



## Vocation

In the first 31 verses of the Bible God declares his work good at least seven times. Moses is inspired by God to write these opening verses as God – excited. It is as though God can't contain himself, every time he sees a new and flourishing part of his creation he delights by declaring "good!". As you read this chapter today enter into the delight God had over his artistic expression called earth.

**Read:** Genesis 1:1-31

There are many words in this chapter that describe God's work for example: "said", "called", "saw", "blessed" are some of the "verbal" activities, "created", "made" seem more "active" and descriptions of design such as "seed bearing fruit" all speak of an intentional design to our world. But it also speaks of God's utter joy in what his work accomplished. Many people have seen their responsibility to work as an assignment rather than reflecting a God who works. Others have missed a second significant observation about God and work – he celebrates work, to move on from one task to the other without celebration (at least to call it "good") is to miss another opportunity to reflect our God who works.

### Questions for Reflection:

1. Does it make a difference to you whether you are designed or random?
2. According to vs 26-27 humans were designed to do something, what is it?
3. What would it look like for you to match God's tone in telling his story today?

It would be absurd to suppose that because emotion sometimes interferes with reason, that it therefore has no place in the spiritual life. Christianity is not stoicism. The Cross does not sanctify us by destroying human feeling. Detachment is not insensibility. Too many ascetics fail to become great saints precisely because their rules and ascetic practices have merely deadened their humanity instead of setting it free to develop richly, in all its capacities, under the influence of grace.

Thomas Merton , Thoughts in Solitude

### Prayer:

Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits which you have given us,  
for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us.  
Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,  
may we know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day.  
Amen.

St Richard of Chichester (1197 – 1253)



## **Vocation**

In this retelling of the creation story man has been dispatched to work and care for the Garden (v.15). As creature after creature came before the man to receive a name there was no appropriate partner to be found for man. Perhaps there was no being that could image God nor discern God being imaged. To remedy the situation God creates a woman as an appropriate partner for man to co-habit and cultivate the earth with.

**Read:** Genesis. 2:4-25

### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. As you reflect back on reading Gen 1 yesterday and Gen 2 today, are you surprised by how much work man was expected to do in Paradise? If not, when you envision being in Paradise do you envision being as busy as Adam?
2. Does it tell you anything about work and pleasing God that the first human was assigned chores in the garden?

Vocation is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need.

Fredrick Buechner

### **Prayer:**

Lord, help me make wise choices today.

Give me insight to discern good and evil and choose according to your will.

I desire your truth, wherein great wisdom can be found.

May I seek you more and more.

For your honor and my joy

Amen



## Vocation

Intro: What was the curse that God put on creation (Gen. 3:17-19)?

Work itself was not cursed in the fall. A careful reading of Gen. 3:17-19 shows that God cursed the ground as a result of Adam's sin-but not work: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it" (emphasis added).

Notice three ways that the curse affected work: (1) Work had been a joy, but now it would be "toil." People would feel burdened down by it, and even come to hate it. (2) "Thorns and thistles" would hamper people's efforts to exercise dominion. In other words, the earth would not be as cooperative as it had been. (3) People would have to "sweat" to accomplish their tasks. Work would require enormous effort and energy. Most of us know all too well how burdensome work can be. Workplace stresses and pressures, occupational hazards, the daily grind, office politics, crushing boredom, endless routine, disappointments, setbacks, catastrophes, frustration, cutthroat competition, fraud, deception, injustice-there is no end of evils connected with work. But work itself is not evil. Far from calling it a curse, the Bible calls work and its fruit a gift from God (Eccl. 3:13; 5:18-19).

**Read:** Genesis 3:17-19

### Questions for Reflection:

1. What are the most frustrating things for you at work? What are the most rewarding?
2. Other than occupation how do you express your passion?
3. Would you call that your vocation?

You have your work. It will be more meaningful for you, whatever it may be, if you take all the opportunities it affords to serve and give joy to others; if you reverence the things you work with and are conscious that your working with them gives them an opportunity to express themselves at a higher level through your activity and love; if you share some of the fruit of your labor with those less fortunate; if you do all for the love and glory of the heavenly Father, knowing then that your work is part of the transformation of the whole creation, including especially yourself.

M. Basil Pennington, A Place Apart

### Prayer:

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Amen



### **Vocation**

In this passage see Jesus challenging his hearers at their trust level. They were no doubt of the mindset that God or gods were involved in the fortune and misfortune of their lives depending on whether they had been pleased or angered. Jesus challenges a hoarding mentality to earthly possessions. He uses examples from their world of bird and flower to show how provision and beauty are given to both, so what makes a child of God think they would be less cared for? His intended take away? Seek first the kingdom of God and quit worrying about what you'll eat or wear or even about tomorrow.

**Read:** Matthew 6:19-34

### **Questions for Reflection:**

1. Does this passage challenge your view of money and wealth?
2. How does your view of money relate to your view of "hear and obey", generosity, hospitality, celebration and vocation?

Most of our conflicts and difficulties come from trying to deal with the spiritual and the practical aspects of our life separately instead of realizing them as parts of one whole. If our practical life is centered on our own interests, cluttered up by possessions, distracted by ambitions, passions, wants and worries, beset by a sense of our own future, or longings for our own success, we need not expect that our spiritual life will be a contrast to all this. The soul's house is not built on such a convenient plan: there are few soundproof partitions in it. Only when the conviction -not merely the idea- that the demand of the Spirit, however inconvenient, comes first and IS first, rules the whole of it, will those objectionable noises die down which have a way of penetrating into the nicely furnished little oratory, and drowning all the quieter voices by their din.

Evelyn Underhill, *The Spiritual life*

### **Prayer:**

If anybody enters the path of repentance  
It is sufficient to advance a step every day.  
If you practice repentance, if your heart is meek,  
Your way will be straight to the King of the Kingdom of Heaven

**Vocation:**

Today you read the story of a man who was transformed by the gospel, blessed the poor, and resisted the culture of legalism by paying back the wronged by more than the law required.

**Read:** Luke 19:1-10

**Questions for Reflection**

1. Zacchaeus committed himself to a lifestyle change from the day he met Jesus. Are there any lifestyle changes you need to make to align yourself to your understanding of the Gospel and God's Kingdom?
2. Do you think Zacchaeus saw his vocation differently after his conversion?
3. What does a redeemed view of your vocation look like?

My son-in-law, Alan Jones told me a story of a Hassidic rabbi, renowned for his piety. He was unexpectedly confronted one day by one of his devoted youthful disciples. In a burst of feeling, the young disciple exclaimed, "My master, I love you!" The ancient teacher looked up from his books and asked his fervent disciple, "Do you know what hurts me, my son?" The young man was puzzled. Composing himself, he stuttered "I don't understand your question, Rabbi. I am trying to tell you how much you mean to me, and you confuse me with irrelevant questions." "My question is neither confusing nor irrelevant," rejoined the rabbi, "for if you do not know what hurts me, how can you truly love me?"

Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on the Water*

**Prayer:**

Lord God, because You are my helper,  
I will not be afraid—not of the thing I've committed to do that is too big for me;  
not of what people think of me; not of a lack of finances; not of anything.