

WORK IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Sermon by Nel Slater

October 8, 2017

Ruth 2:17-23

REMEMBER ...

YOU HAVE AN INNER _____ BECAUSE YOU ARE MADE IN THE _____

John 5:17

YOU HAVE SOMETHING _____ THROUGH YOUR WORK

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO PROVIDE _____ OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS, TO THE DEGREE _____ IN EACH SEASON OF YOUR LIFE

2 Thessalonians 3:10, Ruth 2:17-18

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO _____

Leviticus 19:9-10 (CEV), Deuteronomy 24:20-21 (CEV)

Helping others have an opportunity to work does 4 things:

1. It maintains _____
2. It promotes _____
3. It prevents _____
4. It prevents _____ and _____

Some ways you might invest in the work of others:

1. Providing opportunities
2. Being welcoming and encouraging
3. Cooperating
4. Appreciating someone's work
5. Protecting or speaking up for others (Ruth 2:9)
6. Partnering
7. Buying and paying for products

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR ABILITY TO _____ WHAT IT NEEDS

You can plug into this source by:

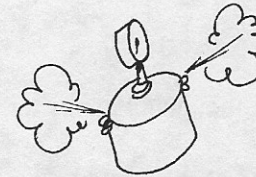
1. Thanking God
2. Asking for God's help
3. Studying the Bible
4. Conversing with others
5. Investing time and money
6. Obeying what God puts in your heart to do

WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO OFFER IN YOUR WORK COMES FROM GOD, NOT FROM _____

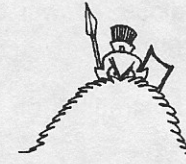
Matthew 13:3-9

My Job Is Like ...

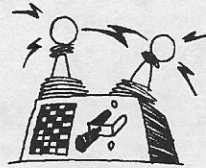
How's your job going? Whether you work at home, for a corporation or for yourself, how would you describe your job? Choose one of the descriptions below which best describes your job and take turns sharing your answers with the group.



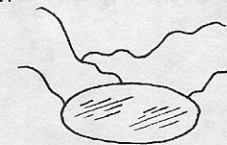
Pressure Cooker
The stress is driving me nuts!



Uphill Battle
I'm always behind and keep getting behind!



Frankenstein's Laboratory
My job is vibrant and creative.



Newly Frozen Pond
I'm always on edge because I feel like I'm skating on thin ice.



Drying Paint
My job is so boring and monotonous that it's like watching paint dry.



100-yard dash
I get tired of always competing with my coworkers.



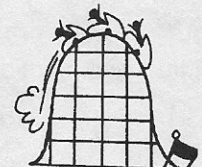
Gossip Factory
If everyone stopped gossiping, we'd get some work done!



Piece of Cake
My job is so easy I could do it blindfolded.



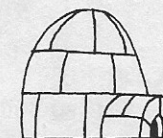
Super Bowl Quarterback
Everyone is always depending on me to make all the right decisions.



Amusement Park
I almost feel guilty because my job is so much fun.



National Monument
I feel great about my job because what I do is important and meaningful!



Air-conditioned Igloo
Most of the time my job seems absolutely pointless.

WORK IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Sermon by Nel Slater

October 8, 2017

Ruth 2:17-23 So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal. "Where did you gather all this grain today?" Naomi asked. "Where did you work? May the Lord bless the one who helped you!" So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, "The man I worked with today is named Boaz." "May the Lord bless him!" Naomi told her daughter-in-law. "He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers." Then Ruth said, "What's more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed." "Good!" Naomi exclaimed. "Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you'll be safe with him." So Ruth worked alongside the women in Boaz's fields and gathered grain with them until the end of the barley harvest. Then she continued working with them through the wheat harvest in early summer. And all the while she lived with her mother-in-law.

REMEMBER ...

YOU HAVE AN INNER NEED TO WORK BECAUSE YOU ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

John 5:17 But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."
Genesis 3:17-19 And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return."

YOU HAVE SOMETHING THE WORLD NEEDS THROUGH YOUR WORK

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO PROVIDE YOUR SHARE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS, TO THE DEGREE YOU ARE ABLE IN EACH SEASON OF YOUR LIFE

2 Thessalonians 3:10 ...Those unwilling to work will not get to eat.
Ruth 2:17-18 Ruth gathered barley [in Boaz's field] all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal.

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO INVEST IN THE WORK OF OTHERS

Leviticus 19:9-10 (CEV) When you harvest your grain, always leave some of it standing along the edges of your fields and don't pick up what falls on the ground. Don't strip your grapevines clean or gather the grapes that fall off the vines. Leave them for the poor and for those foreigners who live among you...

Deuteronomy 24:20-21 (CEV) When you harvest your olives, don't try to get them all for yourself, but leave some for the poor. And when you pick your grapes, go over the vines only once, then let the poor have what is left.

Helping others have an opportunity to work does 4 things:

1. It maintains work skills
2. It promotes self-respect
3. It prevents dependency
4. It prevents forced labour and exploitation

Some ways you might invest in the work of others:

1. Providing opportunities
 2. Being welcoming and encouraging
 3. Cooperating
 4. Appreciating someone's work
 5. Protecting or speaking up for others
- (Ruth 2:9 I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well.)
6. Partnering
 7. Buying and paying for products

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR ABILITY TO GIVE THE WORLD WHAT IT NEEDS

You can plug into this source by:

1. Thanking God
2. Asking for God's help
3. Studying the Bible
4. Conversing with others
5. Investing time and money
6. Obeying what God puts in your heart to do

WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO OFFER IN YOUR WORK COMES FROM GOD, NOT FROM TRYING HARDER

Matthew 13:3-9 He [Jesus] told many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand."

WORK IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Sermon by Nel Slater

October 8, 2017

Icebreaker/Introduction

The 'My Job is Like...' activity is a creative way to get your group thinking and sharing about work. Have them read through each of the descriptions and decide which of them best fits their situation (more than one might). Point out that they can apply to their current job or another one that they have had. Take turns sharing responses.

Ask if there was anything from this week's message that stood out – either a point that was made which really resonated with them, or perhaps a question or difficulty that came up for them.

Recall the story of Ruth. How familiar are you with it? Read [Ruth 2:17-23](#) if needed. What (from the overall story of Ruth) stands out to you?

Nel talked about some of her jobs, highlighting the worst job. Consider having group members share about their worst job (or their best job).

Nel said that working problems can be the most difficult kind of problems. Would you agree? What about problems you have within your family, or serious medical issues?

Nel reminded us that it's good when we have a job that is a 'good fit' for us. How do we know if a job is a good fit?

REMEMBER ...

YOU HAVE AN INNER NEED TO WORK BECAUSE YOU ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Focuses on [John 5:17](#)

Discuss Nel's point that when we're unhappy with work that it will often spill into other areas, but that when we're unhappy in other areas (eg. at home) then work can become a refuge.

Would you agree that we all feel an inner need to work? How does that affect your view of retirement?

Nel said that we will have work to do in heaven? Does this seem good to you? (or were you looking forward to relaxing?) What kind of work would you want to do in heaven?

Consider [Genesis 3:17-19](#). Is work part of the curse? Is that why work will be okay in heaven (because it won't be associated with the curse of sin)?

YOU HAVE SOMETHING THE WORLD NEEDS THROUGH YOUR WORK

Nel said that the world is incomplete/unfinished, with more potential to discover. In what ways would you say the world is incomplete? What more is there to discover?

What is something that you have which the world needs?

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO PROVIDE YOUR SHARE OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD'S NEEDS, TO THE DEGREE YOU ARE ABLE IN EACH SEASON OF YOUR LIFE

Focuses on [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), [Ruth 2:17-18](#)

Nel said that we all don't necessarily do an equal amount of work but the everyone should do their 'fair share'. Can you give an example of this? How are chores divided up in your household?

Discuss Nel's statement that "your work is not your gift to God but is a gift from God."

Nel pointed out the difficulties/tragedies that Ruth and Naomi faced. When have you asked the question "How could God let that happen?" Have you ever lost your job? How difficult was that for you?

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU TO INVEST IN THE WORK OF OTHERS

Focuses on [Leviticus 19:9-10 \(CEV\)](#), [Deuteronomy 24:20-21 \(CEV\)](#)

Helping others have an opportunity to work does 4 things:

1. It maintains work skills

2. It promotes self-respect

3. It prevents dependency

4. It prevents forced labour and exploitation

Recall the instructions God gave to allow for gleaning (scriptures above). In what ways is this an example of investing in others, not just providing?

Are there situations where 'providing' is appropriate? (eg. famines, other disasters). Are both investing and providing needed?

Nel asked "are you tempted to donate money (and then work harder yourself), rather than invest in the skills of others? Why?"

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF YOUR ABILITY TO GIVE THE WORLD WHAT IT NEEDS

Discuss Nel's statement that we need to 'value simplicity enough to have margin [of both time and money] to be able to invest in others'. Can you see how simplicity can help with this? How much simplicity have you built into your decision-making? Do you feel that you are able (as Nel said) to live a life of freedom, joy and generosity?

Under point 4 in this section (Conversing with others), Nel talked about 'parallel conversations'. Are you familiar with this term? Do you recall what she meant by this? (talking with God as you talk with others – ie. being sensitive to the Holy Spirit) Have you ever done this? Do you think you could? What situations might it be most helpful in?

WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO OFFER IN YOUR WORK COMES FROM GOD, NOT FROM TRYING HARDER

Nel encouraged us to live a life of thanksgiving. What does that idea mean to you?

Nel asked us who we identify with in the story of Ruth – Boaz, the workers, Ruth, Naomi. Which of these fit with you? Why?

Nel used the story of the sower ([Matthew 13:3-9](#)) to close the message. Why is this a good illustration to wrap things up? (we only need to be fertile soil – dirt, God will take care of the growth)