Rewarding Work

John's Gospel 6:25-29

Mission Mindset

The visit of Mike Raiter and the Bible College of Victoria mission team is just around the corner. It's a great opportunity for us to be thinking about how we can promote Jesus with our friends and family through 'Simply Living' Week.

In this weeks study we delve into a Bible passage Mike Raiter is speaking on during the first Sunday of mission. He'll be considering the question of work and work-life balance. Mike will examine those issues in light of who Jesus is and what he's come to do. The aim of this study is simply to begin to look at what Jesus says about 'work' here in John's Gospel. After doing that we'll also take the time to pray for Simply Living Week.

Work and Me

Here's an exercise to unpack a bit about how *you* feel about work. Read the following story and look at the different responses each person had to their work.

> The story is told of a man (in the pre-mechanisation era) who, while taking a walk down a country lane, came across a stone quarry in which a number of men were working. He questions several of them about what they were doing.
>
> The first replied irritably, "Can't you see? I'm hewing stone."
>
> The second answered without looking up, "I'm earning 100 quid a week."
>
> But then the same question was put to the third man, he stopped, put his pick down, stood up, stuck out his chest and said, "If you want to know what I'm doing, I'm building a cathedral."
>
> *John Stott, New Issues Facing Christians Today (3rd ed) (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), 195*

Which response most reflects how you think about work you have done? Why?

Would your response have differed during different times in your life?

Work and My Society

Work is a large part of our lives. There are all sorts of issues our society is trying to think through when it comes to work. Take a few minutes to figure out what you think are some of the commonplace attitudes or issues people have about work. Try and come up with 3 on your own first. Then pool answers as a group and decide on a priority list of 3 for the whole group.

My top 3

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Our groups top 3

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Read John 6:25-29

Quick Questions

a) Where has Jesus been and where is he now?
b) What has he been doing so far in John chapter 6?
c) How much effort did the crowds have to make to find Jesus?
d) Why are the crowds interested in Jesus? (6:26)

Think it Through

e) In Jesus time what is work for? Is it still the same today?
f) Is Jesus against working for food?
g) What else does he want people to focus on (6:27)?

Jesus seems to be asking people to consider re-prioritising their lives. Life can't be allowed to become only about work and providing for life's necessities now. Somehow God needs to be part of the equation. But how to get to that point is not entirely obvious to the crowd.

h) What approach does the crowd naturally take in trying to re-prioritise God in their lives (6:28)?
i) Is that what Jesus asks for?
j) How does Jesus suggest they'd get what they needed from God (6:27,29)?

Jesus and Work

The crowd's focus on God is tied up with thinking about what THEY MUST DO for God to be pleasing to Him. In contrast to that, Jesus describes the response that God is really looking for. While at surface level it sounds like Jesus is also talking about 'work to be done', if you dig deeper it's not so much about doing something so much as trusting someone.

Read John 6:35,47-51

So the 'work' they are to do is to accept that Jesus is who he says he is. To trust that is the case. To Trust that Jesus really can provide everlasting sustaining living for them (6:51). That what he's working towards at the cross will provide life and overturn death. It's not something the crowd can actually 'work' for. This life-giving bread comes down from heaven, provided freely by God. The life that Jesus brings is not something the crowd would've been able to earn.

- Why is doing the 'the work' called for in John 6:29 NOT the same as earning your salvation?

- How do you 'get' some of this life-giving bread from Jesus?

- What are some of the different reasons people work long hours?

- How would you know if *you* were a workaholic?

- Someone you know confesses they really need to get better at work/life balance. What difference would you say Jesus makes to this problem?

Praying for Simply Living Week

Hopefully you've received a copy of the BCV team and timetable handout. It's got some prayer points that relate to what's happening during Simply Living Week.

Begin by thanking God that he provided us with eternal life from Jesus not that we worked for it.

Pray that Jesus offer of life-giving hope will be clearly spoken about through talks and testimonies and conversations during Simply Living Week.

Spend some time praying for friends and family you know who need to re-prioritise God in their lives. Ask that God will bring them to a point of believing and following Jesus.

Pray for people at our Sunday Services who are yet to begin a personal trust in Jesus. Ask that God would begin that in them through Mike Raiter's talks.

Pray for the events happening at Grovely and Mitchelton schools on Wed and Thur.