

Domestic Bliss - Children

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[0:00] This is a sermon from King's Church West Lothian. Great, thank you. We'll just see if our microphone works. Thanks Dan for doing that. Thank you Luke.

! Yes, as you have heard, my name's Luke. Another Luke is up here, so it's easy to remember. If I've not met you, it's great to see you. Welcome to church today. Today, we are coming towards the tail end of our series in the book of Ephesians from the New Testament, so Paul's letter to the Ephesian church.

And we are, over the summer, going to be focusing on part of it called the whole armour of God. But today we are finishing kind of the main other part we've been looking at. So we're in Ephesians chapter 6, and the verses today are 1 to 9.

So if you've got a Bible, you're welcome to turn to it, but it will be up. Oh, that's exciting. We've got a soundtrack too. No, don't worry Grace. We'll have our scripture here, so if you need to have a look at it, then you're absolutely welcome.

I'll wait for it. Just clap along or hum along. Great. Thanks Dan.

[1:13] Excellent. Oh, here we go again. Too quick, too quick for your praise. While the guys get that. Brilliant. Thanks guys. Amazing.

Today in our scripture, before I read it, just to set the scene, we're going to be thinking about four groups of people. Four different types of people. And two that are very familiar. You are definitely one of them.

Children. Everyone here has been a child at some point. You may be a parent. So we're going to be thinking about children and parents. Hopefully not. The other two. We're going to be thinking about slaves and masters.

So two that are a bit more unfamiliar in our context and two that are familiar. But we're going to read our scripture. So from Ephesians 6, verses 1 to 9. Paul says this. Children, obey your parents in the Lord.

For this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise. So that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Fathers, do not exasperate your children.

[2:17] Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.

Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly as if you are serving the Lord, not people.

Because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them.

Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven. And there is no favoritism with him. So we're going to kick off by looking at the first three verses again.

So thinking about children and thinking about parents. And Paul says, children, obey your parents in the Lord. And then he talks about the Ten Commandments. He says, honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment for promise.

[3:17] And here, the Apostle Paul is encouraging children to obey and honor their parents. And I wonder if you think about if you've got kids or if you know people with kids in today's culture, I wonder if this word obey and obedience feels a little bit outdated, maybe a bit old fashioned.

I don't think if you went along to like a baby group or something like that, people would be talking about the word obey and how you teach your kids to obey you, that kind of thing.

I don't think that's in vogue at the moment, is there? And there's loads of reasons for that. Some of them are good reasons. Some of them, maybe not. I think one of them is, I was thinking about this, I

think one of the big reasons we don't really use words like obedience is actually there's been over the years definitely an erosion of trust of people in authority.

Not just parents, but, you know, I'm a teacher. I definitely feel that in my workplace. I reckon the police would say the same. Politicians would definitely say the same. And often that's for good reason, to be honest.

Sometimes we see that people in power are particularly susceptible to things like pride or greed or dishonesty. And we see that and it becomes so clear and it comes out in the news. It's horrible, isn't it?

[4:33] But also there's a sin in ourself, isn't there? That we can become cynical or we can easily mock people in power. We have a rebellious spirit in us that doesn't want to do what we're told sometimes.

So the idea of obedience doesn't fit neatly, does it, in that? When we think of obedience and faith, lots of people might say that actually the idea of obeying God or even obeying a parent, well, that's a bit old fashioned.

You know, that's not really expressing yourself. That's not really having joy, is it? It's a bit, maybe a bit of a straitjacket, a bit stifling. Maybe that's a bit of a rule-based faith rather than a faith that's full of life and freedom.

But Paul uses the word obey and we're going to think about why. He clearly roots the word obey and obedience in the idea of honour, honour towards parents.

And he's talking here about the Ten Commandments. So we're going to look at this word honour because I think this is the key to why a child might obey a parent. So we're going to look at this word honour. And I was listening to a podcast recently from the Bible Project.

[5:42] Some of you might do that yourself. It's really helpful sometimes for getting deep into what words mean in scripture, what different parts of it are all about. And they were just talking about this commandment to honour your father and mother.

And they were talking about the word honour. And there's a little bit of Hebrew. I don't know any Hebrew and I'll probably forget this word. You don't need to remember the word. It's more about what it means.

They talked about this word kabad. Kabad. So it's K-A-B-B-E-D. And the word kabad is the word for honour in the scripture. And the word kabad actually means to be really heavy.

To have a physical weight. It's quite strange. So to honour is all about weight and heaviness. And there's quite a strange example in the Old Testament of the priest called Eli.

And in the book of 1 Samuel he dies. It says that he fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. And his neck was broken. And he died for he was an old man.

[6:45] And he was heavy. So they use this word kabad. It literally means heavy. Eli had a lot of weight it sounds like. So when he fell it was bad news for him.

He fell with a lot of force. So how does the idea of weight link to the concept or idea of honour? Well I think it's really at the heart of what this word kabad means.

You know imagine if you needed advice. You were in a bit of a situation. You really needed advice from someone. And you turned to someone that you really trust. You might say that their words to you have a lot of weight.

You know I might turn to someone like Luke. And his words to me would have a lot of weight. You know. Compared to someone on the street who I don't know. That means his words are kabad. They're heavy. Oh yeah absolutely Luke. Their words are significant. Important. They're valuable to me. When you kabad someone. You honour them.

[7:46] You treat them as heavy. That sounds. Let's not go around calling people heavy. But it's about honouring them because they have weight in your life. They have a significance. An importance.

An importance. A value. And I think it makes sense. To say that true. Joyful. Wholehearted obedience. Whether it's to God. Or to a parent.

Flows out of this place of honour. We obey a mother or father. Because we hold them in that place of honour. We hold them as significant in our lives.

As important. Now I'd love you to look back on your childhood. And I appreciate it looks very different for different people. Your childhood might have been a happy time.

It might have been a painful time. But I wonder if you think about when you obeyed your parents. Or when you tried to obey your parents. Did that come out of a place of honour for your parents?

[8:43] If it didn't. I bet that was quite tough. Wasn't it? I bet. And we've all been there. Do you know? I bet that's a difficult thing to hold in balance. If you don't really honour your parents. It's then hard to obey what they're telling you to do.

But when we do honour our parents. That obedience comes much more naturally. Doesn't it? And if you've got kids. Maybe it's hard if they own kids to see that.

But the people around you can probably see what's going on in your family. And how that works. I think obedience and honour. They really hold together. And if one of them is out of balance.

You feel that tension. Now if you are a parent sitting here today. I think you'll quickly realise. That you cannot force a child to obey you.

Or to show honour to you. It just doesn't work. Does it? And this is true from the youngest years. And I'm sure it will be true. My kids aren't quite at teenage years.

[9:40] But our oldest is heading that way. And I'm sure that will have lots of its own challenges. And I don't think there's anyone who could stand up and say. There is a simple fix. To helping your kids to obey what you say.

And to honour you. However. I do think it is important. We're talking about this thing of honour. As a parent. I want to be someone.

That my kids find easy to honour. Do you know? I don't want to go out of my way. To make it difficult for them to honour me. You know? I want to be an honourable sort of dad.

And it is Father's Day today. Isn't it? I want to. You know. Going back to the root of that word.

Kabed. To be heavy. I want to be the kind of dad. That my kids think. Actually. He's got weight in my life.

You know? His words. His actions. They mean something to me. They're significant. They're important. And there's lots of ways we can do that. I'm not saying we need to earn it.

[10:38] It's just we want to be the sorts of people that our kids look up to. I think it's all about living a life of integrity. I think that's a huge one. I think for me. I think about my parents.

What they said. And what they did. Most of the time. Matched up. You know? So I began to trust them. I began to honour them. That started from. From when I was so little.

I couldn't really think about it. I couldn't really understand. But as I got older. You start to see. Oh yeah. They actually mean what they say. You know? They do live their life that way. That's integrity. Isn't it?

And I think that helps a child. Doesn't it? To then honour their parents. To understand what their parents are trying to say. What they're trying to do. And that flows into obedience. And Paul describes in verse 4.

One of the ways that we can put that into practice. Now this one is for the dads in the room. I'm not quite sure why. I have to say. I'm not going to go into why it's the dads. But happy Father's Day. Dads. The Apostle Paul has a verse for you.

[11:37] Isn't this nice? It could be in your card. Maybe. Maybe. Did you write it in Luke's card? I don't know. This morning. It would be a good verse to put in. Wouldn't it? And Paul says.

Fathers. Do not exasperate your children. Instead. Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. It's a funny verse. Isn't it?

I mean. Paul only says. One thing. That the dads should not do. And he chose this one thing. To not exasperate your children. Trouble is. We don't really use that word much.

Do we? I mean. I'm not sure when you would have last used the word exasperate. In like normal conversation. But. For me. I don't really use that word. It's a bit unusual. I looked it up.

And it's all about causing great irritation. Or anger. I'm looking at the dads. Do you do that to your kids? Sometimes I do. Wind them off on purpose. But.

[12:31] I'm not sure if that quite counts. I don't know. The ESV translation of the scripture says. Fathers. Do not provoke your children to anger. I think that's quite helpful. Isn't it?

You're not trying to provoke them. But bring them up in the discipline. And instruction of the Lord. Now. For this bit. I did turn to Google for a bit of help.

Because I thought. Like. Do you know. We all have our blind spots. Don't we? And I am a father. So probably I am exasperating my kids sometimes. So I Googled it. You know. How might a child feel exasperated?

And I found this really helpful. Just some little tips here. So I'm going to share them. If you already do these things. Well done. Or. If you learn something new.

Then that's great. So some of the ways we might end up exasperating our kids. And to be honest. I'm sure this could be true for mums and dads. One of the ways. Number one. Is. When we discipline our kids.

[13:27] If we are overly harsh. Or if we're inconsistent with our discipline. If our kid goes away feeling like. That's unfair. That doesn't match up. That creates a lot of confusion.

Doesn't it? A lot of confusion. Rather than feeling secure in the family. I think that is. One way that we can exasperate our kid. So if we change the rule suddenly.

Without explaining it. Or if our punishment. Maybe our consequence. Doesn't fit what they've done. Children can easily become frustrated and bitter. And like I said.

I'm a primary school teacher. So all the time. We're trying to be consistent. You know. As much as possible. And especially with the kids. Who really need it. You're just there to be reliable. And consistent. And to be saying the same things.

Day in. Day out. To help them to understand. These are the boundaries. These are the rules. If I suddenly go in. And treat them very, very differently. Or if I change the rules. All of a sudden. That's going to exasperate.

[14:23] My kid in my class. And my own kids at home. So that's number one. Number two. Is having unrealistic expectations. So I remember when my kids. Were like really small.

Just like the little one. Who had to go out there. Like babies. Toddlers. And sometimes you expect them to be able to do far more than they can do. To be able to understand far more than they can actually understand.

You know. You're saying. Be quiet. Be quiet. Or something like that. And they can't be quiet. They don't understand what that even means. So sometimes if we expect too much from our kids. That can be something that might exasperate them.

A third one is. Easily done. If we criticise. More than encourage. If we criticise more than encourage. I think that's easily done.

Isn't it? It can leave our kids feeling like they never quite measure up. If it's not balanced with affirmation. A child's spirit can get crushed.

[15:21] Can't it? They can feel like. I'm never going to please mum. I'm never going to please dad. It's never enough. And number four. It's okay. If you've got an only child. That's fine. But if you've got more than one kid.

If you begin to favouritise one over the other. And that can often. You know. It probably is a blind spot for many of us. And we're probably not even doing it. You know.

On purpose necessarily. But it's just something to think about. If we subtly do. If we favouritise. It can create jealousy. Or resentment between siblings. And you know.

If you're feeling like you're that less favoured child. You're probably feeling a bit like. Where am I in the family? You know. Feeling a bit inadequate. Often people talk about the middle child. I don't really know. I'm not a middle child.

I'm a younger child. Woo. But if you're the middle child. Did you? Mike's nodding. Okay. We'll pray for Mike later. And these things we can laugh about.

[16:14] And I think all of this stuff. Take it with a pinch of salt. I mean. We're probably many of us doing brilliantly. In our parenting. But hopefully it's a helpful thought. About how do we not exasperate our child.

But Paul names that problem. I think it's good. Isn't it? Sometimes we just need to recognise. That actually our families. Are not perfect. Okay. Sometimes we might have a problem. And we might need help.

Whether it's from the scriptures. Whether it's from a friend. Whether it's people supporting you. Praying for you. And Paul says. You know. Instead of exasperating them. It's all about raising them. In a spirit of love. And security. And affirmation. But also. Bringing them up. In the training. And instruction of the Lord. That's what he says.

So we'll hone in on that bit for a moment. For me. I don't think there's necessarily. A one size fits all approach. To doing this. For training and instruction of the Lord.

[17:08] For your child. And in fact. My. I was reading it in my study Bible. And it's very vague. It said. Just focus on teaching your kids. The practices and lessons taught by Paul.

In Ephesians chapter 4 and 5. So basically. You know. Read what Paul said. And just try and do it. You know. What does that look like? What does it mean? Sometimes we want a manual. Don't we? But I think.

Although that is vague. And broad. I think. In lots of ways. That's helpful. I think our kids are also different. And you as a parent. Are different to the parents sitting next to you.

And the way that you would parent a child. So. Absolutely. There is freedom to do this. In lots of different ways. For us. In our house. Thinking about how it says.

You know. Just put into practice. What it says. In Ephesians 4 and 5. I went through. And I looked at the things. That Paul does say. And I thought. What are the things. That we're tackling. With our kids at the moment. And I bet. This is one that.

[18:04] We're facing. And you are too. Ephesians 4. Verse 29. Says. Do not let any. Unwholesome talk. Come out of your mouth. But only what's helpful. For building others up.

According to their needs. That it may benefit. Those who listen. For us. At home. That is a big one. With our kids. At the moment. And probably has been. And probably will be. For a long time.

I think. For Shara and I. We notice this thing. Of like. What are we saying. Not just the kids. But us too. And the things that they listen to. And what are our kids saying. What words are coming out of their mouth.

And are they helpful. Are they helpful words. For them to be hearing. Or to be saying. And it can be so varied. So. My kids. They love music. Especially our middle child.

He loves music. So he loves listening to songs. But of course. When you're just asking Alexa. To play stuff. Or Spotify. You get a whole heap of stuff. Don't you. And some of it has. Interesting lyrics.

[18:59] So you. I think for us. And I. It's just listening. Sometimes to what they're listening to. And then having that conversation. And saying. You know that word. We don't use that word.

And not. Not just being like. Overly harsh. Or critical. And being like. Turn it off. But actually explaining. Why. You know. So that they can understand. A bit of our heart. Behind why.

Because ultimately. We want them to grow up. To make their own decisions. And we want them to grow up. To honor us. But not. Not out of fear. Or not out of. Just feeling like. They're going to be judged all the time.

If they do the wrong thing. But understanding where we come from. So lyrics of songs. I mean. We're always saying. To them about like. Let's say things that are positive. And build people up.

Rather than. Cutting them down. And I'm sure. If you're a parent. You have that thing too. And yesterday. Thinking about the words we speak. Finn was talking about. Why do football fans.

[19:55] Say racist things. And I was like. Because it had been in the news. And I was like. That's a great question. So we were talking about. Why people do. The words that we speak. And how they're important.

And any of those conversations. I think are just really helpful. For our kids. To learn. What it is. What is Paul talking about. In the Bible. When he says about. Unwholesome talk. And the importance.

Of our words. But that was just one issue. There could be many. What I'm trying to say. Is that throughout. Your week. And throughout life. As a parent. There will be many opportunities.

To bring children up. In the training. And instruction. Of the Lord. And I think those. And I think those can be really varied. And creative. And as a parent. I know for me.

I just need to be ready. To take the opportunity. I need to be ready. To hear. What's on my child's mind. I need to be ready. Maybe if I've been praying. To share something with my child.

[20:50] If I've been reading the Bible. I just need to be ready. For God to use me. To do that. To bring them up. In that way. So rather than a. A manual. Or a guidebook.

That's. It's being responsive. To our kids around us. And what they need. And I would say. If you're sitting there. And you don't have. Kids. Maybe. For whatever reason.

I think we all have a part to play. Do you know. I think we all have a part to play. In bringing up each other's kids. In this way. About. Showing them. Every facet.

Of who God is. Through the church family. Do you know. And it might be. That you're the person. Who shares a scripture with them. Or prays for them. Or encourages them. Or plays sports with them. Or whatever it is.

Just is silly with them. Does jokes with them. Everyone has a part to play. In helping our kids. To get to know Jesus. So. It's kind of a thank you. If you are doing that. For my kids.

[21:45] And. Let's keep doing that. Because it's so important. We could talk about. I think parenting. And all that. Till the cows come home. But we need to move on.

We're going to move on. To the next part of our scripture. So we're going to think about. The next two groups of people. Slaves and masters. So I wonder. If we could look at verse five onwards. Thank you. So Paul says. Slaves. Obey your earthly masters. With respect and fear. And with sincerity of heart. Just as you would obey Christ. Obey them.

Not only to win their favour. When their eye is on you. But as slaves of Christ. Doing the will of God. From your heart. Serve wholeheartedly. As if you were serving the Lord. Not people.

Because you know. That the Lord will reward. Each one. For whatever good they do. Whether they are slave or free. And masters. Treat your slaves. In the same way. Do not threaten them. Since you know that.

[22:38] He who is both their master. And yours. Is in heaven. And there is no favouritism. With him. So. Whilst. You know. Parenting. And families.

And that kind of thing. Is very familiar. To all of us. The topic of slavery. Feels quite unfamiliar. Doesn't it? But. I think here. It's really important. That we try and. Enter into the time.

The culture. For Paul. It was just. So. So normal. It was an integral. Part of life. To have slaves. To have masters. It's estimated. In a city like Ephesus.

A third of the people. That lived in Ephesus. Would have been a slave. So it's. It's not a minor issue. It's just part of life. And. They were often considered.

Just an essential. Part of a family. So. Paul goes from talking about kids. To then talking about slaves. And masters. And it's like. Well this is all. Almost part of the same thing. We're talking about.

[23:33] Just how life works. What families are like. It's a natural part. Of him dealing with. Family relationships. Now. You can probably imagine. That the treatment of slaves.

At the time. Varied. Enormously. Do you know. Actually. Surprisingly. Because I think. Often when we think of slavery. We think of like. The transatlantic slave trade. Taking people from Africa. Across America.

And the horrible treatment. That they had. Actually. In the ancient culture. We're talking about. Although slaves were treated badly. At times. They were often very valued.

And respected. They became trusted family members. Sometimes they were given. Huge responsibility. So you read in. Matthew 25. The parable of the talents. You know. They were given. Money. And responsibility. Generally. Slaves were permitted. To work for pay. And to save up. To buy their freedom. And if you're interested. Paul talks about that.

[24:28] In 1 Corinthians. Chapter 7. He encourages them. To buy their freedom. And when this happened. A former slave. Would be called. A freed man. And often.

They would just carry on. Working for the family. It's kind of interesting. They wouldn't just. Like. Head off. You know. Do their own thing. Necessarily. They might stay. Working for their former master. They might even adopt.

Like the family name. And continue to honour. Their master. So it's quite an interesting.

Relationship. And maybe not one. That we would necessarily. Expect. Or we might find it hard.

To understand. I guess. But. Obviously. Not all slaves. Were treated like this. Some slave masters. Would exploit. And abuse their slaves. They had the power.

Of life or death. Over their slaves. They could give out beatings. Imprisonment. Or they could sell them. Sell them into a harsher. Situation. As a punishment. So it's complex.

[25:23] Isn't it? And I think. In these verses. Paul's not really talking about. The system of slavery. He's not condoning it. Or justifying it. But he's also not saying. That slaves should just. Go free. He's talking about.

The dynamic. Of what it means. To be a slave. Or to be a master. And how. We live in that. He's providing instructions. To Christian slaves. And to Christian masters.

About how they could. Live out their roles. Within that. Social and legal culture. So for us. How do we read. These verses. And what can we take. Take from them. I think it's important.

We don't. Immediately take. Verses like this. Out of context. Of course. It's about slaves. And masters. But it's important. For us to try and think. Well are there any principles. That could help us. In our lives today. So. The obvious. Kind of parallel. And it's not perfect. Is to think about. You know. In your workplace.

[26:17] And thinking about. Being an employee. Or an employer. About a worker. About a boss. And there's definitely. Principles in here. That are important for us. Do you know.

If you. Work in any kind of way. It is what we give. Much of our lives to. It's so. So important. And it's something. We don't often talk about. At church. Necessarily. So I think it's important.

In these verses. We see. How can Paul. Help us. As we are. People who are. In the workplace. And I think. If you are. Someone who is. Employed. If you work. For other people.

The main thing. That we can probably. Take from these verses. Is that doing. Our earthly work.

Here on earth. Doing it well. Is an important way. To serve our heavenly father.

It's a really important thing. Paul says. Wholeheartedly. As if you were serving. The Lord. And not people. Only.

[27:11] Though. We at times. Maybe I'm talking to myself. Sometimes we cut corners. Or maybe sometimes. You know. If the boss isn't looking. Or you think. I'll just do that quickly. Or maybe. For some people.

You know. At work. It might be that they. You know. Put on a show. When they're in the spotlight. But behind the scenes. They act very differently. That's not the kind of work. Or worker. That God. Desires.

We know. That the Lord sees. Everything that we do. That which is public. And that which is in private. In secret. And I think he's calling us.

To be the same person. In both of those contexts. In the public place. Where you're seen. And in the secret place. Where maybe you're just doing your work. And nobody knows exactly.

What you're doing. But he's calling you. To be a person of integrity. A person who is wholehearted. And someone who is eager. To do good.

[28:05] And this is not easy. Workplace can be. Some of the biggest pressures. Of our life. I think the workplace. Can be the place. Where we really show.

Our true character often. And I think for me. It's a place where I have to. Really rely on God's help. Paul. It's interesting. Paul emphasizes.

Our hearts. In these verses. He talks about having a sincerity of heart. He talks about doing the will of God. From your heart. He talks about serving wholeheartedly.

Paul is saying like. You need to have a changed heart. God needs to change your heart. So that you can be. A really, really good worker. In your workplace. So I think if we are.

Someone in the workplace. We need to think about. The state of our hearts. Don't we? And how the Holy Spirit. Is renewing us. And changing us. And giving us strength. For each day. That we're in work.

[29:04] And sometimes. When I'm driving to work. And I know the things. That are coming up. That day. I just have to. Remember to give it to God. You know. Give those things over to him. Because if I just do it.

In my own strength. With a hard heart. Or a stubborn heart. It's not going to be a good day. For so many reasons. But with God's help. He can help me. And give me a soft heart.

To listen to him. To listen to my colleagues. To listen to the children I teach. All those kind of things.

Now if you are. I said an employer here. But maybe if you're a manager.

A boss. Of any kind. I think the key principle. That Paul would say. Is to remember. That you are not. More important. Than the people.

That work for you. Or the people. That work with you. You're not more important. Paul says. In verse 9. He who is both. The slave's master. And yours.

[30:00] Is in heaven. And there is no. Favoritism. With him. Paul's saying. God is your master. Whether you're the boss. At work. Or whether you're. The lowest position. At work. Your heavenly master.

Is the same. And it's a. He's saying. God doesn't favor. Those who are in positions. Of influence. Or power. More than those who are not. He is master of both.

And he judges fairly. And in fact. If we think about Jesus. You know. Washing the disciples feet. It makes me think. Actually. If I. If I'm a. A manager. A leader. A boss.

An employer. In some way. It's actually about serving. My employees. Rather than. Them serving me. And. Just. Anecdotally. In my experience.

For myself. And for people I know. If. If the boss removes himself. From the reality. Of day-to-day work. And detaches himself. From. You know. What work is really going through.

[30:56] That is a real way. To start breathing. Bitterness. And resentment. And misunderstanding. And I don't know exactly. Who I'm speaking to. I don't know everybody here. But you know. If that's you.

And you are. Someone with influence. In your workplace. I guess I just encourage you. To keep getting alongside. The people. That are maybe. Beneath you. In the workplace.

And what they're going through. Make it the thing. That you're going through too. With them. I think for me. If you have a sense of unity. And togetherness. And work. It can be a really powerful thing. And additionally.

When I've seen. My boss. Putting. Their neck out. To help. An employee. Maybe it's about workload. Or to do with their contracts. Or.

Maybe it's just recognising. What they. Like. You know. What someone's done. The hard work that they've done. They're expressing that truth. That work is a team thing. It's not about.

[31:51] I'm the boss. And you do all the stuff. It's a team thing. It has to work well. As a team. And each person. Needs to be valued. And I think. Paul's instructions.

To slaves. And masters. They do have a lot to say. About. What we do in our work. And. As I said earlier. I think work is so important. You know. God has made it for us to do.

It's really. A precious thing. And a good thing. And we give. Lots of our best time. And energy. And focus. To our work lives. It's so important. That we see it. As God does.

And it's easy not to. It's easy to get disillusioned. Or to get tired. Or burnt out. Or all these things.

That sometimes. They happen to all of us. But God has a vision. For you. And in your work.

And. I've been reading. The book. By Tim Keller. About work. Called Every Good Endeavor. I'd really recommend that. If you're struggling. With work at the moment. Or you just need. A bit of fresh vision. For work. What it means.

[32:46] I would really recommend it. And you can chat to me afterwards. If you want to know more about that. We need to come to a bit of a close. Now. Just to finish. Whether you are.

An employer. A boss. An employee. Whether you're a parent. Or a child. I know that each of us. Are still. Learning.

How to grow into these roles. In a godly way. None of us. Is perfect. None of us. Have got it sorted. We don't always get it right. You know.

As a dad. I'm keenly aware. I do not get it right. Do you know. The context. Of family. And workplace. They really do show off. Our true colours.

What we're really like. And we. We make mistakes. We desperately need. God's help. It's interesting. In Paul's next sentence. In the letter. We've not read it today.

[33:42] But in the next verse. He says. Be strong. In the Lord. Be strong. In the Lord. And in his mighty power. Do you know.

You might feel. When you think about. Your family situation. Or when you think about work. You might feel a bit. Hopeless. A bit weak. A bit vulnerable. A bit like.

You don't have enough time. To do all the things. That need to get done. You don't have enough capacity. To give out. To your kids. You don't have. Limitless love. We were singing about. God's limitless love. Maybe you feel limited.

Do you know. I think. God would encourage us. This afternoon. To give. Those sorts of pressures. And those feelings. Over to him. To know.

That actually. It's only. In the Lord. That we can be strong. Only in his. Mighty power. Can we find. The power. That we need.

[34:37] For each day. So I'd encourage you. I'm just going to pray for us. It might be. That you just want to lay. Some of this before God. About being. In family.

About being. In work. God we thank you so much. We thank you for your word. Lord I really thank you. That. For how you speak to us. How you help us.

How you want to direct us. And give us fresh hope. And vision. For tomorrow. God I just pray. For us each. As we. Bring to you.

Maybe our children. Or families. Maybe our workplace. Our colleagues. God we just pray. For fresh strength. Pray for fresh.

Vision. For what this looks like. God help us. Help us to. Rely upon you. Help us to. Know your strength. Help us.

[35 : 36] Lord. In. Anything that tomorrow brings. We give it to you. Thank you Lord. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.....