



Look to Jesus for Service - April 26, 2020

OPEN

Last year CKNW News presented a “[Future of Work](#)” series with this introduction – “With ever-advancing technologies and artificial intelligence creeping into the workforce, job security for current and future generations has never been more worrying. CKNW’s Future of Work series focuses on how British Columbia’s job market is going to evolve and how to help workers get the best possible employment opportunities in the future.”

Currently, Global News is presenting a “[Future of Work](#)” series with this introduction – “This is an in-depth look at the changing nature of employment during this epic time and how those who are affected could transform workplaces in the long term. From industries that are still hiring to those that could lead the recovery, the series will cover how people can transfer skills to new jobs that are proving to be essential.”

Wow – we thought 2019 presented transformed working contexts! Think what has happened in 2020! To explore this realm of our lives that we call “work” we are looking at **Hebrews 13:15-16**. We are continuing to think about the invitation of Hebrews 12:3 to “**consider Jesus**”. The Greek term contains “analog” and was used in calculations. When it comes to navigating our lives, we are to “consider” or “take account of Jesus”.

Why look to Jesus? Maybe the idea of “looking to Jesus” seems passive to you. However, given the fact that Jesus emerged victorious from a life of service that involved betrayal, abandonment, beating, mocking, and crucifixion – it is highly advisable that we take our life cues from Him!

DIG

Albert Einstein called Jesus the “Luminous Nazarene”. Indeed, the life of Christ sheds light on how we may truly live! Let’s explore is how patterning our lives after Jesus will help us to make a difference in our world.

Hebrews 13 is an interesting passage. Is it a post-script? Was the writer flooded with random thoughts? Was he running out of writing materials? Did he forget to put these ideas in earlier sections of the book?

What we do know is that the letter to the Hebrews was written to *remind* Jewish Christians about the victorious message of Jesus – see **Hebrews 2:1**. Facing unprecedented change and persecution, these believers were at risk of slipping back from freedom in Christ into ritualism (familiar but a fetter). So, the book of Hebrews is a book of confidence for the believer. It outlines the most vital certainties of our faith in Christ. How does looking to Jesus impact our service? Consider two imperatives.

1. The imperative to worship - v . 15

Whenever we say the word “worship” many people hear “music”. Though this is not wrong, it is certainly limited. Worship should be a way of life in which we bring honor and glory to God in every sphere. Does that include singing songs of praise in a church service? Yes, but there are many more realms in which we can worship God. Consider what we are told about worship in verse 15.

- **Worship is instrumental** - The first word of the verse emphasizes that it is *through* Jesus that we praise God. He is instrumental in this process. It is “through Him therefore” in reference back to all that is discussed about Jesus’ sacrifice for us in the previous chapters. Jesus makes true, ultimate worship possible by allowing us – by His blood – into God’s presence!
- **Worship is sacrificial** - Reading the Old Testament we learn that worshipping God had a sacrificial nature. So much of worship today is for personal enjoyment/fulfillment. This is likely because it is centered on a subjective experience rather than a self-emptying lifestyle.
- **Worship is continual** - Worship cannot be contained to Sunday morning gatherings. Rather, we worship in all that we do. Do you love to garden? Worship God for the beauty that He created as you dig in the soil. Do you love to run? Worship God for the strength and energy He gives to run.
- **Worship is confessional** - At first, this might sound that our worship is tied to some prescribed, scripted liturgy that is said in worship services. That is what worship has become in some churches. The phrase “fruit of lips” links back to Hosea 14:1-2: “*Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity. Take with you words and return to the LORD; say to him, ‘Take away all iniquity; accept what is good, and we will pay with bulls the vows of our lips.’*” What we say with our words will be congruent with our lives of repentance and obedience!
- **Worship is thankful** - Authenticity is revealed by gratitude? True worship comes from the heart of thankful person. Without thankfulness, worship is just perfunctory. As Jerusalem was rebuked in Isaiah 29:13, “*These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are afar from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.*”

What does your worship sound like? No, I do not mean “are you a good singer?” Rather, I am asking if your worship is a default lifestyle? Does the worship of your life reflect these five characteristics? Does your joy, delight, and gratitude for salvation in Christ spill into all the areas of your life?



Can you say that worship is the “default setting” for your life?

2. The imperative to work - v. 16

Well, right along with the command to praise God with our lives, is the invitation to work. And this work is specifically to benefit and bless other people. What is this work? Some do-not’s will help us here.

- **Do not neglect your service** - It is possible to forget the needs of others as we settle into our Christian experience. But serving the needs of others is actually a sacrifice that we render to God! It is essential. And we must not forget to practice doing good and sharing with the needs of others.
- **Do not limit your service** - We are told to “do good” – and there is no boundary to offering kindness. This includes family, congregation, neighbourhood, workplace, and through partnerships, the world. The word for “sharing” is often translate “fellowship”. But such sharing is much more than “coffee and chit-chat”. It implies a very deep sharing of things both practical and intangible.
- **Do not trivialize your service** - When we serve others sacrificially we bring pleasure to God! Yet some say, “I just help in the background.” Ephesians 2:10 tells us “*we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*” The term is poihma – a “work of art.” We are called to good works – this is how God has designed the believer.

In games like tennis, the serve can be key to the entire game. And this is also true in our relationships with one another in the church.

Are you forgetting to serve? Are you limiting your service? Are you trivializing your service?



Which of these three “do not’s” is the most challenging for you?

Yes, the COVID 19 crisis has complicated an already challenging work context. But if we think the impact is merely monetary, we are missing something significant. The cosmic shift in the working world is impacting how people see themselves (identity) and how they engage with the world (legacy)! It is no wonder that people’s lives are shaken when their livelihood is threatened when we recognize that the work people do is not just how they make money...it is also *who they are!*

John Berard, James Penner, and Rick Bartlett in their book **Consuming Youth** (Zondervan, 2010) argue that we now live in a time when youth are conditioned to become consumers rather than producers. (20). Here are a few quotes from their book that shed light on this issue.

“For those of us who live deeply immersed in the branding economy, we make an identity for ourselves, and an identity is made for us by our relationship to consumer goods...Never before have young generations had to contend with such an intensive culture of corporations who want to sponsor this identity work for us.” (Tom Beaudoin, 47)

This identity crisis sabotages God’s design that identity is found only in Christ. As Hebrews 13:15-16 reveals, from that place our worship and work come together to bring Him glory and us good!

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” (Frederick Buechner, 17) “You are not what you do. You are not what you have. You are not what people say about you. You are the beloved sons and daughters of God.” (Henri Nouwen, 61)

REFLECT

God is in the business of making Isaiah 43:21 a reality: “*The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.*” Will you let Him do this in your life?

Will you allow your sacrifice of praise and your sacrifice of doing good/sharing come together in your lifestyle?

Like any large city, Washington D.C. has its share of traffic problems. Frequently jammed is the **Francis Scott Key Bridge**, named after the man who wrote the “Star Spangled Banner”. Because that bridge often has notorious traffic problems it has become known as the *Car Strangled Spanner*. Let’s not allow anything – even the impact of COVID 19 – to strangle out a life of praise and service!

Check out the story of two men whose lives left a legacy of great worship to God and such meaningful work that blessed others.

[Oswald Chambers](#)

[Eric Liddell](#)