

I. Introduction

- A. What does "Jesus first" look like practically in specific areas of my life?
 - B. How "Jesus first" affects our lives
 1. One size fits all jeans
 - a. They adapt to the person, maybe?
 - b. Matt, Travis, and Kyle
 2. What we tend to do with Jesus is try to get Him to adapt to our lives.
 - a. Jesus transforms you and me to Him.
 - b. **"Jesus first" in all areas of our lives does not look like Jesus adapting to us but our lives transforming to Him.**

C. Work

1. World's view (and to be honest, much of the church)
 - a. God (or whatever thing that you believe in because everybody believes in something) = spiritual dimension
 - b. Work = real dimension
 - c. No significant connection between the two. This philosophy has bled into many churches and families-sometimes it just looks like work is a way to pay bills and buy stuff.
2. When Jesus is first in my life ...
 - a. Work becomes a form of worship.
 - b. Work becomes a form of witness.

II. Work

A. God's design (Genesis 2:1-3; 15)

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 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. 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. ... The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

1. God made man in His own image with part of that reflection being work.
2. Man placed in the garden to work - not a burdensome anointing but one that connected man to God.
3. Work preceded sin.
 - a. Sin made work more difficult but did not erase God's call to work.

- b. God sometimes calls us to do difficult things and when He does, what is our focus during those difficult things?

****When we do difficult things with our eyes focused on Jesus and an attitude of trust and dependence, then we transform that task into an act of worship.**

B. Work as Worship (Colossians 3:16-24)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

1. Unpack the text
 - a. The Word, God's wisdom, our minds and our hearts = the backdrop
 - b. Everything you do, easy/difficult including work, do it with Jesus as the first focus.
 - c. Wives, husbands, children, servants, etc.-no matter what or where, see all through the lens of worship
 - 1) Husbands: words you use with your wife, could that pass for worship toward God?
 - 2) Wives: treatment of your husband, could that pass for worship toward God?
 - 3) Children: attitude toward parents ...
 - 4) Employees: the work you do, could that pass for worship toward God?
2. How "Jesus first" transforms work into worship.
 - a. Identity: anchored in Christ - I am who you say I am, chosen not forsaken.
 - b. Dignity: all work matters (Martin Luther - 1500s)
 - 1) Empowered believers to know their work served humanity and enjoyed God's full blessing
 - 2) The farmer shoveling manure and the maid milking cows pleases God as much as the minister preaching or praying.
 - 3) We become agents of God's providential care.
 - c. Spiritual compass (beyond moral but does include ...)
 - d. Worldview: Christ is served; offering to Him first
 - e. Hope: value, significance, and worthwhile

3. When we work with Jesus first, our work becomes a vehicle of transformation in our lives resulting in worship toward God.

C. Work as witness (1 Thessalonians 4:9-12)

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.

1. Unpack text
 - a. An absolute command: love one another
 - b. Increase your love by...
 - 1) Living quietly: quietness of mind and heart, that inner peace that enables us to be sufficient through our faith in Christ
 - 2) Mind your own affairs: be about your Father's business, not meddling in the affairs of others (like the child who says, "But what about him?")
 - 3) Work with your hands: do work, replace idleness and nosiness with getting at it ("He needs to get a job")
 - c. (Increase your love) So that ...
 - 1) Your witness would be powerful for those who are watching
 - 2) Dependent on no one does not = no community
 - a) If, because of irresponsibility or arrogance, you are in need, God is limited in the way He can use you in the lives of others.
 - b) Spiritual leeches
 - c) In reference to a refusal to work or spiritualizing not working
 2. How "Jesus first" transforms our work into witness
 - a. Excellence pursuing
 - b. Holiness reflecting (integrity and ethics)
 - c. Redemption displaying (perspective of gratitude and recognition of what Christ has done producing a natural response to grace toward others)
 - d. Mission advancing (salt and light in every venue of culture)
 3. **When we work with Jesus first, our work becomes a vehicle of witness in the lives of those we work with for the sake of Jesus Christ.**

III. So what now?

A. Questions

1. **Are there elements of my work that I can easily see as worship? Are there aspects of my work that I have a difficult time seeing as worship? How can I change my perspective?**

2. Does the way I approach work cause people to think more highly of Jesus and His Church or less highly? What can I do differently to better represent Jesus to those I work with?
 3. How I work reveals God's work in me
- B. Pray