

## Genesis 1:26-2:1-3,15

### Rest and Work Too

June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016

I want to start with a question that was once posed to me. What would you get if you laid head to foot every person who fell asleep in church?



Answer: “More comfortable people!”

I have been asked many times if it upset me if someone fell asleep in worship. My response has always been, “No, the Bible says God grants his beloved rest.” Remember, “He makes me lie down in green pastures,” I just assume the person is well loved by God if they are asleep,..... but I do expect an “Amen!” when they wake up.



In this series on rest and work, last week I spoke a lot about rest and abiding in the presence of God; so now I want to speak a bit about work. Indeed we were made to be fruitful and multiply. We were made to have dominion over the earth and take care of it to till it and keep it. We all have our God given vocations to follow here in this world. We all have work to do and all have callings to fulfill.

The importance of work, and its God given source, can often be seen in the lack of work or employment. Most have heard the old proverb “Ideal hands do the devil’s handiwork.” When ideal or under or unemployed people often drift off into doing things they shouldn’t. King David instead of going off to war with his troops stayed back and got into

a lot of trouble with Bathsheba. God made us to work. We rest first and then work. But it's important for us to work. Work gives life vibrancy and purpose.



Morley Safer recently retired after 48 years as a journalist and was dead within a week. I have known pastors who after many decades of service have retired and soon passed on. All of us could name someone who upon retirement died within a year or two because in their minds they ceased to be useful.

Remember God's first commandment to us was to be fruitful and multiple.

Work keeps us alive. Those who are unemployed are often depressed, not only because the lack of income affects their life, but also because in a real sense they are not living out their God given calling to lead productive lives. God has made us to be productive to be fruitful! We are created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

Many in this church would agree with the following statement. **"There is no such thing as retirement."** Many in this church know that retirement to be fulfilling is more than fishing and vacations and playing golf. God built into the very fabric of our clay, our being, the need to be productive, to be useful. I believe so many in this congregation live so long; and so many church going Christians live so long is that they stay productive, they stay useful in life. Recently, there has come out study after study showing the correlation between faith and longevity.

How many are retired in this congregation? Raise your hand. Now keep your hand up if you are now busier than when you went to work every day. We are made to work to be productive.



*“In the movie Secondhand Lions, Hub and Garth (played by Michael Caine and Robert Duvall) – they are brothers and former fighters in the French Foreign Legion and have retired to Texas. When fiery, hot-tempered Hub overexerts himself he suffers a blackout spell that lands him in the hospital. After checking Hub out of the hospital, the brothers stop at a diner and order Barbecue. Garth begins probing to see what is bothering Hub.*

*Garth asks, “What’s the matter, brother? Are you afraid of dying?”*

*Hub replies, “Hell, no, I’m not afraid of dying.”*

*Garth then asks, “Then what is it?”*

*Hub replies, “I’m afraid of being useless.”*

*It is not until Hub finds a new purpose– the raising his great-nephew, Walter–that he recovers his will to live.”* Building a Discipling Culture p. 104



I believe many of you relate to that and have avoided feeling useless by being involved in so many ministries here that make a difference in peoples’ lives. We have seen this in the Agua Prieta slides. You make a difference in this world!

Finally, related to there being no retirement, I need to let you know, there will be work in heaven. Remember our good works will follow us to heaven and at the Heavenly banquet feast of the Lamb we will be robed in our good works? Remember that?

Well what is here on earth that is good; will generally continue in the New Heaven and Earth. Both heaven and hell begin here on earth, and sorry to break it to you, but Heaven isn't going to be just one long worship service playing harps and singing hymns as we float among the clouds. God will have something important, meaningful for you to do. There will be work to do!

**God put our ancestors to work before the fall, there was work after the fall, there is work today, and there will be work in Heaven.**

But there is a rhythm of life in this world and the world to come. There is rest and abiding with God like God did, walking with Adam and Eve in the Garden, and there will be rest and abiding with God in Heaven. Did you know the word Paradise also means garden? Humanity began abiding with God in a garden and will end up abiding with God in a garden...Paradise.



It is in times of rest and abiding with Jesus that we will reconnect with God. We will deepen our relationship, our union, our communion with God. We need that rhythm that balance, between rest and work to live lives of joy and fruitfulness. It will give us lives that people will see and want. It is a great life to live life in balance.

The rhythm of life is this: **abide (rest), grow, bear fruit (work or be fruitful), prune, abide, grow, bear fruit, prune etc.** I will specifically address these phases in the rhythm of life in two weeks when I speak about Jesus as the vine and we as the branches.

I want to close with a question. The question God asked Adam, "Where are you?" Are you so busy that you have no time to rest? Are you working so hard you have hidden yourself from God? From your family? From your Church? We can get lost in work.

Or are you so hidden in spiritual laziness (no prayer, no Bible study, worship, fellowship etc.) that you have no relationship, union, communion with God? We can hide in laziness that goes beyond rest, or we can hide in our busyness. Where are you in the rhythm of life? I hope you are in a sweet spot!

Today I invite you for a moment to simply abide in Jesus. Reflect on where you are in the rhythm of life.

Come rest in Jesus and renew your union, your communion with God. I invite you to reflect on your rhythm of life as the choir sings, "Jesus Like a Shepherd Lead Us."

In Jesus' name. Amen.

