

“FAITH AT WORK: Work in Perspective”
by
Rev. James C. Ramsey

Texts: Deuteronomy 5:12-14
Preached: 3/3/19
Ephesians 2:8-10

We take our faith to work with us. No matter what our work might be, our work intersects with the LORD’s work. We’ve seen that [these last few Sundays] in the fields of education, healthcare, social work and business. I hope you’ve been inspired in your own work as you’ve listened to expert reflections.

This morning we conclude our Faith at Work series. We spend many of our waking hours at our jobs. We’ll talk about what this means for our life. We’re privileged to hear three more reflections today from still more resident experts. We have Frank McCoy, Shari Smallwood and Tim Resciniti. Frank’s up first...

--Frank McCoy

--Shari Smallwood

--Tim Resciniti

These days it might be more important than ever to remember our faith at work. This week an article came out in *The Atlantic* magazine titled: **Workism Is Making Americans Miserable** (by Derek Thompson).

For many in our culture, work has taken over the place of religion -- promising identity, transcendence, and community, but failing to deliver.

The decline of traditional faith in America has coincided with an explosion of new atheisms. Some people worship beauty, some worship political identities, and others worship their children. But everybody worships something. And workism is among the most potent of the new religions competing for congregants.

What is workism? It is the belief that work is not only necessary to economic production, but also the centerpiece of one’s identity and life’s purpose; and the belief that any policy to promote human welfare must always encourage more work...

When we take our faith to work, it helps us keep things in perspective. I've been surprised how many different scriptures seem to reference work – not least of which is the fourth commandment, Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

The Sabbath is a wondrous gift from God, reminding us who we are and whose we are.

Reflecting on the Sabbath, Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel said this:

"Time is like a wasteland. It has grandeur but no beauty. It's strange, frightful power is always feared but rarely cheered. Then we arrive at the seventh day, and the Sabbath is endowed with a felicity which enraptures the soul, which glides into our thoughts with a healing sympathy. It is a day on which hours do not oust one another. It is a day that can soothe all sadness away.

Presbyterian pastor Eugene Peterson said in Perspectives:

I don't see any way out of it: If we are going to honor [God], we must keep the Sabbath. We must stop running around long enough to see what [God] has done and is doing. We must shut up long enough to hear what [God] has said and is saying. All our ancestors agree that without silence and stillness there is no spirituality, no God-attentive, God-responsive life.

Our work is important...and the time we spend there matters to God. But we are more than what we do. Even God rested after creating the world and all that is in it! Keeping the Sabbath helps us put work in perspective...God built rest into the very fabric of creation.

We weren't created for work...but for good works...We are what God has made us -- created to partner with God in the managing and renewal of creation!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.