this night, my God, that shall send shockwaves, reverberations throughout a nation and beyond a nation. Lord, we're asking largely, for we know that You can answer and we ask that You will.

Not for our sakes, for that dying world's sake, for Your name's sake, do it, we pray. We'll give You the honor, the praise, the glory, the acknowledgement, the tribute. In Jesus' holy name, Amen.

Well, I feel this is one of those occasions where I'm being required to walk over that precipice with the balancing pole and over the tight wire, over a chasm that I have never before traversed, but I'm willing to take the chance of plunging. As a matter of fact, I have no alternative. I've tried to shake it off.

It avails nothing. I have simply just to go ahead and see how it's going to work out. We can begin with Matthew 5, and I ask you to listen attentively, taking these steps with me.

The Sermon on the Mount, the portion that we referred to at the beginning, from the verse 10, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do men light a lamp and put it under the peck measure, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. I made reference the last time on this topic that there's a conjunction between righteousness and glory, and the good works that are referred to in the 16th verse are the works of righteousness, and these alone glorify our Father who is in heaven. It may seem like a simple observation, a truism hardly worth speaking, but the only kind of work that will glorify God or the Father is God's own work.

The Father's own work is the only kind that will glorify him. Every other work, however well-meaning, however sincere, is a dead work. We need to be shaken profoundly to recognize that the measure for estimating whether a work is God's or man's is not whether it seems to succeed, whether it brings numerical increase, whether it makes the people happy, whether it seems to fulfill a conspicuous need.

All of those things may be true, and it may yet be a dead work. There's only one absolute standard by which a work will glorify God the Father, and that is that it's the work that he himself has ordained and performs through us. If that's the case, if that alone is a good work, a living work as compared to a dead work, what work is it? Is it feeding refugees? Is it opposing atomic arsenals? Is it campaigning for pacifism? Is it against smog and pollution of the earth? Is it in being involved in teacher's strikes or against strikes? What is the good work that will glorify our Father who is in heaven? And I want to give the cat, is that the expression? Let the cat out of the bag and say that the work in my opinion, at the end time work that will glorify the Father, is the work that is born out of the rest of God.

And I hope to show that tonight in taking you through a bit of an excursion in the scripture. There's been a subject on my heart virtually from the time I've arrived that I've been trying to swallow down or ignore, but the Lord has not allowed me to do so, and tonight I have got to allude to it. If you'll turn with me to Isaiah 55, I'll begin to introduce it.

Well, let's say Isaiah 56. Thus says the Lord, preserve justice and do righteousness. Amen.

That's been his theme from the first with us in these days. For my salvation is about to come and my righteousness to be revealed. I've underlined in my Bible the word my.

The works that glorify the Father are also things that constitute his righteousness. Any other righteousness is self-righteousness, as any other work is dead work. I hope to appear before you tonight as one utterly simplistic and absolute in his views, black or white.

How blessed is the man who does this and no other. And the son of man who takes hold of it, who keeps from profaning my Sabbath. How did that get in there? How do we all of a sudden go from works to Sabbath? What is this some kind of sleight of hand? Some kind of deft manipulation? Or is there some kind of profound connection between work and rest? A paradox, an end time final revelation of something that has evaded us that we need both to see and to apprehend in our experience.

Who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and keeps his hand from doing any evil. I'm going to be gasping and sucking air all the way through this, so this is only sign number one. And the reason I'm doing so is because I almost virtually have to start from scratch.

Speak to you as if you have never understood or had the faintest inkling and you're being introduced for the first time to some of the most fundamental and necessary concepts of God. For example, when you read the word evil there, I'm sure immediately that you conjure up in your mind some grimy picture of something lascivious and steeped in sensuality and vulgarity and orgies. Well, yes, that's one expression, but there are subtleties of evil that don't have any of these connotations at all, and yet in God's sight are equally and as blatantly evil, for which we ourselves, everyone in this room, are guilty.

What kind of evil are you talking about, Ott, if you're not talking about blatant sin or moral corruption? Well, it's alluded to a little earlier in the 55th chapter, where we read in the 7th verse, "...let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." We are so naive, so earthly, so human in our considerations, however religious, that we have not understood the enormous gap, the disparity between heaven and earth, and our thoughts and his thoughts, and our ways and his ways, so much so that God says, "...let the wicked forsake his way." Doesn't mean that his way is apparently wicked or evil.

It doesn't mean that he's rolling in the gutter in his vomit. It doesn't mean that he's debauched in sin. It means that he is simply assuming and enjoying and taking to himself a way which is his own, and not God's.

That's enough in God's sight to make it wicked, and it's equally as much in God's sight for our thoughts to make us unrighteous, not because it has to do with fornication, or adultery, or other kinds of sensual imaginings, but only because it's our thought. I'm hoping against hope. I'm operating by faith that you're understanding, that we need to see as God sees, and how wicked and unrighteous we have been before him, initiating things out of ourselves, programs and activities, and every kind of religious conduct that had a seeming appearance of good, but in God's sight was wicked or evil, because it was our way, not his.

It was our thought, and that's what made it unrighteous. The thought was religious. It was even spiritual, but the thing that makes it unrighteous is, it was ours.

I sometimes feel like one of the few servants of God on the earth who has this brooding, passionate jealousy for the complex working of God in the last days. To see this labyrinthine interweaving of the

purposes of God, that so much as a hiccup in Moscow has reverberations in Washington DC, and so is it also in the kingdom. If you but once glimpsed this, and understand that we're moving toward the culmination of the age, and everything is so intricately bound up, you would not ascend a platform like this, even to speak in two-by-four New Zealand, to a meager collection of saints, without the greatest kind of foreboding and trembling.

You say, ah, it's only us. Well, that's the way you may see it, but that's not the way God sees it. God sees it, and I choose to see this night tonight as utterly historic, as if time itself is suspended, as if God is wanting to birth and bring into existence, by his word, an event that will have such consequence.

You say, my, you have grandiose notions, but I always think so, and if it were not so, I wouldn't want to be on platforms, because I'm not an entertainer. I always believe that God has such ultimate things to perform, and I have a special sense of that tonight. God calls us to do righteousness, but not our own.

He calls us to do good works, so that in that final wedding supper, we shall not be embarrassingly and eternally naked, but clothed with the garment that is made of the good works of the saints, the good deeds, the righteous deeds of the saints constitute that garment. How careful we ought to be about what would then we do, what ought we to do, what constitutes a good work. Blessed is the man who does this, that his, God's righteousness might be revealed, who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, the Lord will either surely separate me from his people, neither let the eunuchs say, behold, I am a dry tree. For thus says the Lord to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, and choose what pleases me, and hold fast my covenant, to them I will give in my house and within my walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters, and I will give them an everlasting name, which will not be cut off. Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and holds fast my covenant, even those I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on my altar.

Strange passages. What does this have to do with righteousness and deeds? This reference to Sabbath and the eunuchs who keep them. I want to say that one of the most radical requirements that God has ever posited to his people has been to keep his Sabbath.

It's so radical a requirement, so contrary to human inclination, disposition, and will, that you virtually have to be a eunuch to do it. And there's something growing in my spirit and consciousness, especially in these days with you, through conversation and through my own observation, a sense that you're wonderful hearers, that you're most fastidious in taking notes from speakers, that you nod acceptably and sigh in all the appropriate places in a kind of spiritual amen, but I'm not at all persuaded that you're going to do what you hear. As a matter of fact, I have a growing impression that you're chronic non-doers.

There's something about doing that changes everything. And somehow we have been so spoiled by nodding and being in agreement with things spiritual and agreeing to the things that are preached, that it has even dulled and made it even more difficult to be able to break out of that filmy cellophane plastic thing that contains us and keeps us from being the doers of God's Word. Now, not too long ago, God spoke into my own fellowship during a period of time that we were waiting upon him for ten days.

An entire fellowship had called a moratorium on everything. We took the off the hook in every way that we could, literally, symbolically. We ceased every function and every act, and we wanted to come before God and wait upon him in a kind of complete cessation of ourselves.

We wanted to quiet ourselves before God. You say, how was this born? Well, I have been preaching everywhere that the Church was born in waiting, that the one commandment in obedience to which the Church was born was, wait in Jerusalem till you be endued with power from above that you may be witnesses unto me. And the Lord has just been drilling this into my heart, this utter and profound waiting, with the women also, for ten days in an upper room.

It's a staggering thing. I don't think that we have adequately considered it, what that means, because it is so alien to our own experience. We had had an earlier time, a few years before, in a crisis of our fellowship, when Alan Williams was with us, a precious YWAM brother who led us through a great difficulty, where the Lord had us on our faces for thirteen hours, in utter silence.

It was not at all boring. I have never had my spirit so profoundly engaged in God as through those thirteen hours. Nothing happened at the conclusion of them, but we knew when it was over, and we all rose from our faces, the adults of the community who were at each other's throats, in such a tension and a poisoned atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy, and every kind of thing that had gone wrong and gone amok, that we had come into community with the bravest and noblest of kingdom intentions.

We had come to a crisis beyond our ability to solve, though we were artful in all of the vocabulary of a kingdom come, we could not perform it. We came to a place of utter desolation, brokenness, we had confessed our sins to one another, it had to begin with me. We wept, we prayed, and we finally came to a place where we could say nothing more and do nothing more.

We came to an utter end. We went down that morning by some kind of unspoken signal, on our faces before God as dead, and the only thing that broke that silence, that punctuated those thirteen hours, was an occasional groan or a sob. Not any talking.

I'll show you how carnal we are. I'm sure that you're asking, well, did the glory of God fall? If you wait on God with a motive and an expectation that you're going to receive a reward for your investment, it's no longer waiting on God. It's a utilitarian investment, which is already too much of what we presently are.

Waiting on God is not because you expect or you deserve or you need a response, it's because God is God, and we are men, and this is the correct foundational posture before him. And I don't think we're going anywhere, folks, until we find it. And I don't think we're going to undertake anything either, until we find it.

Because it's likely to be born out of our own feverish mind, out of our own compulsive necessity to do, out of our own insecurity that requires some kind of activity that we might be found to be doing something good for God. I'm suspicious, profoundly suspicious, of our humanity. Something needs to come down in a totality before God, where there's not so much as a whimper possible out of us.

Then, if it shall please him, he can unfold his strategy for a world that is so compacted in its bloodshed, its violence, and its corruption, that no man has the wisdom to know how to unravel it or where to begin. Don't ask me how this is to be reconciled with Loren's points of view. I'm not even asking the question, I'm only obediently opening my mouth and speaking.

Somehow there's a way in which it's to be resolved. Waiting is another name for Sabbath. Sabbath is another name for waiting.

A total cessation from man. A bringing to a quiet before God of the entire human personality. And I'm not speaking about sinful, corrupt men who have to be kept from their sport and from their diversions.

I'm speaking about spiritual men who mean well for God, who also need to come down before him in that kind of totality. It was in the course of a... Oh, let me get to this. So, having preached that the church began in waiting, in the command to wait, I remember stepping off the pulpit one day, flushed in my face, having preached wonderfully, and some young believer, you can always trust them, naive, coming up and saying with complete innocence and candor, Artie said, in all of your travels, all over the world, he said, have you ever found a single fellowship that has yet waited together ten days on the Lord as they did before Pentecost? You know the kinds of questions that when they're asked, they hit you in the solar plexus and you gasp and double over and the air goes out of you? It was that kind of a question.

I was devastated by it, and my mind raced through some of the most beautiful fellowships to be found over the earth that I've had the privilege of touching and ministering and visiting and knowing, and I finally had to turn to this young man and say, no, I don't know one that has ever yet waited, in modern times, ten days on the Lord together. And then the Lord asked his question, how about your fellowship, Hotshot? So I came home and I shared it with the folks, and they all agreed, yes, one day we ought to do it. But of course it will have to be a really opportune day, when the kids don't go off to school, when the demands of the ministry and community are somehow at a minimum, and that we can afford to do it in that day.

Somehow the day never came. Somehow the demands grew more hectic, more demanding, more voluminous, more pressing, until this past September, we came to a resolution that such a day would never come. The world of flesh and the devil, let alone God's people, would never grant it.

We simply had to take it. We had to be a doer of the word. The kingdom of God suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

It cometh not by observation. And so we declared, as of Monday, this fellowship is commencing a ten-day period of waiting on the Lord, in fasting for as many of those days as you can. I think most of the men fasted the entire ten days, and we didn't die.

Felt like it. And it's going to begin at such-and-such a building, and we're going to begin every morning, meeting together at eight, after the kids go off to school, put away every practical task and every burning necessity. We're not going to the office, we're not going to open our mail or see to our correspondence.

We're giving ourselves totally wholly exclusively to God in waiting. We didn't know how to do it, but to begin. We thought that we would stay up all the night, the elders first, and we fell asleep.

Some were more persistent than others, but it was a groggy and unsatisfying night, and in the morning the Lord showed us that he had another way. That there was to be prayer 24 hours a day, around the clock, in three-hour shifts. And we had ten days of prayer, 24 hours a day, around the clock, and found ourselves praying with saints who are in the fellowship, but we have never seen them in this posture or in this relationship.

Somewhere between 3 and 6 a.m. in the morning, on the seventh day of the fast, groggy, foul-breathed, mind dulled, to be in the same room with three or four others in the same condition. You want to know

something? I never heard such prayers. I never heard such prayers.

Somehow we had come beyond and into a dimension other than that which we had prayed previously, and our prayers were not bad before. They were conscientious and dutiful and sincere, but this was another dimension of prayer, almost beyond ourselves and not even of ourselves, where we were too wasted by lack of sleep, by lack of food, by tiredness, by the strange thing of being lost in God in that continual realm of waiting for it anymore to be self-consciously our own. I cannot believe some of the things that we prayed, heroic, devastating, large, radical, sweeping.

The ten days did not end with the falling of God's glory, which I so desired, that He would rend the heavens and come down and make the mountains to quake and melt them in our presence. But we had extraordinary dealings day after day. I have never seen such exquisite, powerful, penetrating dealings of God with men as was our privilege to experience morning after morning as we assembled together.

I can't take the time to describe some of them or any of them. I just want to say in summary that for me the greatest value was this, a foundational thing was corrected or established for the first time in my understanding. Namely, that God is the creator and that we are the creatures and that there's only one fit and right appropriate posture of ourselves before Him and that is in total prostration and in utter silence waiting.

That's the priestly place and until that is restored, we're not going to find the apostolic place. For these are inextricably connected, for Jesus is the high priest and the apostle of our confession. This is an hour of restoration and God is restoring what has been lost to the church through tradition, through human manipulation, through mere religious practice and waiting upon God is one of these foundational things that is now in process of being restored.

On the seventh day of the ten days of waiting, it proved to be a Sunday and in that service, one of the elders gave a message on the Sabbath of God. I praise God that I was not the one who gave it. Lest anyone would think that I was speaking out of my Jewishness, that there was some kind of residue, hangover of something intrinsic to my Jewish past that was now being subjectively expressed.

The word came out of the mouth of a Gentile of the Gentiles, a man different from me in every point and particular and when I heard that word, a hush came over my spirit and I knew that we were hearing a rhema of God, a now word, a word that we were privileged. It was something being given that came down from heaven. It was perfect and it was from the text in Isaiah 58.

The 13th verse, if because of the Sabbath you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on my holy day and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honorable and shall honor it desisting from your own ways and from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, then you will take a delight in the Lord and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. And underneath that text I have written, Sunday September 13th 1981, Dominion evening service, Art Beebe's message, perfect. I wanted to remember this word that broke into time, that came out of the heart of God, that was not given as Bible study, it was not given as something to which we should nod for its aesthetic or spiritual appeal and beauty, it was given to obey.

God was calling us to restore the Sabbath in practice. Oh I used to say to people who would ask me, well Art you're Jewish and you're a believer, what about the Sabbath? Do you observe it? Well no, we're in grace and we're beyond the law and we're no longer required to have this kind of observation. For me

every day is the Sabbath and yet as I said that, though to a sense it was true and probably more true for me than for most because of a rest to which the Lord had been bringing me, of necessity must bring me or else how can you follow after the Lord for two and a half months at a time from Egypt to Israel to Athens, come aboard a ship on our Easter Sunday without preparation and banged out of shape and no time to prepare yourself and miss the first launch and get there with a service begun and be rushed up to the platform and just have a presentiment in your spirit, John 11, Lazarus and open the Bible and open your mouth and something comes out of such portent for that people and so also in Belgrade which was the next stop and arrive in Belgrade in the same condition and have four services, one right after the other and East Germany for a month in occasions that were church history in the making that you held your breath as God led us through things so intricate with patriarchs and apostolic giants of the faith in a room listening to me and then on to ministers conferences in France and Switzerland and back to West Germany and to England for two and a half months, day in and day out, night after night.

You've got to be in the rest of God. It's not even physically possible so I knew it in measure but I was never happy with my glib aside of every day is the Sabbath when the fact of the matter is that no day in fact was. I'm not pressing for a particular day but I'm suggesting that this shall always remain for us a kind of biblical rhetoric, a mere kind of fanciful expression, a sweet sound in the ear until we shall determine to do it.

I just want to share our beginning experience from the day that the Lord spoke this to us. We sought to make our Sunday into a day of the Lord, not an hour of the Lord, not a few hours of service for the Lord, the day of the Lord because the word says from doing your own pleasure on my holy day were we actually able to give God a full day in the week. Wouldn't we be bored? What would we do before and after service? What if the weather was beautiful and you itched to be out rolling on the lawn, supposing the kids were chafing and impatient and it was a great day for a ball game.

Could you say to them who have school five days a week and Saturday chores that listen, this is the Lord's day and you cannot indulge your pleasure in sport. Oh, come on Art, you can't be that cruel. After all, they're only kids.

It's wholesome recreation. They need a bit of sport. God doesn't mind.

You see why only eunuchs can keep the Sabbath. I want to tell you that one of my favorite heroes in the scripture is a eunuch. I have paid a price for celebrating him publicly.

An Ethiopian eunuch in the book of Acts chapter seven or eight, I think it is, described as a man of great authority who had the charge of all the Queen's treasure. Only eunuchs can. You say, how come? Because something has been radically dealt with at the root that there's no way after that, that anything that belongs to the treasury can be misappropriated by such a one in the house of God.

You can trust him with your bevy of wives, with your, what do you call it? Your harem. You can trust him with your treasure. You can trust him because the ax has been laid to the root.

I thought a eunuch would be some high pit squeaked voice, effeminate character, but it says a man of great authority. There's not many who would like so to have the ax laid so radically to the root of their lives. And for that reason, they're not entrusted with treasure, nor great authority.

And I have been looking at that map every day that we have been here. That map has been pressed into my eyeballs. I virtually see it steeped in blood and can hear the groans and cries coming out of every corner of the earth.

The needs are overwhelming for the righteous acts of the saints. But what is needed to perform them is great authority and the charge of all of the King's treasure. A eunuch is not only stripped of any prospect of misappropriation, he has to bear also the stigma of being so denuded.

He's a radically separated man. That's service to God that somehow cannot be rendered by others, whose eyes always will somehow itch or be tempted to see something voluptuous for themselves. But a man who has been radically dealt with at the root has no reason for his eyes to wander or to be distracted.

There's no possibility of insinuating his own ambition in the purposes of his King. There's a single-eyedness that is possible only to a eunuch that is not available to others. See, others will talk about every day is the Sabbath, but for them no one day ever is.

A eunuch is one who keeps it and takes hold of the covenant of God and keeps his Sabbath. Keeps it! I don't give a rat what the weather is like or how much the kids need recreation or what ball game is on TV or what innocent or harmless diversion could be enjoyed. He keeps it and makes it the Lord's day.

I can't tell you how excruciating walking this out has been for us and we're heads and shoulders above you, not because we're superior, but because we've had seven years of a far more intensive and demanding kind of life and community than ever you have known in your charismatic and other situations or can know. But despite that seven-year investment, when we had but to be obedient to this one word that came down from heaven on the seventh day, symbolically enough, of a ten-day time of utter separation to God and waiting, it was excruciating. What should we do at the time? What about my kids and their restlessness? What about my wife's dotting looks? What about the hints of some that, couldn't we do this and couldn't we do that? Would that be considered pleasure? How do you define pleasure? And begin to sense all of these subtle ways in which men extricate themselves from a total obedience to God.

It was a painful walking out what God has said and we're not through it yet. On the very second or third week, I was in my room in a kind of rest up on the Lord before the evening service. It was a beautiful day and I was kind of wakened from my reverie by shouts and screams and kids playing right outside my window.

My house is just a stone's throw right across a little path from the other eldest house who gave this message. He was sitting by the window so he heard these shouts as clearly as I. I immediately rushed down to see what's up and the kids had just broken up. They had been playing ball.

So long as I was up and out, I walked into his house and I said, brother, didn't you hear that noise? He said, what noise? Sometimes, you'll not count this travesty, it's almost more rich to quote Shakespeare than the Bible. Conscience doth make cowards of us all. You can give a brave word, but if it's your kids who are playing ball and you have to stop them and come out there and say, hey, didn't God speak to us about keeping the Sabbath and desisting from our own pleasure and doing our own thing and seeking our own way? Now, I'm required to tell you kids that you have to cease right now from playing.

How many of us can stand the look of their kids who will construe us and see us as legalistic, unfair or whatever other adjective they could come up with and have to look at their pained faces and see that we have lost esteem in their sight because formerly they had seen us as nice guys and real elders and wonderfully balanced men who understand and now we are narrow and insistent. What noise, he said? He went strangely and conveniently deaf because he could not bring himself to the kind of obedience that would result in a loss of esteem with these kids. It takes a eunuch to keep the Sabbaths of God.

For thus says the Lord to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths in actuality by doing the work. I don't care whether it's Sunday that you choose to do it or Saturday, but I wonder what it would mean if Christians in a particular nation would determine to do it and give an entire day over to the Lord. Not so much as turning on their TV set, not so orchestrating their Sunday service that allows them to sleep in late from staying up late the night before, before the TV set or their good pleasure and coming home yet sufficiently early to have the full day, the balance of the day for their pleasure, but that they gave the Lord the whole day.

How long would it take before that would come to the attention of the Gentiles around you who would think you insane for so misspending that valuable time? I think it might be one of the most profound witnesses that we could ever practice to be the doers of such a word and to choose that which pleases him and hold fast the covenant. Word came to him through the evangelist that was joined to his chariot. He said, what does hinder me seeing this water from being baptized? Nothing if you believe with all your heart.

And so it says, and he commanded the chariot to stand still and they went down into the water. This is why a eunuch though he is despised in the world is esteemed by God. The world may laugh up its sleeve at these strange men who are single eyed in their devotion to do it, to stop the chariot and get off and go down.

But the Lord loves them. And he says that he'll give them a name in his house beyond that which is given better than that which is given to sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, which will not be cut off.

Because they are cut off from their own pleasure and doing their own thing. He'll give them a name which will not be cut off. In Matthew 19, Jesus said, there are eunuchs that are born eunuchs, poor freaks, they couldn't help themselves.

And there are eunuchs that are made eunuchs of men. I guess it must take about four able bodied men to hold them down and lay the axe to their root. And then he says there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

Let them who can hear it, hear it. I don't think that these great needs in the world, this great cry for righteousness, the prophetic presence for a church in a world that is disintegrating is going to be met except by those who take hold of the Sabbath of God. Because I don't think that anything that is born outside of that Sabbath is likely to be a good work.

Maybe our work, but it will not be His and it will not glorify the Father. Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord to minister to Him. This is priestly ministry.

I can hardly imagine or know how to describe what such ministry is. Of a ministry that is a ministry to Him, that is not to men, that is not determined or affected by how the people will like it or how they'll receive it, but is utterly and singularly given to Him. Priestly ministry.

To be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast my covenant, even those I'll bring to my holy mountain. That's a reference to the government of God, to the Zion of God, to the law of God that goes forth out of that Zion for nations. I'll bring to that holy mountain.

Getting restless, are you? I see a few of you shifting in your seats. The word losing its novelty? Those I will bring to my holy mountain. Those who have charge of the King's treasure.

Men of authority who will rule and reign with Him, who do not profane the Sabbath but take hold because they're eunuchs who keep His Sabbath and make them joyful in my house of prayer. So one is a reference to the church as it affects the world and the other is a reference to the church as it affects the saints. To be effective and powerful in one and joyful in the other is the privilege that God gives to those that keep His Sabbaths and choose what pleases Him.

A few verses down, there's a kind of an alternative that is suggested from the 10th verse on in chapter 56 of Isaiah. His watchmen are blind, all of them know nothing, all of them are dumb dogs, unable to bark. Dreamers lying down who love to slumber.

And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied. And they are shepherds who have no understanding. They have all turned to their own way.

Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. Come, they say, let us get wine and let us drink heavily of strong drink. And tomorrow will be like today, only more so.

In my kind of intensity tonight, do I dare suggest that when the smoke clears, in this radical centrifugal process that is going on, by which we are moving toward one radical orbit or another and there's no neutral ground between, that the two things that are offered and toward which we're tending is one to be a eunuch who keeps the Sabbaths of God and does His pleasure. Whose ministry is unto the Lord, who holds fast the covenant, who has a place in His holy mountain and in His house, as against others who are dumb dogs who bark, who don't even bark, who are toothless, whose activity and sound signifies nothing. Who a dream is lying down, who love to slumber, who say amen and sigh for the word but don't do a thing about it.

A spiritual slumber, a lying down, a life that is inconsequential, meaningless, both for time and for eternity. They are shepherds, it says, who have no understanding. Greedy for their own gain, their own denomination, their own work, their own pleasure, but that's all.

They have all turned to their own way. Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. And tomorrow will be like today, only more so.

Christianity which is a mere succession of services. Boring, monotonous, predictable, dull. One Sunday like another.

A little faint variety, perhaps in a visiting speaker, but nothing substantially to be expected. Different from previous Sundays. Tomorrow will be like today, only more so.

Excuse me for this whole simplistic view tonight. And for radically suggesting that we're coming to an hour when it's the one or the other. That we're going to be a people who are doers of the word, no matter how it makes us appear to men.

No matter how it's going to offend our kids. No matter how we cannot explain ourselves. Because the Lord has said, you shall keep my Sabbath.

You shall not profane it. For if, because of the Sabbath you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on my holy day. And call the Sabbath a delight, and not a drag.

Not a boring requirement. Not a religious obligation. A delight.

The Lord's day. Who knows to what degree the heaven will be opened. Who knows what kind of impartation God will give.

Who knows how he will honor our obedience and come down. Who knows that he'll not give us services that cannot be timed. That will go on in hours in such an excursion and journey that we're in heaven.

Where not so much as a baby whimpers or a kid is restless and rides in his seat. For God is present and makes us to ride on the high places of the earth. And gives us the heritage of Jacob.

Because we have been obedient to be doers of the word. And have desisted from our own pleasure. And from our own way.

And speaking our own word. That's enough to terrify nine out of ten pastors right on the spot. Because if there's any day that is steeped in sweat.

That is full of grimy exertion. And labors that profane the Sabbath. It's Sunday.

Men who are speaking their own words. Breaking their necks over the concordance to come up with some novelty and some clever, some cute, some acceptable thing. To be winsome and acceptable and colorful and quaint and attractive and impressive and biblical.

Come on guys, you can't fool me. Let's confess up. Sunday is the most rugged, demanding and sweaty day of the week.

It's ironic that we've come so full circle. That the day that should be the Lord's day and the day of rest and the Sabbath of God has become for us the most hectic, the most frenetic, the most frantic, the most sweaty of all days of the week. We can't wait for it to be over to finally loose our tie and let out a sigh that the work, the labor is finished.

Then Monday becomes our day off. Doing our own pleasure and speaking our own word. What would it mean to face a Sunday in the rest of God and trust that he would supply his own word? You not only have to put up with the faces of your kids because they are detained from playing ball.

You have to put up with the faces of your congregation as you stand there silently in chokes and splutters waiting for that which comes out of the rest of God and is his work and glorifies the Father. And not your expertise or human eloquence or religious ability. I don't think that we're going to come to this all at once, but we need to start coming to it.

I think it's rather remarkable and I've never seen it before because Lauren has been alluding several times in these days to chapter 58 as a key of something that God is restoring and that until we do it, until we break the bonds of wickedness and undo the bands of the yoke and let the oppressed go free and feed the hungry and divide our bread and bring the homeless poor into the house and see the naked and cover

them, that we're not going anywhere. This is the righteousness that God is waiting for. Indeed, an act of righteousness.

And further on in the chapter it says, and those who among you will rebuild the ancient ruins, you'll raise up the age old foundations, you'll be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths in which to dwell. This is the work of restoration. This is bringing back that which was lost of the liberal church, called the social gospel, in which they were involved in social issues and we fundamental evangelical believers only in the gospel of salvation.

This is something that needs desperately to be restored, not as an alternative to salvation, but as the expression of a genuine salvation that expresses the grieved and sorrowing concerned heart of God for despairing mankind that needs to be fed and clothed and helped. These are acts of restoration and little, isn't it strange that in between these acts and following the scripture that you shall restore the paths to dwell in comes the verses, if because of the Sabbath you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure in my holy day. How did that get in there? Because it too needs to be restored.

I want to say tonight for the first time, ever, anywhere, that I believe now that this restoration of this Sabbath, this true acknowledgement, this deed is as imperative to be restored to the people of God as feeding the hungry and dividing our bread and bringing the homeless poor to our house and covering the destitute and the naked. And that somehow they're connected, that we're not going to be able to do the one without the other because this is a work that glorifies the Father that needs to be born out of the rest of God and needs to be performed in the rest of God or the work itself will destroy us and crush us with this overwhelming demand. We have got to be a people who know how to come into the midst of the most demanding activity and perform it out of God's rest.

As I myself am doing before you right now.

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