

PREFACE

*“Thank God for the love of Yeshua Christ in the heart of His servant to reserve the message for this Sabbath as it was supposed to be given earlier. It’s also the graciousness of God and the goodness of divine providence that 80% of the conferees are already here. Three generations are represented here. I thank the Spirit of God for granting the man of God such light on the topic of Christian Work Ethics. As the man of God expounded on it, I was amazed that Paul the apostle has written so much on it. Pastor enlightened me that the principle of work ethics is actually founded in the Old Testament. So many verses from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes were cited. The Jews have a distinguished record. They occupy the top echelons of the world. They are the top students in the elite varsities because they abide by the principles of the Old Testament on work ethics. That is why they reap the blessings. It’s fascinating to hear pastor remarking that the Holy Spirit caused Moses to comment on it from the commencing chapter of Genesis. God had laboured and then He rested. Work ethics distinguishes people from people. It is an annoyance to interact with people who are NATO (no action; talk only). You cannot fool people with words. Certain competitors stand out because they are more hard-working. I thank God for pastor who unfolded the beauty of Christian work ethics. Certain hard-working groups may have their values and work ethics but it cannot be compared to Christian work ethics. What stands out about the Christian work ethics is its underlying motive and motivation. The believers do it for the Lord Yeshua Christ. Every work is meant for the Lord. There is no motive as noble and pure as that. It’s to please the Lord Yeshua Christ Who is our Master in heaven. It is different from other work ethics which have different motives and incentives. Pastor showed us many aspects of this work ethics from both the Old and New Testaments. Believers ought to live by these principles. It’s amazing to hear pastor commenting on Paul expounding this work ethics in the context of the New Testament where the grace of the Gospel appears. Pastor moved on to show us that in the Gospel work the standard is higher. I thank pastor for his mastery of the Holy Scriptures to show us other insights about Paul. Paul not only has such work ethics; he is very motivated to strive for higher ground. Besides that, pastor made me understand that this is how he judges character. It is stunning. Paul not only lives by this principle but expects those with him to have the same attitude. Sadly Paul could not find people like him except Timothy. In the Gospel work much is expected. Personally as pastor went on, **I felt indicted in many ways. I am very much a man-pleaser.** The heart is desperately wicked. My religion is substantially man-ward. **There is the great lacking of the fear of God. I address Him as the omniscient God but do I sense and feel His presence at all times.** I pray God help me in this area. **Not to work for man to see but work as unto the Lord.** I felt chided as I am unlike Timothy, the way that he serves God. Paul said he finds no man like-minded to naturally care for souls. I find I lack the natural care for the souls of my brethren. There’s much of the interest of self rather than the care for souls. Sometimes my service to Christ can be so mechanical. It lacks greatly warmth and care. That is why pastor always reproves me and the brethren as we do not serve with the spirit of Paul, with the spirit of the Gospel. Thirdly, I also saw my failures. I was very shocked when the man of God showed me the real assessment of the Lord Yeshua Christ. It is not so much what I have done but what I have omitted. This is the standard of the Holy Scriptures. In my conceitedness I think I have done something for the Lord but upon retrospection, the things I have done are unsatisfactory, perhaps at times, abominable. I have omitted many things on so many counts. At least I could have served the Lord better in the mission fields. In the immediate context, pastor talked of the Bible Reading Calendar distribution but it is certainly applicable to all areas of our work. I am guilty that I have not given my best. I thank Nehemiah for confessing this aspect of it at his closing prayer. It shows me how far short I am. Maybe men who are not discerning may commend me but in the eyes of God I felt a miserable failure. I felt enlightened also when pastor showed that God is not a wasteful God. Heavens is His throne and the earth His footstool. He could have given us all the resources but God wants quality and not quantity. As pastor uses to say, ‘One Paul is enough and one Paul is even better than the 12 apostles together.’ God gives the bare minimum. ‘Minimal input, maximum output’- the principle of Michael Chen. God also uses this principle and pastor commented that this is a cardinal principle of economics. I should not complain why God has given so little resources but utilize what God has given. This is something that can be observed throughout the Holy Scriptures. Although we are expanding, nonetheless we are not big. God wants all of us to be efficient and faithful in utilizing whatever resources that God has given us. I stand corrected that I have been wasteful in the management of my time. I am a purloiner, not redeeming the time. Sometimes, in the Gospel work too. Thank the Holy Spirit for using the man of God to address me in all these areas. I feel the conceitedness in my heart as well. I say I follow the man of God and have been serving Christ all these years. But my conceitedness surfaces when I think I should slow down and let the second and third generations take over. It is one thing for the second and third generations to take over but another thing for me to slow down. Thank God for the singing of the passage from Philippians 3. Paul never slows down but strives to attain to greater heights. While we want to motivate the young brethren, I must not be a stumbling block to them. Thank God for the heart-searching exposure from pastor’s sermon. There are all my inward sins to repent. I want to thank God for what Nehemiah prayed. We have a living Paul in our midst; in the person of our minister. Despite his sicknesses, he continues to labour night and day to feed us the Word of life. I really*

want to thank God for the person of our minister in our midst. What characterizes him is that he dies daily. The sentence of death is on him so that God's people can live. There is so much of self-denial in him. In the area of work, pastor is always a perfectionist. Pastor gives his best shot in every sermon he gives. That is why he would not want to preach two different sermons within the same Sabbath. Pastor does not do anything shoddily. He never short changes anyone of us. I thank God for his life that is a pattern of the Gospel of Yeshua Christ. Josiah Chen reminded us of pastor's comments that this Pauline work ethics has affected the whole Europe and the men of God in past centuries. Thank God that it affects profoundly the man of God in our days as well. I feel so sad that though I claim that I am begotten of him in the Gospel, I am so unlike him. As the proverb says, 'like father like son', I pray I may have the grace of God to be transformed like my father in the faith. I pray the Spirit of God will purify my motives. I feel challenged by the sermon but I know myself. I will never attain to the standard of the Holy Scriptures unless God grants me grace. Lastly, I thank pastor for the link he has brought to the area of salvation. Salvation is certainly not by my works and labour but I thank pastor for skilfully bringing out the fascinating truth in Hebrews 4. Christ laboured and then enjoys His rest and God the Father laboured and enjoys His rest. If I don't labour in the Gospelic sense, how can I justly expect the rest for my soul? This is an indictment to me. I also leave a trail of failures as I do not complete my work. It is so easy to start, so difficult to continue and almost impossible to end. I need to do what I can but at the same time, pray that the Spirit of God may transform me and change my heart that peradventure I may enter into His rest." Zephaniah Soh's response to pastor's discourse on Work Ethics Part 2, Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia; 14 December AD 2014