

Book	Ephesian – Study 17
Topic	Household Codes
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Today we are going to looking at Jesus being the Lord in every area of our lives, in our work, our families and today we are going to look at this particular section called the household codes. It is a name given by Martin Luther. This refers to a series of Bible verses which Paul has written, all similar except one by Peter, which were manuals for relationship within the Christian church, which were different from how one would act in a pagan society. You must understand that in those days, they live in Pagan societies. That was maybe the background from Aristotle and other Greek Philosophers and then modified it, we don't know.

Now if we look into ancient society. There are two ways in which you can go. You have got patriarchy which is basically the father, the patriarch rules everything. Whatever he says, goes, life and death of his children and all that depend on him and him alone. On the other hand, you have got emancipation egalitarianism, which is what a lot of people are moving in today, because egalitarianism means we are equal and under the gospel we are equal as a fact. It is a spiritual reality, but do you actually take that spiritual reality and how do you translate that into 2000 years ago kind of patriarchal society, how you would actually apply it. If you suddenly apply it, there will be huge-huge social problems and the church will be perceived as some sort of radical group and all the woman will be branded like Amazons, it would be actually disastrous.

So what happens is that Paul actually promulgates a middle ground, a middle ground where there is sensitivity to secular values, but you adjust the secular societal structures along the lines of justice, fairness and giving you a theological rational. Paul takes the patriarchal society and he basically modifies it in such a way that is neither egalitarian nor patriarchal but somewhere in the middle. That's how he comes up with the household codes.

Ephesians 6:1-9 (ESV) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

Before we go on, because we live in a predominantly Chinese society, we are going to talk about 'Xiao'. This is filial piety, which is very important in our Chinese society.

It is an attitude of devotion to one's parents and ancestors that one expresses through obedience, loyalty, and respect.

So we are going to look at Chinese or Confucius ideas of 'Xiao' and then compare them to New Testament idea, so that we can come to some sort of understanding at the way we live, because we live in a society where the elders who actually conform to this as well.

“In serving his parents, a filial son reveres them in daily life; he makes them happy while he nourishes them; he takes anxious care of them in sickness; he shows great sorrow over their death; and he sacrifices to them with solemnity.”

This is something that all Chinese will do.

Filial piety begins with serving one’s relatives, continues on with serving one’s ruler, and culminates in establishing character or personal fulfilment and self-actualization for the person who practices filial piety

There are 24 stories in ancient China about how people are filial. For example:

- Wu Meng’s parents were poor and so therefore they had no money to buy mosquito net. So, when they sleep, he stood with his naked body next to them, so that all the mosquitoes bite him rather than the parents. So that’s an example of filial piety.
- “He Fanned the Pillow and Warmed the Blanket” story by Huang Xiang. Whenever it is winter, Huang Xiang would wrap the blanket around himself to warm it before his father slept in it. He also fanned the pillow during the summer time, so that it will be cool for his father.
- “She Breast-Fed Her Mother-in-Law” Madam Tang. Madam Tang’s mother-in-law got no teeth, because she got no teeth so therefore she cannot eat meat. So she breastfed her mother-in-law, which is a bit odd now.
- “He Fed His Parents With Doe’s Milk,” Tanzi”. He actually dressed himself out as a deer and go and suck the doe’s milk and then gave it to the parents.
- “He Cried and the Bamboo Sprouted,” Meng Zong. His parents only can eat special bamboo’s sprout and it was a time of famine. So, couldn’t grow any bamboo sprouts and this guy cry, cry and cry until all the water waters the ground and bamboo sprouts came out and he took it for the parents.

So, these are actually quite extreme stories of how people treated their parents. I gave these stories to show you how extreme this is. This is a whole generation of people who really revered their ancestors and their mothers and fathers and you all are competing with each other in order to be very competitive.

The biblical standards which is similar to

- Love and obedience towards one’s parents,
- Submission to governing authorities,
- Respect for social hierarchy,
- Belief that such an attitude is divinely ordained.

If you look at filial piety, it is a principal of harmony. One of the virtues that maintain the social structure and harmony. Because if the social structure is based on this, if you are actually obedient to your father, and then your father was obedient to the government officials and then government officials will be serving to the emperor. Now if you are rebellious, the whole structure falls down. So, it is very important to maintain social harmony.

Where else New Testament practice, we do the same thing, submission but the submission and extension of one devotion to God. So, it is for different reason. The motivation for filial piety is motivation for self-preservation, fame, and success is filial piety. Making a name for the sake of the honour of parents and avoid acts that lead them to trouble. So you must not do any things that will dishonour your father's name. That is the motivation everyone has.

Why do you do that?

It is actually a virtue. It is "an all-embracing rule of conduct" allowing people "to live in peace and harmony" and to be of "one accord with all under heaven. So everything must be under harmony.

NEW TESTAMENT HOUSEHOLD CODES:

*Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV) 1 **Children**, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "**Honor your father and mother**" (this is the first commandment with a promise), 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

The word here is 'Tekna', which is basically children, which means it is not adults.

Why are you supposed to obey?

This is the first command. They get this from the Old Testament. Basis of the children's obedience to their parents is based on this Old Testament. If we look at the Ten Commandments, we have got the first four and fifth commandment is right in the middle. Command 1 to 4 is about fidelity to God. Command 6 to 10 is about loving your neighbor and number 5 is about parents. Our parents are our closest numbers, so therefore it is a pivot point of our obedience to God.

Deuteronomy 5:16 (ESV) 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

The word honor is 'kabod', which is weightiness or heavy. So therefore you actually have to give weight to your parents, which means give due consideration and honor and appreciation. The same term is used of God. for example

*1 Samuel 2:30 (ESV) 30 Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who **honor** me I will **honor**, and those who **despise** me shall be lightly esteemed.*

A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name.

So, he is actually having a go towards the priests who are not honoring him. If you don't honor your parents,

Exodus 21:15-17 (ESV) 15 "Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death.16 "Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.17 "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death

So actually, the honor part in the Old Testament is a very-very serious deal. If you actually strike at your parents, you will be killed. Then you have got

Deuteronomy 21:18-21 (ESV) "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, 20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

There is a reason why dishonoring your parents is a very-very serious matter in the Old Testament. The reason is actually the same reason as the Chinese Confucius idea. This idea says that if you are honoring your parents, it is actually the bedrock of social order. The moment you don't honor your parents, you are not going to honor the government and the government is not going to honor the emperor and the whole society collapses. It is based on that kind of idea. So therefore, if you strike your mother and father, or you curse them or you disobey them, then the same thing will go out. So therefore, it is very serious.

*Deuteronomy 5:16 (ESV) 'Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that **your days may be long**, and that it **may go well** with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*

What happens if you don't honor your parents and you actually have people who are selfish, that means there is no authority and you are selfish. If you are selfish and you live for yourself, the social structure of family and society will collapse.

Israel is God's son, so therefore the son must follow the father and what happens is that if the son follows the father all will be well. You go to the promised land, you will dwell in the land of milk and honey, you don't rebel against me, you will have blessing and you will live long, but if you rebel against me disaster will come. So, I think that is the main issue here. Because submission to the authority which is delegative authority to your parents will lead to a long life, because you don't rebel.

So as the son obeys the father, Israel obeys God.

Parents are God’s gift to children to teach us how to live under authority. We learn ‘to submit to authority instead of living for self’ by learning to submit to our parents. If we cannot submit to our parents, we cannot submit to God. That is the thinking behind that.

CARING FOR AGED PARENTS

Proverbs 19:26 (ESV) He who does violence to his father and chases away his mother is a son who brings shame and reproach.

Proverbs 28:24 (ESV) Whoever robs his father or his mother and says, “That is no transgression,” is a companion to a man who destroys.

Joseph provides for his brothers and family and father. He tells them

Genesis 45:9-11 (ESV) Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. 10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.’

*Genesis 47:28-31 (ESV) And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were 147 years. 29 And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but let me lie with my fathers. **Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place.**” He answered, “I will do as you have said.” 31 And he said, “Swear to me”; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.*

So, Joseph even though honors the father when the father dies and takes the trouble to take all that body all the way back to Israel out of the land of Canaan. So, he honors his father even in death.

Ruth is a Moabites and when her husband died. She told her mother-in-law

*Ruth 1:15-17 (ESV) And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” 16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. **For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.**”*

This is a lot of filial piety. The Bible does talk a lot about filial piety. Here is a filial piety from a foreigner, a daughter-in-law to the mother-in-law. As a result of that, the Lord blessed Ruth.

Condemnation for those who try to renege on their obligations to care for parents.

Mark 7:9-13 (ESV) And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! 10 For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother’; and,

Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ 11 But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Here he is criticizing the Pharisees and for some reason, the son is upset with the father. He says, all my property is dedicated to the temple, but the son can still use it. Once it is dedicated to the temple, the boy can use it but the parents cannot touch it. So Jesus is saying, you are rejecting the commandment of God, you are not actually helping the son honor his father and mother. By using your traditions over against the actual commandments of God.

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So here the fathers are asked to bring them up in a discipline and instruction of the Lord. What is the purpose of parenting? The biblical parenting is outlined in Psalm 78.

*Psalms 78:5-8 (ESV) He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded **our fathers to teach to their children**, 6 **that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children**, 7 **so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments**; 8 **and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.***

So biblical parenting is actually teaching the children, to the next generation, that they not forget the works of God but keep his commandments. That is the purpose. It is not the purpose of you giving them the best education in the world for them to then walk away from God. It is for them to be taught the precepts of God. That is biblical parenting.

The wrong motive for disciplining them is scolding your children for your own pleasures. We discipline the child out of anger or irritation, that should not be the way.

Wrong methods:

- manipulation – your sister did it okay
- fear – you won’t know what’s hit you
- bribery – I’ll give you a sweet if you shut up
- emotionalism – after all I’ve done for you
- inconsistent – just this once

What about disobeying parents?

Is it ever right to disobey parents. You have got the problem with the fifth commandment conflicting with the first commandment. The first commandment says, you shall worship only one God. Then you have got, I got to honor my father and mother and many times the first and the fifth actually contradict each other. Here we actually have Ezekiel to the exiles of Israel in Babylon

Ezekiel 20:18-21 (ESV) And I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, 20 and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.' 21 But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths

He is saying that these rebellious people are your parents. If they don't obey God, the sons and the daughters should not obey them. He is actually advocating disobedience because when the first commandment is being contradicted by the fifth commandment then you should dumb the parents as it were. You must follow what God tells you to do first.

There is a very interesting story in Luke.

Luke 2:41-51 (ESV) Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

If your son or daughter is missing for three days, will you be happy? You will definitely call police. When you will meet them, you will definitely scold them.

47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." 49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

Jesus was obedient to God.

I must be in my father's house.

So this passage only apply to Jesus. When Jesus came into the world, he is to bring the gospel. He goes to his father's house, which is basically a temple. He must teach there. That is his prime directive. So therefore, you can't question that. The second thing is that

And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them

You have a clash of the first and fifth commandment, but the first commandment is done in such a way that the fifth commandment is also obeyed. In the right time, he has to be in the temple and he must teach and when he goes back to Nazareth, he doesn't say my father told me like that, you must keep quiet.

Joseph and Mary were not perfect, but Jesus was submissive to them. Now you can see the fifth commandment and the first commandment the meld very closely together.

The child's obedience to his parents is transcended and qualified by its obedience to God but at the same time included and grounded in it (Church Dogmatics, III/4:259)

They two meld together. Although Mary would never want the son to go off three years away from her and to be crucified on the cross but remember on the cross what did Jesus do. He talk to John, look after Mary she is your mother. Even when he was dying he never even forgot his mother. It was at the right place, he was submissive, he was loving, he honored her even though he has a father to honor as well. So, the fifth commandment and the first commandment they don't really clash. The fifth commandment is a way of honoring the first commandment. If you don't honor your mother and father, you honor God and that's why your honor your parents. They are interrelated, they don't really contradict.

Further examples of Tensions between the first and fifth commandment

*Mark 1:19-20 (ESV) And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 And immediately he called them, and **they left their father Zebedee in the boat** with the hired servants and followed him.*

That means here they left their father and went into discipleship. This is even worse

*Luke 9:57-62 (ESV) they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 59 To another he said, "Follow me." **But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."** 60 And Jesus said to him, "**Leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.**" 61 Yet another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home." 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*

How can the dead bury themselves? This means Jesus is asking them to leave.

What about Abraham?

He was in the land of Urr. God told him to leave his family behind, go to another nation. So, the reason why Jesus says this is that there must be some sort of priority in your life. As far as God is concerned, he takes all priority, but if you look at another example of Elijah. Elijah had Elisha,

*1 Kings 19:19-21 (ESV) So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "**Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.**" And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" 21 And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.*

Here Elijah let him go back and kiss his father and mother, settle a few things, cook for them and then only join. Whereas Jesus didn't allow that. So, you actually see different kinds of behavior, but it is not exactly to be, that means you don't have one paradigm. There is a way in which the first and the fifth commandment are actually meld together, depending on your circumstances. Here Elijah allowed Elisha to go back, Jesus didn't allow the others to go back, they are all in different circumstances. There is no hard and set rule, but there is a principle. The principle is you serve your father first and in serving your father you will actually honor your father and mother that is the actual principle. So that's the family relationship.

Now we go to work relationships, in which all of us are involved in some way of other. We have got slaves. In Greek times, they only become slaves through two ways, one is through debt or you are captured by war. Attitude towards slaves was, they are stupid people, they cannot think for themselves, they are like objects, they are like a tractor at home which you use for your work. Greek slaves, they actually cannot be represented in court. The court doesn't recognize them even as a person.

- In court have to be represented by owner not self
- Subject to seizure of arrest by anyone as property.
- No legal protection from abuse by owners.
- Must work as directed by owner
- Must live where directed by owner

There is a difference between Greek and American slaves. A lot of people are very critical of Paul because he didn't ask to emancipate the slaves immediately, because they think of slaves in the vain of the American slaves. American slaves are racial in nature and they are really all picking cotton, very low class as it were. They are really tortured. They were killed, treated very-very badly. The slaves in those days in the Greek is different. They have:

- Food and lodging and medical care provided. In fact, some people who are poor purposely become slaves, because of food.
- Can be highly trained as teachers or doctors or philosophers, accountants, tailors, bakers
- Can be freed by vindicate, enrollment or manumission
- Owner still has some minor claim on him for work days
- Jewish slaves freed after 7 years

So slaves were abused. Augustus had a slave called Tallus, who leaked some information from a confidential letter, so he broke his leg. Caligula was worse. His slave stole his one silver coin, he chopped off his two hands, tied around his neck and told him to walk around the whole day and for months with the rotting hands around his neck.

- Reports from Seneca and Juvenal
- Aristotle, Senecan and Columella argued for fair treatment of slaves
- Death for slaves who inform on their owners
- Owners tended to make up their own rules

Why didn't Paul advocate abolition of slavery?

- The emphasis of Christianity was always the transformation of the individual to transform the society and not the other way around. Paul never went to try to transform the society and then change the individual. He worked at the level of the gospel. The gospel moves the heart and the heart really moves society. It is a transformation of people first before society. That's why he didn't immediately do that.
- He advocated submission to authorities in government and they all maintained slavery.
- He always taught that the suffering in this life was nothing compared to the eternal joy that awaited each person in Christ.
- Slaves would have been Christians for the wrong reason if he had done this.

So, these are some of the possible reasons.

Ephesians 6:5-9 (ESV) Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. 9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

So, let's look very closely at bondservants. It applies to employee and employer. So therefore, we are supposed to obey or subject ourselves to them wholeheartedly, which means don't cheat, with integrity.

Slave would know they were equal in the sight of God. The way in which you work is like your boss is Christ. If you think your boss is Christ, then it changes the whole way in which you actually work. You work wholeheartedly. Jesus said

*Matthew 23:1-3 (ESV) Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, 3 **so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.***

Scribes and Pharisees are the most horrible people in the world. Jesus is asking them to submit to them, but don't break the law. So therefore, your obedience is not contingent on how good they are, how fair they are or how wonderful they are. Your obedience is to do whatever they tell you to do, but you are not to follow and become like them. They are hypocrites, so therefore you don't take in their ethical values. What Jesus is saying is that you are to obey, but you don't take their values. You cannot follow your boss as it were.

OBEDIENCE ADORNS THE GOSPEL

Titus 2:9-10 (ESV) Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

So therefore, as we are obedient to horrible, selfish, unrighteous masters or employers, we actually show that we are submissive, we are well pleasing, we are not argumentative, we don't steal their money and we show good faith. In doing that, then when you actually share the gospel with them, it looks great. So basically, it is submissiveness.

The bottom-line of gospel is that, it frees us from our situation. When we are working for terrible bosses, under terrible conditions, it is very hard to reciprocate with wholehearted service. Many of us work wholeheartedly only if we got plenty of money in return or the boss treat me well. But if you are not in a situation where you can leave the job, you should actually serve wholeheartedly because your service is actually service to God.

Philippians 2:14-15 (ESV) Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

So if you are a nice employee who is never rubbing your boss, compared to everybody else in the office you are like an angel, a light, because everybody in the office will sure say bad thing about the boss. If you are not doing that, you are making a huge difference in terms of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:6 (ESV) not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

It means that when you work you shouldn't work deceptively. That means you outwardly do things, but you actually never do anything. You are ultimately accountable to Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:8 (ESV) knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

So we are all having one boss, in the end whether the boss is fair to you or not fair to you, you will actually receive the reward. Expectation of reward is with God, unlike masters who promise but do not deliver. That takes us out of the situation.

*Ephesians 6:9 (ESV) Masters, do the **same to them**, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*

So therefore, you should treat your slave or employee with integrity, dedication, good will, justly and fairly.

*Colossians 4:1 (ESV) Masters, treat your bondservants **justly and fairly**, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

So, when you are in heaven, God is going to judge you as an employer and him as an employee, same basis. Whether you treated him fairly or he acted fairly, whether he cheat you, on your side did you treat him well. A lot of bosses are doing that things, they are not looking out for the welfare. Bosses can be tremendous testimonies for God today.

REDEMPTION OF THE WORK PLACE RELATIONSHIPS

Liberating because your environment does not control you. So you are not controlled because you are the bad boss. Because you are a bad boss, your life is terrible. So it actually redeems and transforms your work because the ultimate value is now with God. The reward is with God and you are actually serving God. Dorothy Sayers write, “all work done well and for God's glory is Christian work.”

If we look at the theology of work, either the unbiblical view or the biblical view, there are three unbiblical views of work:

1. The low view of work. I go to work and they call themselves tent makers. Like someone say, I am a part-time waiter and then I serve in the church. You don't give importance to your work as a waiter, that's call the low view of work. That's wrong. Because if you are serving as a waiter, Jesus Christ is your boss. That work is just as important as your work in church. That's the low view.
2. The high view of work is, like most of us, work defines your self-worth. It gives you meaning. Work is everything. Cannot give up your work, workaholic. That's the wrong view of work, because in the end that work has to be offered to God.
3. Divided view, clergy vs laity. Clergy work is more important, laity work not so important. God gives the pastor 10 points, you get 5 points. That's an unbiblical view of work. So, the biblical view of work is work is worship. All work is valuable and done to serve him. Whether you are washing dishes as a housewife or a mother caring for your child, you do it for the glory of Jesus Christ. All work is redeemed. Whether you have got a good child who is very obedient to you or a bad child who really bites you all the time, it is done for the glory of Jesus Christ. If you are actually serving your child, simply because you are expecting something in return, I think that is a disaster. You should serve your child because God has put him into your charge, so that you can love him or her for His glory, no matter what the child does. Because somehow people will always disappoint you.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 (ESV) Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. 19 Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. 20 For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

What Solomon is saying, what little money you get from your job, whether it important job or earns a lot of money or whatever, enjoy it. As long as you earn your money honestly enjoy it. If you really earn so much money, you can buy a big yacht, you can enjoy your yacht, but it is somebody's else yacht, you cannot enjoy it. So maybe you can't buy a yacht, you buy a little motorboat, just be carefree and enjoy your motorboat, after all it is also on the water, it takes you from point A to point B. So Solomon is saying that learn to enjoy life with what you have earned. Otherwise, you will be so upset.

Doug Sherman wrote in his book, "Your Work Matters to God"

The key to bringing the culture and the church back together, to renewing the workplace and reforming the church—may well be a movement of people who are known for their hard work, for the excellence of their effort, for their honesty and unswerving integrity, for their concern for the rights and welfare of people, for the quality of the goods and services produced, for their leadership among coworkers—in short, for their Christ-likeness on and off the job. What could an army of such workers accomplish?

This is a challenge. If we are good workers, what can an army of such people accomplish for our Lord Jesus Christ. Work is important,

1. Through work we serve people.
2. Through work we meet our own needs (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12)

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 (ESV) For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.

So we are asked to work. Work is a gift given by God to you, as long as you are able to work, but you are probably not going to work at the same kind of intensity as 85 years old as you are 55.

3. Through work we meet our family's needs. (1 Timothy 5:8)

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV) But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

It applies more in Western country. In some countries like Australia or even America, you got three generations of people who never worked. The government provides them. That is a disaster. The Bible says, you don't work, you shouldn't eat. It is unbiblical to have welfare forever. You should give them for a period of time and after that out in the streets, because otherwise you have a whole bunch of people who are useless.

4. Through work we earn money to give to others. (Ephesians 4:28)

Ephesians 4:28 (ESV) Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

You work with your hands, so that you have got something to share with someone in need. That is the purpose of work, so that you could actually help someone else rather than sitting at home.

5. Through work we love God. Ephesians 6

This is how the word of God puts work into its perspective. How important is it in our lives and how we are to deal with our employee and employers.