

Sermon: September 5, 2010

“Shepherd re-visited”

I like Labor Day. Pretty ordinary day ... but it is a time to honor the American worker.

Remember your first job?

I was a paper boy. I guess paper boys and girls are done. Ever seen the guy in action who delivers your morning paper? ----- riding down the street ... car full of 100's of papers ... flinging them all over the place!@!! I remember my bike ----- side baskets, front basket ... full of papers. I got to the point where I could fling those suckers onto a front porch ... every once-in-a-while hitting an aluminum door, waking up my grumpy neighbor. Got a penny a paper!!

Then my 7am to 7pm “gig” at the local gas station ----- 75 cents an hour. At the end of the day ... the owner would dip into the cash register and give me 9 singles ----- thought I was the “richest kid” in the world.

This is back in the day ... when you pulled into a gas stations ... 4 people would surround your car: the gas guy, the window guy, the check-the-oil specialist ... we would even check your tires!!

Oh, well ----- hey, do sound “old” this morning???

I guess it's fun to re-live the joy and excitement of one's “first money-paying job.”

Of course, the excitement wears off ... but it's fun to reminisce.

It's hard today.

On the one hand ----- WORK is so sacred.

It's so much a part of who we are and how people see us ... and how we see ourselves.

Work can bring incredible joy and satisfaction ... it makes us feel good, and wanted, and needed.

On the other hand ----- work can kill us. Especially if we're not happy, or if we work too much.

Often we are taken for granted ... even treated poorly in the work place.

Many of you know what it's like to lose your job ... and the tough journey to find a new one.

One of the hardest things is ----- going to school, training for a career ... and then not being able to find a job that you've spent so much money preparing for!@!! Often ... in life ... we end up doing something totally different than we ever thought. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

All I know is this: *every job is sacred. Work ... in and of itself ... is sacred.*

When we sincerely believe God is real and present in the daily “stuff of life” ... when we deeply believe God comes alive in the very fabric of life itself ... then we know ----- *there is no job that is more-or-less worthy than any other job.*

This is not only a financial issue ... it's a spiritual issue.

Much of this comes for inside of us. You gotta believe in yourself ... you gotta know you make a difference.

Some of this, too, comes from the “outside.”

How do we make other people feel? Do we make others feel important? ... and needed. In the workplace ----- are we fair? ... are we generous? ... do we treat people with integrity and honesty?

When someone works for you do you share? ... do you pay them fairly?

When things are tough do we share the risk? ... share the pain? ... set a good example????

In the way we treat ourselves and others this is exactly how folks see God come alive!!

This is how people discover the spirit of a humble carpenter. In how we are treated ... in the midst of our toil and labor ... in the routines of daily life ----- this is where God and Jesus live.

Just in the past few days ... I think of all the people on whom I've depended.

**the names of the back of our bulletin ... the staff ... they are more than just names ... they are the heart and soul of what we do here.

**this morning ... driving to church ... getting gas, buying a cup of coffee ... I expected the clerk behind the counter to be there and to be of service.

The other day ... my daughter and her boyfriend have a bit of car trouble on their way home from Michigan.

Casey calls ----- if we can get to Orland ... do you think Dan Nagel can look at my car????

They get to Nagels' Service on Southwest Highway ... Dan (the owner) stays past closing time to make sure

Casey and Alex can get on their way safely.

I stop by Nagels' to say "thanks." And ... the memories flood in!!

25 years ago ... Danny was just a "kid" ...

His dad ... who owned the place back then ... had a heart attack.

I went to visit him ... and the next Sunday I did a sermon entitled: "*My car shepherd.*"

Dan and his dad ... they have been "my car shepherd" for the almost 37 years I have been here.

As I leave ... Dan says to me ----- "You know, Don ... I don't have to advertise my business.

You and All Saints ----- you are the best advertising any business could have!@!!"

When someone works hard ...

When someone takes care of you ...

When someone goes the extra mile ----- that person is your SHEPHERD.

Ricardo cuts the lawn.

Becky takes care of your hair.

Dan puts your car back together.

Michelle serves breakfast.

Linda cleans the washroom.

The nurse quietly gives you chemo.

All shepherds. All angels. All human.

Life is a textbook. Each day ... is a new chapter.

From chemo on Tuesday ... to another day at the office on Wednesday ... cleaning your house on Thursday ...

saying good-bye to your mama on Friday ... traveling soccer on Saturday ...

It's life.

Its' work.

Shepherds of all shapes and sizes.

A weary gentleman walks into the church early this morning ... pours himself a cup of coffee.

"Hey, rev ----- A GOOD BATCH TODAY!!"

I reply: "Wayne --- coffee tastes as good as the people you drink it with ..."

Just like work.

It's as sacred as the person who does it.

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