

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE:	Turning the Rat Race into a Pilgrimage
SERMON REFERENCE:	Ephesians 6:5-8
LWF SERMON NUMBER:	#2167

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Many people in the world today hate their jobs and dread going to work on Monday.
 - i) Some feel as though they're just drawing their breath and drawing their salaries.
- b) There is a way to put joy, zest and dignity into the most mundane job if you will follow the principles found in the Word of God.
- c) 1 Corinthians 1:26-27
 - i) These are ordinary people whom God chooses.
- d) God's plan is to take ordinary people and put them in ordinary places with ordinary jobs and get extraordinary glory unto Himself.
- e) Ephesians 6:5
 - i) This passage is not talking about our church lives.
 - ii) "Masters according to the flesh" refers to what we would today call our boss in a secular occupation.
 - (1) We are to serve our boss as if he were the Lord Jesus.
- f) Ephesians 6:6-8
 - i) When we go to our jobs, we are not going to work for our boss but for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g) The message today will focus on three principles that can put a little grace in the rat race and that can turn the rat race into a pilgrimage.

2) SEE YOUR JOB AS AN OPPORTUNITY AND BE GRATEFUL (EPHESIANS 6:5)

- a) If you have a job be grateful; it is a God-given opportunity.
- b) Some people see their job as a necessary evil.
 - i) It's the same old drudgery, but they have to do it.
 - ii) They have no sense of meaning and no real sense of accomplishment.
 - iii) To some people, work is just a necessary evil that they have to do to pay the bills.
- c) Some see their job as a cruel master.
 - i) They feel like they're caught in a trap, and they can't get out.
 - (1) They feel like they can't even stop working to look for another job.
 - ii) Sometimes people feel that things are required of them on the job that are just not right.
- d) Some have made a god of their job; they see their job as a demanding god.
 - i) This is one of the most dangerous things.
 - ii) People make a god of their career, and they sacrifice everything.
 - (1) Nothing is too good for a man's god; so, he sacrifices his health, family and his love for the Lord Jesus for his job.
 - (a) Some may call him a success, but his health and family are in shambles.
- e) We need to see our job as a gift from God.
 - i) Proverbs 14:23

- 3) SEE YOUR JOB AS A RESPONSIBILITY AND BE HELPFUL (EPHESIANS 6:6-7)
 - a) Your job is really a partnership with God, even if it's a secular job.
 - b) Work is not a punishment from God.
 - i) Work did not come as a punishment for sin.
 - (1) Toil and sweat came as a punishment for sin, but not work in itself.
 - c) Genesis 2:8
 - i) God was the first farmer.
 - ii) God started it, and then He turned it over to Adam.
 - (1) Genesis 2:15
 - iii) Farming is not preaching or missionary work, but any work done for God is the work of God.
 - d) Colossians 3:23-24
 - i) These verses refer to our so-called secular work.
 - (1) If you work in a factory, you're working for God.
 - (2) If you work in an office, you're working for God.
 - e) When the children of Israel were carried away to Babylon in the Babylonian captivity, some of the people reasoned that since they were in a pagan land as captives that they were not going to work with all of their hearts.
 - i) Jeremiah 29:4-7
 - (1) God engineered the Babylonian captivity because Israel couldn't handle their blessings.
 - ii) God tells us to build houses, to be busy, to get into the work world and do a good job.
 - f) We are to be helpful to others and to help ourselves.
 - i) Ephesians 6:7
 - g) It is not good to be lazy and to refuse to work.
 - i) We should work no matter how much money we may have.
 - h) 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13
 - i) It is a sin to feed a person who refuses to work.
 - i) 1 Timothy 5:8
 - i) We are supposed to take care of our children and not leave that to someone else.
 - j) Ephesians 4:28
 - i) We don't work just to meet our needs but to also meet the needs of other people.
 - (1) This passage is not referring to those who will not work but those who cannot work.
 - (2) When a person cannot work, it is our joy, duty and responsibility to do enough work for ourselves and for them, also.
 - (a) Help those in need.
 - k) The Lord Jesus was a carpenter; He knew what it was to work.
- 4) SEE YOUR JOB AS A MINISTRY AND BE FAITHFUL (EPHESIANS 6:5-7)
 - a) This puts dignity into what we do; we are serving God.

- i) We do not have to be in professional ministry to serve God.
- b) We are serving God full-time, wherever we work and no matter how mundane our jobs might be.
- c) We should not think that one-tenth of our money and one-seventh of our time belong to God; it all belongs to Him.
 - i) All of our money belongs to God.
 - ii) All of our time belongs to God.
 - iii) Every day is a holy day, every place is a sacred place, and every duty is a divine duty.
- d) Colossians 3:17
 - i) If we are in a difficult job or in drudgery, we can say that we are doing it for the Lord Jesus.
 - (1) A classic example of this is Daniel.
 - (a) Daniel was taken to Babylon, not of his own free will, but as a captive during the Babylonian captivity.
 - (b) While in Babylon, Daniel became a governmental employee, and he served God while he was working for a pagan ruler.
 - (c) Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, and the pagan king Darius knew that Daniel, in his ordinary work, was really serving God.
 - (i) Daniel 6:16
- e) We sometimes complain about how difficult it is to be a Christian in the workforce, but it is not God's plan that we isolate from people.
 - i) John 17:15
 - ii) 1 Corinthians 5:9-10
 - iii) Romans 12:21
 - iv) 1 John 5:4
 - v) We have been saved out of the world and sent back into the world to witness to the world.
 - (1) This is the only business in the world we have until we're taken out of the world when Jesus comes.
 - (2) We're in this world but not of this world.
 - (3) Matthew 5:14
- f) Matthew 5:13-14
 - i) The Lord did not say that we are the light of the church but the light of the world.
 - (1) This is the reason we are in our jobs where we are.
 - (a) You do not put a lighthouse in the middle of a bright city but on a barren coast.
- g) Philippians 2:15
 - i) This is why we are in the place (or job) we call Babylon.
 - ii) We can serve God in our secular jobs; this is where the salt is needed.
- h) There are four things we can do at work to be a witness and to let our light shine:
 - i) Don't brag.

- (1) Matthew 5:16
- (2) We are not to be self-righteous.
 - (a) Our light is to glow, not to glare.
 - (b) Those around us are to see the light, not the lamp.
- ii) Don't nag.
 - (1) Colossians 4:5-7
 - (2) No one is won to Jesus by being talked down to.
 - (3) We should not be pointing our fingers in people's faces.
 - (a) Sinners do what sinners do: they sin.
- iii) Don't lag.
 - (1) Colossians 3:23
 - (2) Carry your part of the load at the job and work harder than anybody else.
 - (3) It is a sin for a Christian to do less than his best.
 - (a) If we were to do this on Monday and live what we've learned from the Bible in our communities and in our jobs, then those who are unsaved would start believing what is preached on Sunday.
- iv) Don't sag.
 - (1) Never let down in your Christian faith.
 - (2) Don't join in the petty gossip, don't listen to the dirty joke, etc.
 - (a) Our co-workers will remember our sin more than the good that we do.
 - (3) Don't sag in your Christian witness.
 - (a) There is only one person who has lived a Christian life, and His name is Jesus.
 - (b) If the Christian life is lived in the office where you work, it will be Jesus in you.
 - (i) This is why it's so important to have a quiet time with the Lord early in the morning before you walk into the office.
 - (ii) Be so filled with Jesus that when you walk into the office, God will be walking into that office because Christ will be in you.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) When we see our job as an opportunity and are thankful, when we see our job as a responsibility and are helpful, when we see our job as a ministry and are faithful, then our unsaved co-workers will come to us.
 - i) They will want to know what makes the difference in our lives.
 - ii) They will see the difference and the reality of Jesus Christ in us.
- b) Many people are not all that interested in going to Heaven or Hell; they just want to know how to hack it on Monday.
 - i) We need to go to our jobs in victory and let them see the light, the love, the joy and the peace that Jesus gives us.
 - ii) We need to share Jesus with them, not in a bragging way, but through the grace of the Lord Jesus.

- c) You cannot approach your job this way without the Lord Jesus.
- d) Jesus will come into your life and give you peace and purpose if you'll trust Him.
- e) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- f) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16