

Hope in the Workplace

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[0:00] So, again, my name is Jesse, one of the pastors here. So glad that you're here. If you're not here today, you're listening to this through the podcast or online on the website later on in the week, I'm thankful that you're keeping up with us and look forward to having you back in the room.

I hope that you guys have been digging this series in 1 Peter. We call it Hope in Exile. I know I have. It's been really helpful for me, remembering who we are.

I love this term. He calls us exiles. He calls us sojourners. This idea of like we're a pilgrim people passing through, it helps me remember who we are in God and who we are in Christ and who we've been called to be.

And like this image that we get and the picture that we get from this is that, man, we live here, but we don't belong here. God has placed us in the world at this time for a reason.

So we live in the world, but we always remember that we're here. We're not of this world, right? And we're journeying through life. Our actual home, our true home is a far country, like Andrew Peterson says.

[1:02] And we're journeying toward that place, that place where we long to believe, that place where Jesus is, and that place is heaven. And so we long for that place and we live toward that hope.

And the more that hope gets into us, the more heaven gets into us, the more we live different. And last week, we looked at how this changes our hope in government, which, man, I'm so encouraged that like somebody came back today.

That was great. I didn't offend everybody in the room. That's really awesome. But today, we're going to look at something that, again, all of our lives intersect with, right? And how we have a hope in this, and that is how the gospel changes our hope in the workplace.

Some of us work to live, okay? That's how we approach work. And work is hard. It's unfair. It wears us down. And our work feels pointless and insignificant.

We hate doing it. I had a friend who used to say, man, I don't need the work. I just need the money, right? Kind of this approach to work like, ugh, man, it's just because I have to do it.

[2:06] It's just because it pays the bills and puts food on the plate. Ecclesiastes 2, 22 to 23 says this, what has a man from all the toil and striving of the heart with which he toils beneath the sun?

For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night, his heart does not rest. This also is a vanity. It's worthless.

So there's this working to live that just feels hopeless, where we lose hope in it. But then there's some of us that we live to work. We get identity.

We get significance from what we do. And from what we do, the things that we get to have because of that, the things that our jobs afford us to obtain and the wealth we can amass and possess.

And so our work is actually where we put our hope. But in the end, this also proves to be a false hope. Ecclesiastes 5, 10 to 12 says this, he who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income.

[3:12] This also is vanity. This also is meaningless. When goods increase, they increase who eat them. And what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

Aren't you glad you came today? It's sort of real uplifting so far, right? The point is, whether we live to work, we're on that side, or we work to live, the point is we both end up drinking from the same cup of hopelessness.

That's what Ecclesiastes is getting at. But the gospel, man, it gives us a new hope. It gives us a new reason to work, and we drink from a cup that actually gives us hope for our work.

And it's a hope that's independent of money, the money we're making, or the position we have, or the power we get through our work. So let's jump into it. 1 Peter 2, verse 18 says this, Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect.

So first thing we jump into, first thing we realize, our hope is independent on who we are in the workplace. Now, it's easy to get distracted by the wrong things here, right?

[4 : 31] You hear servants and masters, and you're thinking, like, what are we in some Downton Abbey episode? I'm not saying, like, you know, that there's not an equivalency here.

There is. And there's meaning in what he's saying that translates to today, right? And I'm not saying that, like, okay, I have to think of myself as this lowly servant, and I'm serving these masters.

And it's not to the point where he's saying, man, go purposefully out to find the worst job, the hardest job that you could possibly do, and jump right into it. Now, that's not what this is meaning.

You know, we live in a cool time where we have a lot of choice as far as job and career goes, right? But back in the day, back when Peter was writing this, it really wasn't like that.

Definitely, definitely not. Oftentimes, what family you were born into really determined what your career was going to be more than anything else.

[5 : 27] There wasn't a lot of freedom for, like, mobility upward or even sideways. So, there's another thing that we deal with here. Some of you may be thinking, ah, the servant-slave thing. Ah, okay.

Man, I knew God was this, like, unkind taskmaster that didn't care about slavery. But God's silence here about speaking against slavery is not his condoning of slavery.

Absolutely not. What he is doing is using this moment to speak into workplace conduct according to how the economy functioned that day. That's what he was doing.

And just so you know, there are other passages of Scripture, like the whole letter of Philemon that Paul wrote, that shows actually how Christianity was subversive to this established form of indentured servitude.

Paul asked this Christian, who also was a master of a household and had a business, if you will, to take back one of his runaway slaves. And if you understand the historical context of that man, that slave deserved to be severely punished.

[6 : 36] And not only does Paul say, don't severely punish this guy, but take him back as a free man. He's a free man. He has been bought in Christ's blood.

See him as a different thing. See him as a human being and the dignity that he deserves because he's made in God's image. Treat him as a brother in Christ that way. Now, Christianity, but for a few horrendous exceptions in history, let's be honest, we've had those moments in our family history.

Man, we've been out front in leading the abolition of slavery and seeing that come to an end wonderfully in the past few centuries. So the whole point is, God is not okay with slavery.

If you're wondering that from this passage, no, he's not okay with slavery. He is for every person's flourishing. So now let's get back to dealing with the whole concept of masters and servants, right?

We can start to think, man, a little bit confusing, hard to relate to. Don't get that language. Don't think of myself as in a master-servant relationship. But actually, there are good similarities. And plenty of them that point to kind of an employer-employee relationships of today.

[7 : 43] So we can see a lot of this. We see it can be very pertinent to our workplace, our own workplace. Masters then were like today's bosses and supervisors, the people that you report to.

And servants weren't these unskilled laborers, right? Sure, it included unskilled labor. But many of these guys in Peter's day, they were doctors, they were nurses, they were lawyers, they were artists, musicians, soldiers.

These were, that was the whole broad category of what a servant was. And so we see that they were given this dignity and respect for their contributions to society and civilization, much like we see in today, in the labor force today and employees today.

And it's one of the things I love about the USA. We really value the middle class. We really value the working class. Now, at the same time, these servants, they were of a different class.

Let's be, I have to be honest with you. They weren't totally equivalent to our employee-employer relationship. They had limited freedoms. And their employees did have a lot of power over them, right? Their employees could control a lot of what they did.

[8 : 50] All the Marines in the house said amen to that, right? You guys get that. So I'm sure Peter's writing to a ton of servants who probably wished they could switch places with their masters.

Right? Wouldn't that be a nice dream? It's always that way, right? Wouldn't it be nice to be the boss? Boss for a day. Something like that. The grass is always greener. It's interesting that Peter writes about the workplace here and only addresses the servant role.

Right? He only addresses the employee role. Perhaps it's because, like, most of the people in his church were in the servant class. But we also know that there were masters that were in the churches as well that he was writing to.

So why does he only write to the servants? And I think it's most likely what he's doing here is elevating the position and the role of servanthood. No doubt these servants were seen in Roman society as being on the lower strata.

But Peter is making an argument that runs throughout this passage that we're looking into. And it's this. To be a Christian is to be a servant. To be a Christian is to be a servant.

[10:00] No matter who you are in the workplace, that's how you are to see yourself. Christian, Christianity, man, it doesn't degrade servanthood.

It actually elevates servanthood. That's what it does. Jesus said, who was the greatest in his kingdom? To be the greatest in the kingdom was to be servant of all. And this changes our hope and what we live for.

Our sinful nature, right? Man, if we just gave into it and we were honest about our sinful nature and what we really want, we want to be lord of the manor, right? We want to be the dude in Downton Abbey that, like, owned the manor and had servants and they were at his beck and call.

Man, but in Jesus' economy, the higher the calling, the greater the service and humility. Paul talks about his apostleship like this, right? The apostle Paul, we think, like, oh, man, those guys, they were killing it.

They were like, they're the heroes of the faith. First Corinthians 4.9, what does he say about his apostleship? For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all.

[11:07] Like men, sentenced to death. Whew. That's a bummer of a job description. Because we have become a spectacle to the world. We've been made a joke in front of everybody.

To angels and to men. What is he saying? Man, Paul is not putting his hope in this title or this calling. He's not taking this identity from it or his position.

And that's what he's, we have to recognize here. We don't put our hope in titles. We don't put our hope in our position in the workplace or in our career. And let's just be honest, even in the church for that matter, we don't put our hope in those things either.

We put our hope in Jesus. We take our cues from him. And so right off, what happens? Man, we get smacked with this pesky phrase again, just like it started out with last week.

It starts with, be subject. All right? Say that. Be subject. Try to say it with a smile this time. Be subject. All right? This is idea of humble submission.

[12:11] That's this thing we don't like to do, right? It's like sour grapes. We have to be subject. We have to be servants who are humbly submitted. And this isn't just advice.

This isn't Jesus, hey, here's some good advice. Take it or leave it. God's not telling us that. No. This is a call to follow Jesus. This is a command he's given us. Now, this idea, it's not so bad if you have a great boss, great benefits, great salary, great work environment, right?

If that's where you're at, man, this probably feels like a layup. But what if you don't have any of those things? What if your workplace isn't like that at all, right? What do we get to do? Do we get to stick to the man?

Nope. It says be subject. Then it goes on to say this. Be subject not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust.

Our hope empowers us to be a blessing regardless of our work environment. Man, I like that the Bible's honest here, right? Let's be real.

[13:19] There's good bosses and there's bad bosses, right? And I'm not talking about, like, if you think a bad boss is like, my boss, man, he's rough. He expects me to show up on time.

He expects me to work hard when I'm at work. And he holds me responsible for my mistakes. Now, that's not a bad boss, right? That's not what I'm talking about here, right? The word here for the bad bosses is unjust, right?

It's the Greek word skolios. It's where we get the idea skoliosis from. It means crooked. Someone that has corrupt morals and corrupt character. It's the kind of boss that yells and berates and throws fits and gets mad and is out of control.

It's the kind of boss that overworks you and underpays you. It's the kind of boss that is willing to cheat and lie to make more money and get ahead. Let's be honest.

The kind of boss you dream of saying, like, take this job. And you know what? And as satisfying as like some of, man, we dream about that.

[14 : 22] Oh, man, that would be so good. As satisfying that may feel for the moment, Jesus says, hold on. Hold on. We don't do that. You don't give them what they deserve.

You actually give them what they don't deserve. God says, be subject to those crooked bosses to you. Stuff like this is why the Bible is quite unpopular.

Even with Christians. We read this stuff and we're like, hmm. I want to kind of cross that verse out. We don't like to read those things. Or when we do read them, we do kind of theological somersaults to get it to mean what we want it to.

It's like, surely God actually meant this. But make no mistake, following Jesus means being humbly submissive in every kind of work environment.

Now, this doesn't mean, this kind of humble submission doesn't mean compromising your ethics. It doesn't mean compromising your morals. It doesn't mean being disobedient to your faith.

[15 : 24] No. Working hard means you come and you work hard. You be a blessing. You put in the time. You put in the effort. You're honest. Regardless, actually, of what comes your way. Right?

And that's hard to do. If that means your job might be on the line. If you work hard but stand up for what's right. If you work hard and you say, no, no. Because of my integrity, I am only going to go this far.

I'm not going to cross that line. Even if it means your job's on the line. Even if it means your employer might go postal on you. I know some of you in the room that have made those hard decisions for the sake of Jesus and have paid for it.

It's cost you money. It's cost you lost income. Maybe even some of your job. Financial security. An unknown future.

Some of you got passed over for promotion because you didn't bend the rules to be a good team player. To be a company man. Or company woman, for that matter.

[16 : 25] So then, if that's the case, what's the benefit if when we suffer we seem to be losing out? Well, our hope is knowing God has a purpose for our suffering.

1 Peter 2, 19-20. For this is a gracious thing. Now, you might think it weird that God would look and see us suffering and not step in and stop it.

And that's not what always happens. If you're suffering, I'm going to guarantee you now that I am never going to step in and keep it from happening. You know, sometimes God does step into the suffering and make it stop.

And sometimes he doesn't. Sometimes he lets us sit in there and let it wait. We just sit in it and he waits. But we are promised that regardless of what we're going through right now, that one day that suffering will end.

But until then, we endure. We endure knowing that God doesn't waste our suffering. James 1, 2-4 reminds us of this, right? Count it all joy. Count it all joy, brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

[17 : 49] For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. There's purpose in the trial. There's purpose in the trial. We don't take suffering as punishment from God.

But we see it as an opportunity for God to produce spiritual life in us, right? Something is happening in there. We may not see it right away, but something is happening in there.

Like what Blake was talking about at the beginning of this service, right? We sow and we water and we wait. We wait for this harvest to start happening. And so we live this life in God this way.

A lot of faith has lived this way in the kingdom of God. And we plant a seed in the ground. Our seed gets planted in the ground and we water it. We're waiting and we're looking. We're waiting and we're looking. We're waiting in faith and we're looking.

Lord, what's happening? What's going on? The heat of the sun. It's, ah, this is hard. Waiting and looking and waiting and looking. What's going to happen? When is it going to happen? And then God comes through at some point. We don't know when that is, but he comes through.

[18 : 48] And you know what? Some people live their life and in some situations, they don't see God come through. But, man, they know that in the end, all the pain, all the suffering, all that they've experienced in this life goes to the wayside.

And they live in the release of that in heaven one day. And God uses our trials. He uses that waiting. He uses that silence at times to make us more like Jesus.

That's what's happening. That's what's happening with our faith. So you might think, like, okay, cool. So trials are a good thing, right? Now, let's be careful.

All right? You heard the term ambulance chasers. Like, Christians aren't called to be trial chasers. All right? We're not to go out and be like, okay, sweet. So maturity happens in the trial. How can I put myself in a trial today?

Let me go out and find the hardship and the suffering. No, we don't go looking for it, but we don't run out of it as fast as we can and avoid it all as possible. No, not all suffering pleases God.

[19 : 51] Sometimes we can be the cause of our suffering. And this verse says here, man, when we suffer and sin for it, man, God doesn't really give us credit for that. Okay? That's not what is happening here.

We experience God's grace and goodness when we do good and suffer for it, right? Jesus said, like, blessed are those who suffer for righteousness' sake.

And this suffering, when you think about it, it's more than just material and physical suffering. Like, the scope of it is broader than that. Actually, when you look at verse 19, it says when one endures sorrows.

And the idea here is not just physical. It's actually in the realm of mental and emotional anguish. Okay? And that's a broad scope.

That kind of speaks our language, right? I mean, some of us do experience physical hardship and material hardship. Many of us, man, in our suffering, it feels more like the sorrow of, like, man, life's tough.

[20 : 50] And we feel this mental and emotional anguish. So much of us suffer from that in our workplace. In this competitive marketplace, man, it's like looking at the lobster tank, right?

We're all trying to get on top of each other. Our fellow employees, they put us down. They lie about us. We're slandered. We're gossiped about. There's impossible demands and quotas that we have to meet.

There's bosses who berate us, blame us, throw us under the bus unjustly so they can look good. Even in a decent work environment, the pressure to perform well every single day, man, that can bring stress.

That can bring mental and emotional anguish. And what's cool here is God's actually recognizing that. He's not saying, like, suck it up. What's wrong with you? This is true.

This idea of mental and emotional anguish. This is true. This plays out every occupation, every position, employer, employee, whether you're a student. And whether you're a professional, whether you're a skilled laborer, unskilled laborer, you could be a homemaker.

[21 : 58] You could, any of those things, man, it runs the gamut, right? Yet we're not called to give up when we feel sorrow, when we feel mental and emotional anguish, when we feel a little bit tired and a little bit weary and a little bit worn out.

We're not called to give up or work half-heartedly. We are, again, we are called to humble submission. We're called to work hard. We're called to be a blessing.

And in all of it, we're doing this, we're doing it being mindful of God. It says that, man, when mindful of God, you endure sorrows.

This is a gracious thing. He says gracious thing twice in the sight of God. We aren't to endure just for the sake of enduring. In our endurance, we're to be thinking about God and focusing on him. And here's the thing, guys. Our hope comes from knowing that work can be worship to God. No matter what you do, no matter what your work environment is like, work can be and should be worship to God.

[23 : 04] Colossians 3, 22 to 24 says, slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, whatever you do, work heartily. Work hard. Work with all your heart. Why? For promotion? Why? So your boss can give you a pat on the back? No. Work hard.

Work heartily as for the Lord, not for men. We need to recover the sacredness of our work. Too often, we think the sacred work is the work that we do in the church. We think that's the stuff God really cares about.

That's the stuff that we really find favor with God. And then he kind of puts up with all the rest of what we do. Actually, that's not so. What you contribute in your workplace, what you contribute in your job is a part of God's mission for his people to be a blessing to others.

[24 : 12] It's not what happens in this room here right now. His mission is advanced as you go into the workplace, as we scatter, as we're out there in the week, and we're working hard, and we're working for the Lord, and we're producing things.

Work produces goods and services that better life for everyone. They bring order. They bring joy. They create good things, which, again, brings joy, right?

Enforces law and order. The enforcement of law and order, those are good things that bring joy. Man, we can think about what we do. Lord, thank you for the police and the firemen that keep us safe and uphold law and order.

Thank you for the rancher out there that raises cattle and the butcher that buys it and cuts it up into wonderful sakes to sell to me so that I could cook on my barbecue and eat it and really enjoy it, right?

Lord, thank you for the brewers who created IPA, right? They deserve a Nobel Prize. Think of like steak and beer.

[25 : 17] We're all kind of hungry for lunch right now, right? Probably not the best time to talk about this. Hope I didn't lose you. The point is your work makes a difference.

Your work, it makes a difference. And what you as a person bring to work matters, right? What you bring to work in the form of your skills and your abilities are necessary to make all of that stuff happen.

And you know where you get those things? You get those things from God. Those gifts, your skills, your abilities, those are God-given. Those are things God has given to you and he's given to you to steward, to use for his glory, right?

And to put it to work as his servant in his service so that they can be a blessing. Blessing in your workplace and beyond. And this idea, this understanding helps us come to work with a mindset to work for a different purpose.

To work with worship to God. To see how we can get more worship into our work. That's what we need to be doing. And this worship, man, it doesn't mean you come to work wearing a cheesy Christian t-shirt slogan on you, blasting Caleb in your cubicle.

[26 : 32] It's not that. And it's working hard. It's being honest. It's knowing that you've been called to do something amazing and seeing God's mission in and through those moments where you're at work. Work that is worship.

Work that is mindful of God is gracious in God's sight. And that could be in suffering or not in suffering. Regardless, it is gracious in God's sight. And it's worship because it is following Jesus and trusting God.

1 Peter 2, 21 to 23 says this. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his footsteps. He committed no sin.

Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. Remember, this is the example that Christ gave us to follow.

When he suffered, he did not threaten. But continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. Our hope comes from looking to Jesus' example and trusting in God the Father.

[27 : 49] And let's be honest. Those verses we read, we look at Jesus' example. And we just recognize that's a really hard act to follow. That ain't easy. Let's not pretend that's easy.

But, just because it's not easy doesn't mean God's saying, oh, you know what? No big deal. You don't have to follow it. No, it's the example he set. It's the example we are called to follow.

You know, we look at him, Jesus. He's king of the universe. Yes! And he came to suffer as a servant for all. Oh, kind of a bummer there on that one, right?

We want to follow the example of the first part, but not really the second part. And what did Jesus do? What do we see him doing when people were filleting him with their words?

Did he respond in kind? No. When he endured physical, mental, emotional suffering, did he react in kind? No. Man, that's hard. How does he pull that off?

[28 : 51] And guys, this is the gold right here. It says he entrusted himself to God, who judges justly.

That means he didn't listen to the people's press about him. He didn't take their judgments over him, whether that was good or whether that was bad.

He didn't take them to heart. And it also means he didn't judge himself. He entrusted himself to his Father in heaven, who is just.

There's a lot of wisdom right here we're going to dig into. See, why do we react and respond poorly toward people that mistreat us? Why do we have trouble living in humble submission?

I think a big part of it is because we derive our value from people's words, right? Their words and their actions toward us.

[29 : 56] We believe the lie, I am what people think or say about me. And when this is praise, what happens is we get this overinflated sense of ourself, this false image that we are more than we really are, and it yields pride.

But when this is criticism, man, it can crush us, right? And the image that we want to be is crumbling around us. The things that people are saying about us and devaluing us and berating us and saying, no, you're not those things.

You are. And they're just like hammering us, chopping us at the knees, and it leads to despair.

Either way, either way, it leads to this false reality of who we think we are.

And let's be honest. The criticism just doesn't come from the outside. If you're like me, you have this really obnoxious inner critic that doesn't ever seem to take time off, right?

I have this inner critic in me that is constantly berating me and saying that I'm not good enough. And I was like, man, can this guy ever take a vacation? He doesn't ever seem to. My inner criticism, what that does, it makes me more sensitive to believe outside criticism, or it makes me more susceptible to flattery and outside praise.

[31 : 17] And when I yield to those things, what comes out of me isn't humble submission, right? Man, I either become arrogant or I become despairing and really insecure.

So how do we cut through these false images? Well, we do what Jesus did. We stop entrusting ourselves to others. We entrust ourselves to God who judges justly.

And God gives us the best assessment of who we are. And this is so freeing, guys. This is so freeing to live this way. Look at how Paul deals with this in his own life, right? But he's writing to this church in this moment who were kind of ranking the importance of him with the other apostles.

Some were saying, yeah, Paul's amazing. And some were saying, nah, Paul's not amazing. And he says this in 1 Corinthians 4. This is how one should regard us apostles. As servants of Christ and as stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. Now check this out. But with me, it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

[32 : 25] For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. First, he rejects this notion that apostle is my identity, right?

Oh, Apostle Paul versus Apostle Peter. He's like, no, no, no, no, guys. You know what? You know what? This is how you should regard us, right? Let's lose the apostle title, servants, right? Those of you in the room, like, you know, how you want to think about me.

It's like, let's lose the title. Pastor is a function of what I do. It's not a title of who I am, right? We lose those titles. That isn't our identity.

What we are are stewards. What we are are servants. That's who we really are. Second, the thing he says is, your judgments about me are a very small thing.

It's not a good way to earn, like, people's favor, right? It's like, you know what you think about me? I don't care. And my judgment's about myself.

[33 : 30] I don't even go there anymore. Because you know what? They're worthless. And they never proved to be true or helpful. So he says, I'm going to let God be the judge over me. I'm going to let Jesus be the judge over me.

So why is this free? Because when we live this way, we stop living toward what people want us to be. We stop living toward that. We stop living toward who we think we should be.

And what we start doing is we start listening to God and what he's saying over us. And we start living toward what God says we are. And that is the big difference.

And this is where hope is secured. God doesn't say these things because we earned it by our hard work and our obedience. He doesn't say these just things over us because we're performing in

some magical way.

No. Our hope is secured in the work that Jesus did for us. Verse 24 and 25, he just launches into this. He himself, Jesus himself, bore our sins in his body on the tree.

[34 : 38] That we might die and live to righteousness. By his wounds, you have been healed. Humble servants entrusted with these wonderful things, going through suffering and sorrow.

Man, know who you are. The God who judges justly for you, endure. Know these things. Know who you are. By his wounds, you have been healed. You were straying like sheep.

You were. But now, who are you? And you've been returned. You've been recovered. You've been restored to the shepherd and the overseer of your souls.

You've been restored to the one who cares about you. Just like a shepherd cares about his sheep, who leads and feeds them and guides them to good places.

Sometimes, that's through dry places where there's no water and nothing to eat. But we know he always brings us to green pastures and still waters at some point, right? The overseer.

[35 : 43] Jesus is the big boss. The overseer of our souls. The one who cares for us. The one who we're ultimately submitted to. We don't earn that.

You don't get that because you work for Tom's Shoes or Compassion International. You earn that because of what Jesus did. Because of how he suffered and died for you.

He bore your sins on the cross. Why? So that in his death, we die to sin. There is an immutable law. We are born into sin.

All of us. That's unchangeable. That's never going to change for anybody. We're all born into sin.

And the only escape from that is death. We learn that from Romans, right? We're born into sin.

The only way out of sin is through death. And there is the conundrum. Until we die, we're enslaved to sin. So how does that work? How do we live free from sin?

[36 : 42] And we see that in the gospel. Jesus came and he died in our place. He did the work we couldn't do. No amount of suffering you and I go through.

Earn us God's judgment that would say we're justified. That we're perfect in righteousness and without sin. No amount of what we can do will do that.

That judgment from the Father only comes by Jesus' death and resurrection. And us, by faith, being united with him in his death.

And just as we're united with him in his death and die to sin, it says we are united with him in his resurrection to live to Christ. And that judgment, the just judgment from God only comes through that.

Faith in Jesus Christ. Faith that in his death and resurrection. It's his suffering alone that made it so that we could hear those words.

[37 : 42] And make no mistake, guys, our souls long to hear those words of blessing spoken over us by the Father. I want to end it here. God made man, Adam and Eve in the garden.

You know what it said? The first thing he did, it said he blessed them. We were created for his benediction over us.

Our souls cry out for these words of affirmation from our Heavenly Father who created us. And because of sin, we're separated from that.

And it's broken. And so we begin to chase after other things. We begin to put our hope in other things. Including things in the workplace. Including things outside the workplace. But now because of Jesus Christ.

And because what he's done. And who we are in him. The words of the Father have come back to us. Do you remember what happened before Jesus stepped into ministry?

[39 : 00] He was baptized. He came up and the Father spoke. The benediction over him. He spoke these words of blessing. This is my beloved son. In whom I'm well pleased.

Guys, this is what God speaks over us. You are my beloved children. You are my sons and daughters. In whom I'm well pleased.

Not because of what you've done. But because I did what you couldn't do. Because I loved you so much. Because I want to speak these words over you.

And we put our hope in those things. We put our hope in a God who judges us in a just manner. Because we're justified in him.

Let's close our eyes. If you're here in the room. And you're not a Christian.

[40 : 03] And I hope that you hear the Father's heart. I hope you hear his love for you. That he loves you. He loved you so much that he sent his son to die for you.

He bore your sins on the cross. So that you could die to sin. So that you could be set free from the sin that enslaves you. You could be set free from the shame and the guilt and the anguish and the sorrows that you were experiencing because of your sin.

He sets you free. He sets you free to not live toward the words of people. Whether that is in praise and flattery.

Or if that's words that butcher your soul. He's a father that sets us free from those things. To not work for the adoration of men.

To not work for the praise of men. To not strive after what never satisfies. He sets you free from that. And he's holding out to you the truth today that his son has died for you.

[41 : 18] And all you have to do is put your faith in him. Put your faith and surrender that yes, Jesus, I believe that you are my savior. You are the savior that died for my sins.

You are the Lord, the king in heaven that I can trust in and turn to. You are the shepherd and the overseer who's brought me back and restored me. For those of us in the room who are Christians. And maybe you feel weary. Maybe you feel tired. Maybe it's been tough to want to serve anymore. To be able to give anymore. Maybe that's not just in the workplace. Maybe that's in other facets of your life. You want to hold back and you want to protect yourself.

Man, and trust yourself. To the one who judges justly. Don't serve. Don't work for the praise of men. Don't look for their words for affirmation.

[42 : 30] Because if you look for men to validate you. You have to take everything that comes your way. And those words can hurt. They can sting.

They can wound your soul. Come to the father who loves you. Come to the father who speaks life and blessing over you. Be reminded.

That it's because of what Jesus has done. As we come and we take communion today. We're reminded of what Jesus has done. We're reminded that these good words that God has spoken over us is true.

We don't have to doubt them. Jesus really died. His blood shed for our sins. And it says he bore it on the cross. He separated them far as the east is from the west. That's how far away they are from us.

He can't get any further. He brought us in and he loves us. And we get to have a meal with him. He loves to commune with his children. And so come with thanks.

[43 : 35] Come with faithfulness. That you don't have to earn this. You don't have to work your way to more this. But you just get to rest.

Rest in him. Amen.