

The work God requires

Sunday, Sept 2, 2018

Introduction

Labor Day Holiday

- This is Labor Day weekend
- Originally a celebration of labor
- Let's take a little quiz

Labor Day quiz

- How many hours per day did Americans work In the 1800s? 12
- How many days per week did Americans work in the 1800s? 7
- When was the first Labor Day celebration? 1882, a parade in New York
- Which state was the first to make Labor Day a legal holiday? Oregon in 1887
- **Fun fact:** Historians say the expression “no white after Labor Day” comes from when the upper class would return from their summer vacations and stow away their lightweight, white summer clothes as they returned back to school and work.

Work of God

- Labor Day has become a day of rest celebrating the American worker.
- Unofficial end of summer
- Going from 12/7 - to a standard 8/5 allowing for rest leads me to my topic: **The work God requires**
- This comes from a discussion Jesus has with his followers in **John 6:28-29 (ESV)** (28) *Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"* (29) *Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*

What is the work?

Let's take a minute or two to clarify this work:

Background

Let's take a minute to get some context for their question and Jesus response:

- Just fed the 5,000
- That night he and the disciples leave
- Crowd follows and finds them the next day
- Jesus tells them "You're only here for free lunch". See **John 6:26** *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.*
- Then he tells them to work for what leads to eternal life: **John 6:27** *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal."*

- They ask what is the work God wants
- He tells them to believe

What it's not

Not salvation by works

- Their question is common among all religions “What do I have to do”
- But Jesus tells them God's work is belief
- We've emphasized this quite a bit lately, but ours is not a salvation based on what we “do”
- Consider **Ephesians 2:8-9** *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Not working up to faith

- We saw in Eph 2:9 Faith is a gift
- We can't *work up* to faith
- We receive Gods gift, we expose yourselves to it

What it is

- Jesus tells them *“This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”*
- The work is to believe in Jesus!
- We'll never be good enough, but we can believe in Him who is good enough

- Spent quite a bit of time with this concept Wednesday - Jesus is our *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* - our righteousness
- The work God requires is to believe on the one He sent

Receiving the gift

- We allow the Holy Spirit to impart Faith to our hearts
- We soak it in, immersing ourselves in that
- **Note:** see the context. They followed him for food, they should have followed him to increase their faith!

Clinging to the promise

- This belief is a **complete reliance** on the person and provision of Jesus Christ
- Having believed in Jesus through the gift of faith we cling to our hope in him

Faith without work is dead

- We don't believe in a salvation by works, but faith
- This Faith however, will express itself in work!
- See **James 2:14-17** *14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*
- **Point:** My faith will produce transformation and change

How is this work?

So if the work of God is to believe... How is this work?

Flies in the face of empirical evidence

- God's promise is in spite of what we can perceive with our senses
- **Heb 11:1** *Faith is the subject of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*
- We can't see it - but rely on His promise
- This is true of salvation: **Romans 8:23-25** *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

In spite of time passing

- We live in an immediate culture: have it now
- **Illustrate:** Amazon prime - free shipping, two day. That's not enough. I want it immediately lol
- **Truth:** It's hard to wait
- Abraham was promised a son, but had to wait 25+ years for that to be a reality
- The heroes of faith in Heb 11, died waiting for the promise of their salvation
- We can't give up just because it hasn't happened yet
- **Point:** The passing of time doesn't diminish God's promise!

Constantly under attack

- See the spiritual armor - all defensive
- Enemy is trying to move us from our position of faith
- Now more than ever!
- **Point:** Finish the race

What does this work look like?

Let's take two biblical examples

Plug for Wednesday Bible study

- Free - starting series Wednesday
- *What does faith look like*
- Look at Heb 11, and the people mentioned there
- See how their lives demonstrate faith

Noah building an ark

- God tells Noah he's going to destroy the world by flood
- Tells him to build an ark
- Faith believed God's judgment
- Never having seen rain
- 120 years go by

- His faith, produced the work of an ark
- Because of His faith, he was saved

Rehab trusting in a promise

- Rahab hides the spies
- They ask what they can do
- She asks for salvation
- They promise to spare her
- She has to hang a red cord
- Seems impossible
- Tempted to hide, run, fight
- Instead believed the promise, stayed in her house and hung out the cord
- Her faith saved her!

Closing

Are you doing the work God requires

- The big, primary question - have you put your faith in Jesus Christ?
- Nothing else matters if this remains undone
- If you're still trying to be good enough - you will never make it

Rest in his work

- We use Labor Day as a day of rest
- Let's learn from that, and *rest* in His provision this Labor Day
- Discuss the treadmill of trying to be good enough
- We can **rest** in His work
- **Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)** *(28) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*