

To all those Saints at Manatee Life Church,

SCRIPTURE:

1 Corinthians 3:8 (RSV) – Larger reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-23

The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each.

STORY: (from Our Daily Bread)

If you're into bumper-sticker philosophy, you've probably seen the axiom, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go." For a vast portion of the workforce, that's the best reason they can muster for going to the job each day. According to one poll, only 43 percent of American office workers are satisfied with their jobs. In Japan, the figure dips to 17 percent. In the first century, Christian slaves had even less reason to be enthusiastic about their work. But Paul gave them a way to grasp a glimpse of glory amid the grind. He wanted them to "adorn the doctrine of God," that is, to show the beauty of their faith in Christ by how they work (Ti. 2:10).

A significant and often overlooked way that we serve God is in our everyday tasks. Martin Luther understood this when he wrote, *"The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays -- not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship."*

OBSERVATION:

This Labor Day many will find it hard to celebrate because they are out of work. There is nothing to be thankful for. Some have been out of work for a long, long period of time ... several for 3 years or longer. That is a sad thing to realize in this day and time. And, yet we pause to recognize the labor force of our nation and be thankful.

I was raised in a blue-collar home. Dad labored hard all of his life. From the hot furnaces of a steel treating plant in Ohio, to grinding terrazzo in some of the big hotels along Miami Beach coastline, to delivering milk to grocery stores for Home Milk (remember that brand in Miami?) ... lifting those old wooden crates three or four at a time while still filled with nine half-gallons, plus the wood was very wet. It was all backbreaking work. Dirty, sweaty, and hard ... very hard. And yet it was work.

Us boys would talk about our work – we were a lawyer, an architect, an accountant and a preacher – and dad would laugh. *"You all don't know what work is. Let's compare hands"* and he would open up his calloused hands, comparing them to our soft calloused free hands. *"When you have hard calluses on those hands of yours then we can talk about work."* End of discussion.

Well, there is work and then there is work. Some are thankful this Labor Day that they just have a job. Some are thankful that their working days are over as they enjoy their

retirement. Some are praying hard for a job ... any job ... any place. Some carry the heavy burden of a job that pays them less than what they deserve or worth. Some are hard of heart as they bank excessive amounts of financial reward for work hardly done.

All of us can be thankful – thankful for those who labored to make a living for us as we grew up; thankful for those jobs we did have and hopeful for the jobs that will soon be coming our way. This is Labor Day so let us be thankful that we even have the ability to look for work with the hope that a day will come again when a job will be offered.

Just remember that where we might find ourselves this Labor Day, God has us on an assignment. There is something to share, something to learn, an opportunity to grow, a chance to learn ... always getting us ready for the next phase of our life.

QUOTE:

“No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence.” – [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

PRAYER:

Help us gracious God, to be thankful for the work we do have. Make us sensitive to those around us who are looking for work ... and guides us so that we are grateful for our ability to work when the day arrives for us to go to work. In Jesus name, Amen.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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Plans are completed for the next Worship Service. We will be recording on Wednesday morning at 10 if you might be interested in sitting in on the session. Enter by the north sanctuary door, masks are required, be in your seat by 9:55, no cell phones, no talking/whispering and no getting up to go to the bathroom once we have started the recording.

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