

## Sermon Galatians 4:4-7

*But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

### Incarnation and the Believer's Workplace

#### Last week:

#### 1) Christmas is a celebration of the incarnation

Incarnation = the doctrine that the second person of the Trinity assumed human form in the person of Jesus Christ and is completely both God and man.

Gal 4:4-7 is about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ for us. Other scriptures point to the incarnation in us. to the world.

See:

Acts 1:1,2

*In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.*

1 Cor 12:12

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*

1 Cor 12:27

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*

1 Peter 2:9

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

1 Peter 2:12

*Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

#### 2) How to “declare the praises of him”

We looked at:

##### (a) Carrying the Word

We noted that the seed, the gospel, has life in itself.

##### (b) Working Well

We saw that labour is good but we should not overwork, that service for Jesus energises, that labour can be worship. Involving our faith in our labours, our employment, we defy that dynamic in us which always looks for the short-cut.

### **This week:**

#### **Intro:**

A Christian (not of this congregation) was telling me of a work colleague, disliked by all, rude, petty, manipulative, malevolent. The believer went on to tell me how it felt when this person said, "So you are a Christian too?" Thankfully that person was not of this congregation either!

#### **(c) Prayer**

##### **How to pray in the workplace:**

Invite the rule of God there. You can use the ancient prayer (Matt 6:9) and the phrase, "Thy kingdom come"

Our Father who art in heaven  
Hallowed be Thy name.

**Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom  
the power and the glory,  
For ever and ever.  
Amen.

How to pray for colleagues:

- Sometimes a promise of prayer later, or regularly.
- Sometimes then and there, in the workplace, whether unnoticed to others or accompanied by touch.

#### **(d) Failing well**

See 1 Thessalonians 1:2-7

*We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.*

*You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.*

I don't think Paul was claiming he never failed or made mistakes when he encouraging the believers to imitate him. I think he was also telling them to see how he got recovered after a set-back.

#### **(e) Being different**

##### **Speaking:**

Be ready to speak about what matters most to you. "In polite society one should never speak of politics or religion." No! Wrong!

**The office party:** You do not need to get drunk at the office party, or snog every willing person. Show that there is another way. You could offer to be the sober watcher/protector and driver. Don't show disgust, show love.

**Work humour:** The "blue" jokes, emails, etc.

We will naturally laugh at funny things, it is the way we are wired. We can find something funny without having to repeat it to others. When accused that a Christian should not laugh at disgusting things, we can give a reply for our faith. Be unembarrassed at finding something funny.

### **Obscene posters, email images:**

The reason for turning away or not gazing upon an image may depend on whether you are male or female.

The male Christian *can* admit that certain images appeal to the male nature but that the Christian man has decided not to gaze. The male may need to tell his colleagues of the scripture "I have made a covenant with my eyes.."

Job 31:1 *I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.*

Proverbs 4:25 *Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.*

And for married men, Proverbs 5:18-19 (NKJV)

*Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice with the wife of your youth.  
As a loving deer and a graceful doe,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
And always be enraptured with her love.*

### **Matters of our spirit:**

- Forgiveness or going in a Huff
- Lying - bad for mission, and bad for our souls.
- Blaming a colleague (or arranging it so they get the blame)
- Being blamed. When you get the undeserved blame remember Abram and Lot in Genesis Chapter 13.
- Back-stabbing and gossip. See:  
Proverbs 16:28 *A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a **gossip** separates close friends.*  
Proverbs 26:20 *Without wood a fire goes out; without **gossip** a quarrel dies down.*  
2 Corinthians 12:20-21 *For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, **gossip**, arrogance and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.*