



## SUNDAY - March 29, 2026

### THE GRIND: Ecclesiastes 2:18-26 - Hated Work

#### SERMON SUMMARY:

The message opens with a call to daily prayer leading into Easter, connecting humble, united prayer with God's promise to bring healing. A story of a man leaving a high-paying but soul-draining job highlights a common struggle: many feel stuck in work that empties them. Ecclesiastes reminds us that work is both a gift and a burden, often marked by stress, dissatisfaction, and the fleeting nature of achievement.

Yet there's a better way. When seen as a gift from God, work can carry meaning and even joy. Jesus' call in Gospel of Mark 8 reframes life—deny self, take up the cross, and follow Him—so work shapes character rather than identity. The takeaway: pursue excellence under God, honor rest, and let both hardship and effort form a life centered on Christ instead of endless striving.

#### SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 2:18-26, Mark 8:34-36, Jeremiah 12:5

#### GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to Ecclesiastes 2, what are the specific negative outcomes Solomon lists as a result of his toil and labor?
2. What is the four-part sequence Jesus lays out in Mark 8:34 for anyone who wants to come after him?
3. The sermon described work as a "painful joy." What are the two contrasting elements that make up this phrase?
4. What did the Coast Guard officer's grandfather diagnose about his grandson's situation, and what was the immediate result of that diagnosis?
5. Solomon says a person must leave the fruit of their toil to someone who did not work for it, calling this "vanity and a great evil." Why does this reality cause such deep despair and feel so unjust?
6. Jesus asks what it profits a man to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul. In the context of our work and ambition, what does "gaining the world" look like today, and what does "forfeiting your soul" look like in practical terms?
7. The idea was presented that work has evolved from a job to a career to a calling, and now must carry our identity, purpose, and meaning. [55:25] Why is work such a poor foundation for building our identity, and what happens when it fails to deliver on those expectations?
8. The concept of "hedonic adaptation" [58:56] was used to explain why, as life gets better, we can feel worse. How does this endless cycle of growing appetites make the pursuit of achievement through work so futile?