

{Slide: Logo - The Christian @ the Office}

The Christian @ the Office - 2

Last week we spoke about being 'at the office' as a Christian,
Which means that when we make Jesus Lord, we step into the office of the Lord
And God puts us to work,
which is a 24/7 occupation,
characterized by **obedience**,
And to be aware of the importance of bridging the Gap between what we know and what we do.

As we believe that what Jesus taught us is actually true
As we work on converting what we know into practical obedience.
We get to experience those characteristics that the Bible teaches us about.

Life

Wise

Fruitful

Mature

Blessed

Good deeds

God is Glorified

Our Light starts shining

Most of us between 20 and 60 something however have an actual job that we need to go to every day

This week we are going to get a little more practical as we consider that approx half our waking day is spent at the office. How does the job portion of our 24 hour Christian day fit in with my faith.

Sometimes it feels like I need to leave my Christian coat at home,
go to work and be whoever I need to be to survive
and then put it back on again when I'm home.

And yet we know that work is an integral part of our Christian day.

Maybe it's the way we look at it that needs to change.

Maybe we need to see how Jesus operated in the Office environment

{Slide: Jesus at the Office}

Jesus at the Office

You've all heard the term WWJD, What Would Jesus Do?

Personally I have always been a little annoyed by that statement because Jesus was perfect and everything He did was perfect and so yes, What Would He Do, obviously the perfect thing, which meant the odd miracle or two and the occasional honorable mention from God Himself, where does that leave me?

Always on the wrong end of the graph of perfection.

Maybe that's not the right way to look at it.

I thought, let's rephrase that a little and instead ask, "What Did Jesus Do?"

Let's do a small Bible study on that because I believe that will give us a lot of insight into What Should We Do?

I want to build up a picture.

I want to get a feel for what the Bible is saying.

I want to make a **profile** of how Jesus went about during His day at the Office.

That will surely help me in my time at the office.

1) He prepared for the day ahead

{Slide: 1) He prepared for the day ahead

Mar 1v35}

Mar 1v35

³⁵*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed*

Jesus was prepared.

He knew the day at the office was going to be tough.

With the hindsight we have, we know how tough:

- People trying to discredit Him
- Always surrounded by crowds who wanted something from Him
- Accompanied by slow learning disciples who were supposed to take over from Him at some stage
- Surrounded by unbelievers and people who always knew better
- And towards the end, people trying to kill Him

No wonder He had to start each day early.

Other than people trying to kill you, how does that describe your average day.

How many of these elements do you have to contend with.

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead

2) He prioritized God's Work

{Slide: 2) He prioritized God's Work

Joh 4v34}

Joh 4v34

³⁴“*My food,*” said Jesus, “*is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his **work**.*”

John 4, the woman at the well, the disciples are surprised to see Him talking to her but they hold their tongues.

She leaves and they urge Him to eat something.

He says, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about”.

That confuses the disciples.

But then Jesus says:

“*My food*” - the thing that nourishes me

I underestimate the importance of that simple comparison.

I like my food.

In fact I like it so much I eat every day, sometimes more than once.

I once fasted for five days because I was determined to study the Bible with someone and it took me five days to complete that study.

And No, I didn't pay him.

And Yes I was starting to get pretty desperate.

Guess what I thought of most of the time, food.

Guess what my body kept reminding me to do, Eat.

Back to Jesus, He said that His food, that thing we have to do daily,

that thing our body keeps reminding us about and

if we ignore it long enough, will eventually die because of it's lack, that food.

Is to do God's will.

“*Do the will*” - What God wants me to do

Doing God's will is more important than eating.

Normal food nourishes our bodies.

Doing God's work nourishes our souls.

We have to keep this prominence uppermost in our minds.

Why?

“*To finish His work*” - The process that was started in the days of Adam and Eve.

What work is that?

Reconciliation.

Reconciling man back to Him.

That is the work of God.

And Jesus is there as an agent of that will.

To finish it.

And God has called us to continue finishing it.

This is an important one to understand.

Who are we actually working for?

The company may pay the salary and provide for us on this earth.

God however, our 'audience of One' is our primary employer as Christians.

He has work to do and it needs to be finished.

Jesus was at it.

And we also need to be at it.

While we are doing His work, we can also be employed locally.

So what does He pay?

I'm going to answer this one using the words of Jesus in Joh 8v32:

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will you free"

The work of holding to His teaching sets me free.

The situation at work can narrow my life focus down to the here and now.

With hindsight however, I can look back at all the things that have happened to me, put them into the small box that they belong and thank God that my walk with Him is the only thing that counts.

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead
- He prioritized God's Work

3) It's 24/7

{Slide: 3) It's 24/7

Joh 5v17}

Joh 5v17

¹⁷*In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is **always at his work** to this very day, and I too am **working**."*

It's a Sabbath day.

Jesus goes to a pool called Bethesda.

There He heals a man who has been an invalid for 38 years.

The Jewish leaders give him a hard time because of this Sabbath activity.

And yet, the work of God is continuous, God is always at it.

Jesus is also part of this continuous process.

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead
- He prioritized God's Work
- It's a lifestyle - 24/7}

That's some general observations

Some of spiritual characteristics that we need to make part of our spiritual DNA.

Let's look at some specifics.

I messaged a number of you at the start of the week and asked what in particular challenged your Christian character at the office.

4) God culture trumps all culture

We all grew up in our own particular cultural world.
Usually that world considers itself the only way and therefore it frowns on any other culture that comes along and says that I should live according to a different set of priorities.
When we step into any office in the world we will encounter an office culture together with a mix of all the cultures that the employees bring to the office.
This can be confusing and at best we try and fit in,
Trying to hold onto our little corner of culture.

I grew up in Welkom in the Free State.
Welkom is a mining town, segregated according to the prevailing politics of the day.
I thought this was normal.
I grew up mostly German.
My folks had mostly German friends.
I ate mostly German food.
I learned English when I started going to school and eventually had mainly English friends.
This culture was obviously right and against which I measured all others.
Then I met Jesus and everything changed.
My mind was renewed.
It had to be.
Because God culture trumps all other culture.
That's why I love John 4.
Jesus is in Samaria.
This is already strange considering that the Jews and the Samaritans did not mix.
Jesus is tired and sits down at a well while the disciples pop into town to get food.

{Slide: 4) God culture trumps all culture
Joh 4v7-9}

⁷When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"⁸(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

This woman knew the limitations of her culture.
We don't mix.
Even the Bible has an aside it was such a big deal, in case you missed it.
Jesus knew what Christian culture looked like, we are all the same.

Then the disciples get back.
Even that's insightful from a cultural point of view.

{Slide: Joh 4v27}

Joh 4v27

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

The disciples were surprised because Jesus was talking with a woman.

Why?

Because in this age, a Jewish man, especially a rabbi, was not allowed to speak to women in public (or even be taught the Scriptures)

They kept themselves from asking the obvious questions. Those that their prevailing culture would have made them ask.

Jesus put people ahead of culture, which are just rules taught by men.

Jesus always pursued God culture and so should we.

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead
- He prioritized God's Work
- It's a lifestyle - 24/7
- God culture rules, OK}

One of the topics that came up a lot in some of your challenges that you shared with me was how people spoke to you.

People complained about the organization.

They complained about their superiors.

They complained about their fellow workers.

They swore or used inappropriate language.

They gossiped.

These people could be either employees or customers.

5) Jesus connected with ALL people

{Slide: 5) Jesus connected with ALL people

Mat 9v9-13}

Mat 9v9-13

⁹As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

I find these words most enlightening.

Jesus deliberately steps into a 'sinners den'.

Not to tell them what to do or not to do.

Just to spend time with them.

Let them hear His speech and watch His actions and understand His priorities.

Let them compare their lives with His life.

Often we feel the need to run away.

Spend time in our **monastery of friends** where it's safe and everyone's culture is similar.

How unlike Jesus that is, who said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but sinners".

Because then the 'sinners' will see how you handle:

Discussions concerning the organization, superiors, fellow workers, inappropriate language, gossip.

And how would you handle it?

Well, as a mature disciple, you've trained yourself in the many areas of relational dynamics.

You're encouraging

You build others up.

You avoid negative speech.

You're different.

You belong to God and live according to His culture.

You are patient, loving and kind.

As a boss you still have to be firm and follow company policies but God's light is what you reflect.

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead
- He prioritized God's Work
- It's a lifestyle - 24/7
- God culture rules, OK
- Connected with 'sinners'}

6) God is in control

You know how you often feel picked on by the world.

You have this plan but that happens.

(Story of the plan to go on holiday

Kids were growing up and we wanted to do a last holiday together.

Also had bought an investment house that was costing too much.

Joan had saved up for the holiday but we had to use the money to pay for the house.

Instead of going on holiday, we spent the time painting)

Many of the answers to my question had this one in common:

Being patient under production pressure

Demands on time and energy

Stressful situations and long 'todo' lists

Incompetence in support industries

Slow pace.

You have good intentions and good plans but circumstances and people seem to conspire against you.

You do everything as Christian-like as you think and yet stuff happens to mess it all up.

One of the most enlightening one-liner Scriptures on this topic is found here:

{Slide: 6) God is in control

Joh 9v1-3}

Joh 9v1-3

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

*³"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but **this happened** so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

Jesus walks along and the group encounters a blind man.

The disciples then ask that one question that is always on the tips of our tongues.

"WHY?"

"How can this be explained?"

"Whose fault is it?"

"Something went wrong in the natural order of things, how can that be?"

"Punishment has happened, where do we need to apportion blame?"

"Human expectations have not been met and sin **is** the reason"

Then Jesus puts us all in our place.

It's not sin.

Life happened, "*so that the works of God might be displayed in him*".

Why is this so big?

Because we are always trying to find out what went wrong

Why did this situation, these people, this process Happen

(Story of Nechi - Why not me?)

Instead of saying

"How may God's work (through me) be displayed in this situation."

Another example of this happened when Lazarus was sick.

Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus that their brother was ill.

And Jesus said:

{Slide Joh 11v4}

Joh 11v4

*"This sickness will not end in death. No, **it is for God's glory** so that God's Son may be glorified through it."*

We are the agents of God stuff happening in the world.

(Walk around with golden glow in a dark organization)

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

- He prepared for the day ahead
- He prioritized God's Work
- It's a lifestyle - 24/7
- God culture rules, OK
- Connected with 'sinners'
- God is in control}

Reminds me of Joseph.

Started off a bit arrogant but became God's man somewhere en route.

'Killed' by his brothers, sold as a slave, rape suspect, forgotten in prison.

He was pursuing a less than perfect career path, certainly not one of his choosing.

And then he connects the dots for us in Gen 50v20 and says to his brothers, *"²⁰You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"*

God can use seemingly bad situations, for good.

In ways we don't always understand.

Let's do one more.

Let's keep profiling Jesus at the Office.

Jesus is walking in the temple courts.

The Jews gather around and ask Him to tell them that He is the Messiah.

7) Jesus is revealed through works

{Slide: 7) Jesus is revealed through works

Joh 10v25}

Joh 10v25

²⁵Jesus answered, *"I did tell you, but you do not believe. The **works I do in my Father's name testify about me,***

Jesus told them the truth, plainly, several times.

The Son of God told the people the truth and they did not believe Him.

So if telling people does not work, where do we go from there.

We show them.

"The works I do in my Father's name testify about me".

What Jesus did, testified about Him.

It gave evidence.

It provided proof.

They could see a living example

{Slide: Jesus at the Office

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- It's a lifestyle - 24/7
- God culture rules, OK
- Connected with 'sinners'
- God is in control}
- Don't tell them, show them}

I find this one quite hard to digest.
Surely when we tell people what to do they should do it.
That's what we want.
And yet we know it doesn't work that way in life either.
That's why we say things like, "don't do what I say, do what I do".
A picture is worth a thousand words.
It's also a known fact that people learn more visually than through the audio channel
We are way more impressed by example than by words.

The first bunch of disciples that were converted in Acts 2, didn't just listen to the word and say "sign me up".
They watched how the disciples did life together.
Devoting themselves to what the apostles taught, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, meeting together, shared stuff, ate together, praised God.
It was a visible and obedient life flowing from what was taught.

I didn't just read the Bible and get baptized.
I interacted with people.
I saw how their lives were transformed by what they had learned.
I wanted that too.

And we could go on.

{Slide: Revealed}

Revealed

So we have just had a glimpse of Jesus at the Office.
So where does that leave us as we are about to step into our daily place of work.

I want to close off with a thought.
There was one word, a concept really, that caught my attention as I was preparing this.
It was the word, 'REVEAL'.

Doesn't that just describe the progression of our Christian lives.
Last week we looked at how we start off as *"infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming"*.
There place where most of the world finds itself.
And definitely what your office looks like.

A wonderful description of HERE.
The bottom end of this scale.

The road to THERE,
Like Jesus said, the works I do testify about me,
In the same way we **reveal** Jesus through the obedience we display
Purely motivated by the relationship we have with God Himself.
And those who God will call, through our obedient example ... are the ones who will be
influenced