



Sermon – August 25, 2019  
Chris Osborne

**Verses Covered**

*Ephesians 4:28*

*Genesis 2:1 – 3, 15*

So for those of you that are new, we're in the book of Ephesians. I think I shared with you last Sunday, my son was preaching his, he preached a sermon last Sunday at a church. So I called him up and I said, "How'd it go?" And he said, "Well, pretty nervous." He said. I said, "What'd the kids think?" My grandchildren. He said, "Well, when I was done, Drew said, "You know, you're better than Pops." But Charis looked at her dad and said, "Pops is way better than you." So she's in the will. Drew is out. He may earn his way back in, but I don't know how he's going to do that.

We live, now we're just going to get kind of down and dirty today off the passage that we've got which at first glance looks like nothing. But as a matter of fact is pivotal for who and what we are. We live in a day, and inside a culture, now I'm just going to be as straight as I can be today. We live in a culture that hates us. And unfortunately, we seem a lot of times to hate them back. They don't like us. They don't like what we are. They don't like what we stand for. And we generally have had, unfortunately have the deal of hating them back. We've not done well. We've lived for what we're against, not what we're for. And we've attacked our culture. I constantly hear the phrase, culture wars. The Bible never indicates I'm at war with my culture. I'm at war with the forces that are driving my culture, but not my culture. We looked at in Ephesians 4, we looked at the fact that, unique little verse, that sort of begins this long section of how to live. And inside that he said, keep on being angry, don't sin, don't let the sun go down on your wrath. It's a quote. We looked at this from Psalm 4:4. And it's basically a quote that says, I'm in awe of who He is. I'm in awe of who I am. The fact that He made me to be the greatest of all His creation in displaying His glory. No angel displays His glory like we can. No cherub can, no Seraph, the four living beings that surround the throne, nobody declares His glory with the power that we can. Because we're the only created beings in His image. And so there's an anger from the Father, a frustration, when the beings that He loves do not show off His glory. And there's an anger in the Father at the loss of that glory, but still a love for the person which is why He says, keep on being angry, keep on being bothered, when the glory of God doesn't show up in your life. But do not hate the people that don't show off that glory. And don't let the sun go down on your wrath, which is what's happening. We're upset with our culture instead of upset with the enemy behind the culture.

So we have a chance, based on part of what he says today, to demonstrate to them in a unique way who and what we are. What we're for; not what we're against. Ephesians 4:28. Listen to what he writes.

<sup>28</sup>He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

Let the thief no longer steal. Now he's talking to church people alright. But rather let him labor, now New English Standard says, doing honest work. Literally the Greek just says doing that which is good with his own hands so he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Now a couple things we need to understand. Now I want you to listen to Genesis 2. I want you to think about our culture. They hate work. And the problem is we hate it too. We hate work. We have restaurants dedicated to it. TGIF: Thank God It's Friday. We have GEICO commercials of the hump day with the camel. "It's hump day, Bob." Because that's the day we're almost at the end. And we can get away from work and go home. But the Scripture has a different take. Listen to this. Genesis 2:

<sup>1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

And then when you drop down to verse 15, it says,

<sup>15</sup>The Lord God took the man, put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

So understand something. Part of the greatness of showing off the glory of God is the ability to work. He had us working before we sinned. A lot of people won't believe that. But we were working before we sinned which is why when you die you're not going to sit on a cloud with some wings and a guitar and sing praise songs all day. You're going to work here. You say, "Well what does that mean?" Don't know. But it entails some sort of hierarchical position because it talks about us judging angels, sitting on thrones, and ruling the nations with a rod of iron. There is some sort of high, lofty position of labor that we will incur for eternity. It was part of the blessing, now once we sinned, now labor has become difficult. It is stressful, it is hard, it is painful. And there is nobody that doesn't have a stressful job. Everybody has a stressful job. It's hard, long hours, it's difficult, we don't get paid what we think we should. All these different things. There is nobody that doesn't have a stress place in their job. I get that. And there's no reason, you don't look at lost people and say, "I don't feel any stress." Yes you do. You have the same problem. But we're going to demonstrate to a culture that hates us, and unfortunately that at times we hate, that we're not against something, but we're absolutely for something.

Now if you go back to Ephesians, here's what he says. He's writing to the church members, right, and he says, don't steal, work with your own hands what is good so you can bless people beyond yourself. Now obviously there were people in the Ephesian church stealing because stealing was

easier than working. In that day the marketplace was generally two days a week. And you'd come in this narrow area, all these different booths, people would have vegetables, bread, leather trinkets, all sorts of things. There'd be all this line of people and you'd walk in the middle of all these people and it was pretty easy to just reach over, grab some bread, reach over here, grab a couple leather trinkets, reach over here. And by the time you'd get in, you'd get out the gate and now you're set. Because now people are coming in the gate, you're going, "Hey, Bob, that's ten bucks in there, \$5.50 for you." What's Bob going to do? Pay ten or \$5.50. He's \$5.50. It was a cush life. And then you could sell enough and in about an hour and a half you could go back in and buy what you need for your family. Or you could be a shepherd. Now we have romanticized that, right. In our Christmas plays it's always little kids and they got a little thing here and it was the worst life in the world. There's no hunting gear, no Sitka hunting gear, for the shepherds. So there's no air conditioning. Camels didn't have air conditioned seats like my Ford pickup does. So when you're out with the sheep; if they're hot, you're hot. If they're cold, you're cold. If they're wet, you're wet. If it's dry, you're dry. If they're tired, you're tired. Then you've got to protect them from animals coming to eat them. And then you've got to deal with the goofy sheep. There's always one or two Baptist sheep in there going, "I ain't going with the rest of them. I'm going over here." And then you've got to run over and grab that thing and pull him back. And you don't know how long you're going to be out. You could be out weeks. So you can do that or you can steal and be done in an hour and a half and go home. So there were Christians in the church that were stealing because it was a whole lot easier than working. And so Paul says, "Look, stop it. Stop stealing. Get with the sheep. Work hard so you can bless people beyond yourself."

So here's the deal. We're in a culture that hates us. I get that. What we're going to do, though, is we're not going to be like them. We're not going to hate work. We're not going to be with them and hate Mondays and long for Fridays and hate that kind of thing. We're going to be a people who look at them and say, "You know what, I have stresses at work. I don't necessarily like my work, but I am in love with Jesus and that is what He's given me and I'm going to honor Him in every way I can." And I know it's difficult. I know it can be demeaning. I had a friend in Midland, his daughter was dating the son of the golf pro at Ranchland Country Club. And I remember I'm out there one day and we're fixing to play golf and the pro is out there. Nice guy, really a friendly guy. And these two members pull up in their Mercedes and they get out and they look at him and go, "Hey, put my clubs on the golf cart." No thank you. No smile. No nothing. He immediately put the clubs on the cart. I realize I'm not always spiritual. My first thought is; you know with a good key right along the side of that Mercedes. I know it's a bad thought, but I still feel it today. If you're Bob and some of you work in jobs where you're demeaned, where you're not valued, where you're not honored, I get that. I get that some of you work in jobs that are stressful. I get all that. But we're not going to worry about how hard the job is. We're not working for that person; we're working for our Savior. And we're going to honor Him. We're not going to steal 8 hours a day. You ask anybody in this church, you ask anybody who owns a business, what are the two hardest things they deal with. Government regulation and trying to get people to work an 8-hour day. The problem is they're hiring Christians. We think, listen, if I sign on to do an 8 hour a day, then I should do more than an 8-hour day. I'm honoring my Savior. And I'm not going to whine about it, fight about it, and fuss about it, and hate it. It doesn't matter how they treat me, how the stress level is; it doesn't matter. I'm serving my Savior. So none of that matters. And I'm going to show a lost world that I'm different than they are. Not that I'm against them, but I'm for my Father. He built labor. He based work, He gave it to me, and I'm going to

honor Him in every way I can in that situation because I'm in love with Jesus and I want His glory surfacing in my life, listen, not my pleasure. It may be a horrible job. You may work for me. Maybe a hard job. I get that. But it doesn't matter. You're going to honor your Father and you're going to showcase to a world we're not against things, we're for things. We're not against them because they hate Monday. We're for our Father so we will honor who we are in our labor so that they see a distinction. I'm going to trust my Father. And I know this is hard and I know it sounds "preachery". But you know the Bible actually does say that a cup of cold water, a cup, will not go unrewarded. That somehow when I die, it's in my account to be blessed by the Father in eternity. So it doesn't matter how he treats you, does it. It doesn't matter how stressful it is. It doesn't matter how hard it is. You're going to honor your Father and you're not going to do the thank God it's Friday thing. You're going to make people think you absolutely are honoring your labor because you're honoring your Father. And when you die that will be honored to you because of how you give Him glory here. It's not about your pleasure. It's about His glory. That's the beauty. And it's impacting.

You know the first century when this was written, and Ephesians is probably 55 A.D., I'm sorry, maybe 62 A.D. The guy that writes it is going to die in five or six years. And from there until about the early 300's, Christianity was pretty persecuted. As a matter of fact, we think they hate us here, they hated Christians there. Two reasons. They hated them because we were cannibals: we ate the flesh and drank the blood of our Savior. And we were atheists because we only believed in one God. They believed in several. We only believed in Jesus Christ. And so they hated us as atheists and cannibals. They despised us. So when the Roman empire began to persecute us, nobody was mad. The persecution went back and forth depending on locale and depending on time. But every time we got persecuted, nobody in the Roman empire complained. They loved it because they hated us. You know why the Roman persecution stopped? Because of this verse. It stopped because after a little bit of time, and the Christians were different than their neighbors, they went to work, they labored hard, they produced, they blessed people in need, they touched people's lives with the extra money they had. So that pretty soon the people in the Roman era began to look at their government and say, "Why are you killing people that are great neighbors and good people and don't cause any problems any time they're anywhere?" It was our reputation as people who honored the Father that won the populous that despised us.

So, now I don't want any amens. I want you to listen to me carefully. I get it that there are things in our culture that I hate, I don't like. I've got a nephew who won the bronze star for his firefighting in Afghanistan with the Georgian troops. He could have been killed laser-sighting for the flights up above. So it bothers me, and I don't want any amens, it bothers me when I see people kneel when the flag's being unfurled. I've done enough funerals where I've seen the flag folded that I'll always stand for the flag. But, again, I don't like that. I don't like a Supreme Court that's declared it's OK to take child in the womb and end its life. I don't like that. I hate it when I hear parents at age 3 are letting their kids decide their gender. The fluidity of gender is one of the most brain dead things ever. I get all that. And I don't like it either. Listen to me. Nowhere in this book is the culture ever our enemy. Ephesians 2 says there's an enemy who undergirds the culture. So we don't hate the culture. We don't despise the culture. We don't attack the culture. You've got to get this out of your system that you're involved in culture wars. You're not supposed to fix the culture; you're supposed to demonstrate how great Jesus is in your life and pull them out. That's your calling. We have got to stop our attack on people who don't look like us and walk like us

and think like us because they don't have the same Holy Spirit in us. We're not going to treat work like they do because we love the Father. We're not going to respond the way they do because we love the Father. We're going to love them because He loves them. We're not going to hate people who are controlled by an enemy, listen, we have been redeemed from. And our job is to demonstrate who we are in Christ. Not that we're against this and against that and against this and against that. But that we're for Jesus Christ and the beauty He's brought us in the Father and we want to demonstrate that in a way that the culture responds and says, "I want your Jesus." But if all they hear from us is attack and vitriol and vindictive assault, all they're going to do is assault us back. And I get it. I do. I hate certain things. But all I know is I'm not to let the sun go down on my wrath. And I'm to honor Him in a way that they look at me and say, "Why do you do what you do?" And I'm going to say, "It's not because I'm against you and not because I want to do anything differently than you. I'm doing what my Father has called me to do. And I have the ability to do that because of the blood of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and He's made a difference in my life and He can make a difference in yours." And if we have any other mindset than that, then we have misunderstood everything from Genesis to Revelation.

You know what this Bible is? If you read it real fast, no stopping, you start in Genesis and you just fly. You know what you discover? That there's a Creator who created people in His image who have rebelled against Him and He, before they rebelled, had a plan to get them back and He sent Jesus Christ who died on a cross, was buried, resurrected, ascended, is coming back, so that He can wash our sins away, reimplant His Holy Spirit in us and qualify us so that when we die, we spend eternity with Him. He did all of that to a planet that has rejected Him and the whole story of the Bible is that He wants us back. And when we hate the people He loves, we prevent their return. And our job is to accentuate His call to their heart. We do that when even in something as menial as work, we don't have their attitude, we don't have their demeanor, we're different at work than they are because we have the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and we don't work for that boss, we work under that boss for our Savior. If we can get that straight, we can make a difference.

Father, remind us of Your heart. Remind us of Your love for us, Your love for this world, and Father straighten us from warring against our culture to loving those You love and to demonstrate that by how we live. Drive that in every heart in this room. I ask you that in Jesus Christ name.