

Martin Luther put some word in the mouth of God, as we preachers like to do. Sometimes I may say, God says to you. You are my child. Now I can't find that anywhere in the Bible, but it is what God is saying to you.

Well, here is the way Martin Luther did that one day. The Christian knows that God has said, "If you want to love and serve me, do it through your neighbor, he needs your help. I don't." *I don't need my God, only a volunteer my God, but my neighbor.*

So Luther emptied the monasteries and the cloisters, places where the greatest work had been prayer, ^{or worship} and he called the monks and the nuns to work in the world. Before Luther the word vocation referred to religious callings. But Luther applied the word vocation to daily work and responsibilities in the world and in families. Here God is to be served, in preparing a meal for a family, in repairing a street, in producing an oil filter, in delivering mail, in caring for a parent, in disciplining a child, in teaching in a public school. God is served whenever ^{our} neighbor is blessed through ^{our} work.

So I pray to God that I will be safe through the night. While I sleep ^{for watch} God ~~is~~ watching over me through the eyes of ^{officer} ~~police~~ Riegelsberger who ^{has patrolled} patrols the streets of Avon through the early morning hours.

I ask God to keep the children safe as they travel to and from school and God cares for them in the person of Gary Carlson who moves the snow that falls during the day and night and through Midge Grachinin who carefully drives the bus that picks up the children and delivers them.

My prayers to God are answered by Mark Packer who sees that the meat I buy at Rini Rego is affordable and wholesome. ^{or both that I get in with some and some} My prayers are answered when the plastics I need in my home and car and work are made with care and with safety by Ron Smarsh and many others of you.

God is at work in every one of these people whether they think about it or not. Whenever ~~a~~ neighbor is served, ~~God's~~ God's work *is done*.

~~So that~~ the work that I do in preaching the gospel, and administering the sacraments is not more God's work than yours. ^{job's} What you do in your calling is Holy work. Whether that calling be as a grandparent babysitting a granddaughter or as a person who runs ~~a great~~ corporation. God is being served and glorified in you.

This is the first thing I want you to recognize today. Your work is holy. Wherever your life serves others, helps others you are serving God.

Take a moment, write on your card some ways you serve your neighbors through your daily life.

A second part of daily work is relationships. You can be a blessing or a curse to your neighbors depending on how you treat the people your life touches. This part of serving God is concerned with listening, taking care to build up our neighbors and not to tear them down. You are the representative of Jesus Christ in your school or ~~place of work,~~ ^{office} home, factory, business.

Love your neighbor as yourself. God commands. I want you to spend a moment of time thinking about your relationships, at home, at work, at church. How can you give more to others around you, more interest, more listening, more kindness and gentleness, and less judging and advice. Turn your face away from the concern about, What is in it for me, and turn your face toward what can I do to be a better neighbor to those around me.

I'll stop for a moment that you might jot down a word, or an idea or a name that has come to you.

There is no greater way for you to serve your neighbor than to tell your neighbor of God's love in Jesus Christ. The faith, the hope, the love that is in your own heart can be shared. Often this is that last way

There is one more piece of stewardship of our daily life that I want us to consider. God says, If you want to love and serve me, do it through your neighbor, he needs your help, I don't.

Today . more than ever we are brushing shoulders with neighbors who do not know the love of God in JEsus Christ. How important is your sharing the story of Jesus? Ask yourself what life would be like for you without God. What would it be like not to be able to turn to God in praise or in pleading and to know you are heard? What would it be like to live afraid that death is the end and not to know that eternal life waits for you through Jesus? What would it be like to have no more purpose for your life than to live for self and not for God? When you answer those questions you know how important it is to tell others of Jesus.

we will pause a final time to write a name or two of people with whom you might share your faith. In your home, at school, at office, at recreation.

Therefore my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. Amen