Week 6: Ephesians 2:1-10, 4:7-16

Introduction

Last week, we started exploring the topic of "work" and the dynamics of "master and slave" (Eph 6:5-9), understanding the heart of work as an act of worship and service to God. However, not everyone has a full-time job that he/she feels satisfied with. Some of us may feel stuck in a "wrong" job. Some of us may be in between jobs and waiting for the next career move. Some of us may be taking up multiple jobs as a freelancer or "slasher".

There are probably no Bible verses specifically written for every situation, but these biblical principles remain true for all of us – **that we are God's handiwork created to do good works** (Eph 2:10); **that we are given different gifts so that the body of Christ can be built up** (Eph 4:11-13); **that God is our ultimate Provider** (James 1:17; Matt 6:25-34).

Warm-up question

Complete the spiritual gifts assessment: https://www.islandecc.hk/spiritual-gifts-assessment/
Share about your top 3 spiritual gifts. How are you applying these gifts in your daily life/work?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Recall: In Week 1, we learned how Eph 2:1-20 powerfully summarised the message of the gospel: We are all sinful beings with tendencies of self-centeredness and disobedience (2:1-3), but out of His great love, God saves us when we put our faith in Jesus Christ who died for our sins and resurrected, which gives us new life, new identity and new hope (2:4-7). This is entirely by grace through faith, and we do not earn it with our own effort (2:8-9); our "good works" are not conditions to our salvation but are fruits of our salvation (2:10).

1. Is it easy or difficult for you to consider yourself "God's handiwork" (2:10)? Knowing that you are "God's handiwork", what kinds of "good works" (2:10) do you think God has prepared for you to do?

- The original Greek for "handiwork" (or "workmanship") is poiēma, from which we get the word "poem", meaning a work of art or a masterpiece. This verse reminds us that when we are saved, we are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) – His masterpiece! God has not saved us because of our works (Eph 2:8-9), but He has saved us to do good works (Eph 2:10).

Read Ephesians 4:7-16

Recall: In Week 2, we saw Paul's emphasis on the importance of unity (4:1-6) and diversity (4:11-13) of believers, ultimately leading to maturity and growth (4:14-16). The diversity of believers is demonstrated through different gifts and roles that Christ gives (4:11) which are all for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (4:12).

2. Based on your spiritual gifts revealed in the warm-up question:
(a) How can you keep developing these gifts so that you will grow spiritually mature and no longer be "tossed back and forth by the waves" (4:13-14)?
(b) How can your gifts contribute towards building up the body of Christ and the kingdom of God (4:12, 15-16)?

- One result of being equipped to serve the Lord and others is that believers will become stable in their faith. Children are easily swayed and confused, being tossed by waves and wind (4:14), e.g. false teachings, worldly values, and fluctuating circumstances that make us doubt God; but a mature believer would be able to discern and defend the truth in love (4:15) and build up the body of Christ (4:16).

3. God has created us to do good works (2:10) and given us good gifts (4:11) – He is indeed our Creator, Provider and Sustainer. This is true in every season of our life – employed or unemployed; doing one job or multiple jobs. So how do you see God's provision in your current season? How can you truly trust and rely on Him?

Prayer

End your discussion time with prayers: Pray for each other's struggles in their current jobs / in their search of jobs / in their pursuit of God's call through their jobs, etc. You may use the "A-C-T-S" prayer model for reference:

- **Adoration:** Praise God for being your Creator, Provider, Sustainer.
- **Confession:** Confess to God if you have idolised your job / work for your own glory but not for God's glory.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for His provision and guidance.
- **Supplication:** Present your yearning and request to God.