

Transforming Vocations

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

I know, there's some tricky Hebrew in that passage of scripture, so you did well to read it in English, how you did.

Because if you have ever studied Hebrew, it's quite a complex language, it's harder to learn than Greek, which is what the New Testament is written in.

So, you know, if you go to Morling, obviously you can learn how to do Greek and Hebrew if you'd like to. Okay, you don't have to, we're not forcing you to.

But anyway, tonight we're going to be talking about Genesis 3, and really looking at Genesis 1 and chapter 2, and I'm assuming you're pretty familiar with that part of scripture.

It's something most people would pick up the Bible and say, I'm going to read the Bible when they start at Genesis 1, they get to about Genesis 3, and then they give up because it's all too hard.

But we're not going to make it hard tonight, we're going to be looking at it. Separation and isolation are two of the biggest challenges that we face as humanity.

COVID-19, I guess, has certainly exposed that to us in a more profound way than we'd ever really experienced before.

It was accentuated in the fact that we couldn't meet face to face and we didn't have that embodiment between us here with each other, not just here but other parts of the world.

And the feeling of being alone is what undergirded a lot of the mental health issues that arose for many, many people and who are still experiencing them today.

And we'll probably find out some of the trauma that has been related to that over the next decade and how that expresses itself through further research. But what we see here is the thing that undergirds it is fear.

The fear of being created in a way of separate to other people, feeling rejected, feeling useless, feeling this lack of self-worth.

It's almost like we walk through the foreboding of a dark shadow through a forest at night as we consider the isolation we've just been experiencing over these last one to two years.

These feelings of separation and isolation emanate from what we've read tonight. You would have seen that in the last verse of Genesis chapter 3. And I hope you'll have your Bibles out with you so you can follow me through.

But see, humanity becomes banned from the pervading sense of God in Genesis 3. Separated from the Eden that we read about in Genesis chapter 2.

That perfection, that place, that connection, that place of harmony, where we read in Genesis 2 of thinking, wow, that is the place we long to go back for. That is the place we wish we existed in today. But no, we don't live in Genesis 2.

We live Genesis 3 onwards. Genesis 3 has lots of familiar themes to us, as you heard that read for us tonight.

I'm sure you would have picked up some of those themes of temptation and sin and guilt and consequence that comes around that because of all the different things that humanity did, Adam and Eve. But the last part of that passage is often overlooked.

You see Genesis 1 and 2 state that we were made for community. We were made for relationship. We were made for connection with God and with each other.

But separation and isolation is not what God had intended.

Go back to Genesis 2 verse 18, and you will probably recall as you read through Genesis 1, and I encourage you to go back and read through Genesis 1, you'll read through there's this constant theme.

It's in the Hebrew, so go to Morling and learn about it more. See, I'm going to be plugging in the Morling tonight, aren't I? But if you go back to Genesis 1, you'll see this pattern, and that's how it's written in Hebrew.

We lose a lot of it in the English, but there's this pattern of day one, and it was good. Day two, it was good. Day three, it was good.

Remember that? Day four, it was good. And you'll see this ending of each day with, it was good.

When you get to Genesis 2 verse 18, we have our first not good, first not good. And that not good relates to humanity. It relates to our relationship with each other, our connection with each other.

So by the time we get to Genesis chapter 3, we're faced with the reality that life without the pervading sense of presence of God is not good.

But we're separated now by a flaming sword held by the cherubim because of disobedience towards God, which we call sin. I want to encourage you to shift your language a little bit when you talk with people. We often use a lot of jargon as Christians.

We use the word sin, but what does that mean for people today? Basically, it's disobedience against God.

So we need to be starting to think more contextually in the world in which we live to say, okay, how do I speak about the Bible in ways that people understand? So think about it, it's disobedience to God.

Ever since Genesis 3, we now face the reality of a broken world, don't we?

We all sense it, even those who don't yet believe in Jesus sense it, struggling to make sense of pains, anxieties that have risen because of the disparaging effect of humanity's disobedience against God, here written in Genesis 2.

Sure, we can blame Adam and Eve, and think, oh yeah, that's just years ago, it was them. But you know what? We make that decision every day, don't we?

We still live in that place of whether we choose God or not. And the scriptures are pretty clear, we've all not chosen God. Therefore, we are in the disobedience category we call sin.

Genesis 3 reminds us that relationships with each other and God are now stretched. They're not expressed in the way they should be, of equality and mutuality. You read Genesis chapter 2, what do you see?

You see equality and mutuality between humanity. Genesis 3 flips that, blemished by disobedience. We also see there's this shame, this shame of expression.

It's a pervading sense because of our disobedience towards God. And shame is one of the things that drives fear and guilt in our world. The joy of children is now thwart, pain and hurt exist.

The worth and result of your work is now disfigured with stress, strain, sweat, heartache and disappointment.

And the ultimate disillusionment, as you read through that, as we read through Genesis 3, now enters the world and robs everything that we would want to accomplish in this world. Does anyone know what that was?

What was the thing that robs us all of accomplishing everything that we do in this world? What was that? Thank you, death.

Death. It takes away pleasure. It takes away hope.

It takes away the sense of our contribution to this world. All our efforts in our work, our contribution are taken away.

If you read Ecclesiastes, you'll see this picture of death and work and life clearly expressed by the writer there, the writer called Cohelith. He's the writer of Ecclesiastes. But what's been our response to this Genesis 3 thing?

Well, you probably know some of the responses. We try to relieve childbirth now by having different medications, interventions, anesthetics, take away the pain relief, to give pain relief for those who are having children.

You know, beautifully air-conditioned building to take away the sweat. You know, if you're in the office, if you're in tractors, they have air conditioning as well. Indoor spaces, gyms even have air conditioning now.

I find that amazing. You know, you have a place to go to sweat, but you've got gyms to keep you cool. Sort of a counter, isn't it?

We've got weed killer for the thistles and weeds that Genesis 3 talks about. We've got GMOs to ensure effective harvests.

We try to prolong life through different interventions, and we try to reverse old age with cosmetics and lifestyle changes and a whole lot of things.

However, humanity's feeble attempts at extending our lives and making our contribution worth it fail in light of death. You have to do something with that question, because death robs us of prolonging and the enjoyment and the sustaining of life.

Ecclesiastes says, Meaningless, meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless in light of the reality of death and our work. It all says we strive for, we achieve, but this achievement is given up to somebody else.

Somebody else takes away all your hard work. I remember learning this lesson as a young whippersnapper little boy, and I remember I was at the beach. We used to go to Cronulla Beach.

I grew up around the southern area of Sydney, around Punchbowl. Don't hold that against me. And we used to go to Cronulla Beach.

And I remember going there, and I had my little pail and my spade, and I'd take it down there, and I'd go down the front of the beach. And I remember building this sandcastle.

You know, you get the wet sand, and you put it in the ground, and you build these things. And this was my contribution to the world. You know, it was all probably about five maybe.

And I was contributing and making this great construction, thinking, wow, aren't I great? Look at me, mum and dad.

As I turned my back, this other young boy comes through and starts stomping it, wrecking it, and destroying my contribution to the world. So, tears flow, you know, trauma arises in this young five-year-old Keith.

I pull myself together, and I said, well, I'm not going to let that hold me back. I'm going to continue to fulfill my dream to build this sandcastle and let it stand. So, I spend the next however long, kids.

You know what it's like as a kid, five minutes you think is an hour. So, for me, it was like a month, okay? But I was probably only ten minutes.

So, anyway, so I put this sandcastle, I'm looking at it, going, wow, this is great. And guess what happens? The waves come in and wash it all away.

The trauma arises again. This is the world we live in, folks. The world where our experiences of life and work don't match what we would want it to be because of the curse of Genesis chapter 3.

We experience the sweat. Some experience it more in the construction industry, trade, other places. But we see the struggles and challenges we have in our home life, our study life, our work life.

I'm probably not telling you anything in particular that you don't already know. However, what I want us to focus upon is the importance of this theme of integrating our work and our life together.

I call it whole-of-life discipleship, with a particular focus on our work and what we do the other six days of the week.

You see, the result of humanity's disobedience to God's directive, causing this thing we call sin, has caused some of us to loathe tomorrow. Now, I'm going to say a word that some will struggle with, that's work. It's a four-letter word.

And you're thinking, oh, no, I was having a great weekend until you mentioned that word, Keith. You're reminding me of something that's going to happen tomorrow. Well, I'm hoping that you will see things a little bit different.

Because Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 have to be read together. The commencement of Genesis 3 is the reminder that we were made for work.

We weren't made to just sit around lazing in lounge chairs all the time, although there's not anything wrong with that, by the way. But sin has caused this separation of us enjoying tomorrow.

You see, the ability to work and contribute to the greater good is embedded within us. Genesis 1, 28 makes that clear. We were made to be fruitful.

And that fruitfulness is not just about creating babies, by the way. It's about expansion and extending our world for the common good, improvement in our world.

And our world is struggling in trying to do that through a whole lot of different things, things with sustainability, talking about the global atmosphere stuff, yeah, all that, you know. I don't want to get too controversial, okay?

I know there's still some people against that. But it's in our very DNA to want to contribute to the world in which we live.

When we get up in the morning, we want to do something, we want to see that we've achieved and we've contributed to the world in which we live.

And when we don't do that, I think that's a bit of a precursor for some people towards other health issues, mental health issues, because we lose the significance of our work and why God has put us on this planet.

Scriptures, if you read through them, through the lens of vocation and profession and work, you will see it everywhere.

It was written in the context of day-to-day life, of people being nurses, doctors, architects, construction industry, their contribution. We see it clearly and even in creative areas as well.

They are not just focused on separate living in some holy tower that we call the church, that we are separate from. The church is integrated into the world and should be part of the world.

He who is in us is greater than he that is in the world, is he not? That's what it says in 1 John. Not about you, but I believe that.

I believe he who is in me, the Holy Spirit of God, is greater than he is in this world.

So I don't need to fear when I go to my workplace tomorrow, although I work in a Christian workplace, so it's probably maybe sometimes easier, not always, than those who aren't in non-Christian environments.

But I can go in there knowing that I'm empowered by the Spirit of Christ to serve him and be his representative.

But we've somehow focused on a separate living between our Sundays and the other six days of the week over the last couple of thousand years. We're trying to disentangle it. Pastors are trying to help us.

Leaders, theological lecturers, are trying to help us to understand that we need to live a whole of life. Concept of our faith.

Instead of separating Sunday from the rest of the week and making what we call this sacred and secular divide, thinking somehow what we do on Sunday is much more meaningful than what we do the rest of the week, I want to tell you that's a myth.

What you do the other six days of the week, I... sorry, Jonathan, is much more important than what pastors do. Just block your...

you can unblock your ears now, Jonathan. Now, I've passed myself, but I've learned now, it's about discipleship, it's about understanding that what our congregations do as pastors is the job, that is the mission.

What you do the other six days is so important.

But there's this inconsistency, I'm sure you possibly feel, and it's not just a narrative that this church would have had over many years, but it's a narrative in our society in Christendom, in our cultural concept of Christianity, that somehow says,

you know, it's all about Sunday, you know, do work Sunday, we need to fill this, this, this, and this. They're important, but we also know, well, what does it mean when you walk out of here tomorrow? What's tomorrow going to bring?

And unfortunately, we can get this inconsistency, this feeling of separation. We can love today, feel great, connected, community, and then we go in this other world. I hate to say it, I don't think it's another world.

I think we just need to relook at how we see our place in the world. The Roter of Ecclesiastes says, what we gain and accumulate, we can't take with us. And all our work will be thwarted by death.

So we do have to recognize that what we do those other six days isn't about accumulating stuff. It's not about getting more money. But it is about, I think, being Jesus in where you are, wherever God has you.

Understanding that where you are is God's call. God's call is not just something that happens to us. People who stand up here on stage and get taps on the shoulder say, Oh, I want you to be a pastor.

I want you to be a lecturer or do this. All of us, I believe, have a call, a second call of God to serve him wherever that is. And some of us have worked it out, but some of us haven't.

The reality is we have our good days, our bad days, and these struggles in life go up and down. But we've got to realize when we retire, we can lose significance in what we do.

You know that most, a lot of people die within one to two years after they retire. And I think it's because they lose significance of who they are and what they do, or they're so caught up in their work that that's what they do.

I think we need to realize that what we do is for the kingdom, because we're citizens of heaven, says Paul in Philippians. So therefore, if we're citizens of heaven, we're working for a different society, a different kingdom, aren't we?

So, whether we volunteer or some of us are studying, whether we do unpaid work, whether we're doing work that no one sees, maybe we're, you know, a house parent and no one recognizes us, or we do this volunteer work, no one acknowledges us, we've got

to realize what we do is important. However, we fight against what's called the Protestant work ethic, which says that society has generally labeled that good work is paid work. Well, that's a myth. That's not the Bible.

The Bible does not say that paid work is good work. There's many places in the scriptures that talk about that.

And I think the church has been pushed to the side because we've got this sacred secular divide, that somehow what we do Sunday is much more important than those other six days. I want to say every day is important, not just what you do today.

They just have a different focus, a different place in your formation and in the way that that looks. I want to put to us that, you know, we often think, thank God it's Friday. You heard that?

I was there at lunch today. The one at Macquarie Centre, thank God it's Friday. And the reality is, thank God it's Monday tomorrow because guess what?

You have a chance to share Jesus and be Jesus and the fragrance of His love and grace in wherever you are tomorrow. Isn't that great? This is a chance to make more disciples of Jesus.

Get excited. I don't want us to get caught up with the narrative that somehow, and I hear it, oh yes, Sunday is a bit of a hype, it's adrenaline fixed, we really love Sundays, and then it gets worse as we go through the week.

Oh, maybe there's a Bible study or there's a prayer time and that keeps me going, it's a bit of a hit. But you know what, why are we talking in the language of sugar? Sunday is not a sugar hit, it's a time to come together.

I want to encourage those who haven't yet been able to join community, or maybe you're watching it online, you've never visited this church before, to think of connecting in to a faith community, and to those who are here to continue that as best you

can within the health regulations we have to face. But COVID has reminded us that Sundays are not the signature that we thought was. We've had to do church, we've had to do the kingdom without being here on Sundays, haven't we?

This is a great chance to reflect and think about what that means. The patterns and ways we've expressed things in the past should not dictate how we do things in the future. And this is a chance to say, well, what does this mean for us?

What does it mean to be the church? And I don't think it's necessarily just coming together on a Sunday.

I've been talking to my wife, she works in a preschool and there's people there, she ministers to other staff, other families, even children who will never step into a Sunday service. They will never come here.

They might even talk about, yeah, I'm open to Jesus and you may even be able to pray with them, but they will never come on a Sunday for all sorts of reasons. This is a chance to re-think how this could look. I'm sure your leaders are doing that.

But how we've done things in the past should not dictate the future.

I find it fascinating if you've been to some of those old Anglican or Presbyterian churches, you've been to some of those and they've got this sort of like fence at the front of the communion table. Have you seen anyone been to those?

And there's this fence that's around there. Now, originally that fence was put up a thousand or so years ago for a very practical reason. Does anyone know the reason why they put this fence up around the communion table?

To stop the animals coming and getting the food off the table, particularly the dogs. That's why it was set up. There's a practical reason that they didn't have stages like this.

It was just a flat area and they put it around. People would come and they would put their food and contribute to the meal and put it on the table and then they thought, oh no, the dogs, get them away, let's put a fence up.

All of a sudden, people started to create a theology around it and said, oh, let's make it really nice looking.

And then they started to separate, oh, actually, only the priest or the holy people should go in there, into that section and we'll leave everyone else out. And so what we got was this division. The division we call the clergy and the laity.

You may have heard those terms. But that was the reason why we set up. But we've never critiqued it enough to think, well, we shouldn't be doing that.

Similarly, our Sundays, I think we've been so patterned into them, that now is the chance to actually re-evaluate what Sunday really mean. Why do we come together? And Sunday is not going to work for everyone, is it?

We know that. There's people working right now who are believers or want to be believers. So we need to be thinking differently.

I don't know the answer. I'm not giving you answers. I'm just throwing out a whole lot of stuff and then I leave and leave it up to John to work through.

So, sorry John, I'll give you something to do through the week. You're not doing much lately, are you? You only come Sundays, don't you?

You only work Sundays, isn't it? Thank God tomorrow is coming, because there's a chance to be Jesus. It's a chance to be the fragrance of His love and His grace and His mercy and His goodness.

My wife and I have this thing we're really stepping into. We want to leave people better than when we first met them. And so, we were in Macquarie Centre today and everywhere we went, we thought, how are we going to do this?

And someone would serve us food. We'd say, look, thank you for serving us. You know, you've made our day pleasant, and I'm sure you've made lots of other people's days pleasant.

Thank you very much for what you do. You'd be amazed at the response. They're going, well, you're thanking me?

And they appreciate it. They go, thanks so much for that. And sometimes that opens up another conversation.

Maybe we'll get on to Jesus. Maybe not. We're not pushing something.

Or someone in the retail industry who shows us something. He said, thank you so much for taking the time to do that. I actually was chasing someone today.

You know how someone will serve you, and then you've got to go to the counter, and then something else happens, and backwards and forwards, and the original person that serves you, you never find again. They've gone off to serve someone else.

I chased this guy after I got served. I found the extra time. I wasted my time.

I sacrificed my time to find this guy and go up to him and say, look, thank you very much for helping me today, sir. It was really appreciated and thanks. Yeah, it was really great.

And he was like, oh, it's a pleasure. No, it's fine. You know, I just pray for that guy as I leave.

That's what it can look like. Now, that's just on a shopping shopping trip. But that's how we do it.

Be gracious, be loving, change the narrative in our mind to every single day, how we treat people, how we operate with them. And sometimes it's not going to be by the gospel message being preached to them at that time.

Take the expression of Queen Esther. Anyone knows the Book of Esther? It's one of the oldest books in the Bible.

And the fascinating thing about that book, if you haven't read it before, is that God is not mentioned once. God is not mentioned in there.

But Esther, in her vocation as a beauty queen, Queen Esther, you read the story, she's a beauty queen, that's her role, to be the beauty queen for the king. And her story as a beauty queen is to save the nation of the Hebrews.

And she puts herself at great risk for the sake of the people who are about to be obliterated.

She preaches the, what was known as the gospel in that day, not with Jesus of course, but she preaches just by her love and her beauty in the way she operated. But there's no indication that she preached Jesus, or God would have been God.

Yahweh is the Old Testament name for God. Yahweh was mentioned and preached in that time, because we don't even see the word God.

In fact, it's 1 Peter 3.15 that informs us, that says, be prepared, be prepared to give an account of the hope that's in you. And when you do, do it with gentleness and respect.

Unfortunately, we haven't always had a really good picture of that as Christians over the years.

We've always wanted to get our Bibles and put it down their throat and think, I've got to tell, I've got to talk about Jesus, I'll flip, I haven't got to the gospel yet. And there's this program or the system we have to get to.

Remember what Genesis 2 was? We were made for relationship. This is about relationship and connection with other people.

So when we worship God, we worship him in our work, we worship him in our day to day. There's an Old Testament Hebrew word called avodah.

And this word is used as a worship word, but it's also connected to people's vocations because there's people who were building some stones, they were fine stone cutters, there was people who were using gold, and they were avodahing God.

In other words, they were working and serving him. You see, your work is service, it's worship. How are you doing that?

I live on the Central Coast, I told you before, I commute down to Macquarie Park, and sometimes the M2 when I drive is not a good road to be on.

I've come to a point now where I thank God if there's a breakdown or some sort of pile up of cars because it gives me more time to pray for the cars that are around me. Thank you God. Or I catch the train.

The train's delayed. Thank you God, I have more time to pray for the people in this carriage, maybe upstairs, and maybe the next carriage. I can't see them, but I'll pray for them.

And I make my travel, my commute, a worship experience. Simple, practical, bringing Jesus into my life. Jeremiah 29.7 reminds us that we are here to pray and be a blessing to the city.

Now, it applied to the Old Testament church at that time, or the Old Testament gathering, Israel. But I think we can take that in the way we live today, that we are here to pray for our city.

We need to take our directives and our understanding of what it means to live in this world post-Christendom, post-colonialism, post all of those things, post-denominationalism even. We live in this post-world.

We need to be looking at scriptures like Daniel, Joseph, Moses before he actually went into the desert with the people of God. The New Testament Church and the Roman Empire.

We need to be looking at through the eyes of what's it mean to be Jesus, to be God in this world, incarnated.

That's the word we use, incarnated into the world in which we live, which is what God did when he sent his son and incarnated him to the world here with us and left his Holy Spirit to dwell amongst us.

It's about recognizing God's mission every day in what we do. Our work for God should not be just restricted to Sundays, it should be all days. Whether it's paid or not does not matter.

Work is very broad in the scriptures, and we need to remind ourselves of that. We need to find significance in the work that we do. For some of us, we've discovered this message.

Hallelujah, praise God. Teach other Christians what this message is. For some of us, it's like, Keith, I hear what you were saying, but I don't know whether I can get into that space.

It might be a journey. Tim Keller has a good book to start off with called Every Good Endeavor. I encourage you to read it.

Tim Keller, Every Good Endeavor. It's a really good book just to start understanding. Cara Martin, an Australian author, she's also written a book called Workshop, Worship and Work Together.

Get it? Worship, pretty clever. And she's written a second volume of that as well.

That's another book I'd encourage you, Cara Martin. Two things I want to encourage you to take away.

When you get up in the morning and you put your legs outside your bed or whatever you sleep on, not assuming everyone's on a bed, but you put your legs down, put those feet down and say, I'm here for you, God. Think you could do that?

I know it's an intentional shift, but you're actually doing something with our bodies and connecting it to what God wants us to do and saying, God, I'm here for you today, before you get up and get into the day.

And I want you to connect whatever you do, whatever your profession is, whatever you're going to do, whether you're working at home, looking after children, whether you're looking after a family, whether you're working in nursing care, whether you're

a teacher, whether you're a student, whether you're doing unpaid work or paid work, whatever it is, I don't know what it is. Connect yourself to God. See that what you do is significant for God.

Speak positives over the people that you come in contact with. I want to encourage you when you get out and you connect with God, God, I'm here for you today. I want to be your servant.

I want to be your fragrance of love and grace. Okay, can you do that? I want to speak words that are positive over people.

I want to speak words that build up, not pull down. We've got too much that pulls down, okay? Paul talks about that.

He says, use language that builds up, don't pull down. Paul got it, why can't we? And so we're thinking, yeah, okay, how can I build up my first coffee for the morning, that barista?

Thank you so much for the coffee and all that you do each week. Maybe just a little few extra words than just to thank you. Just to show a difference to those other people who also say thank you.

Leave encouraging messages for others on their desk. Say thanks, Ben, for all you do at college. I love it.

I appreciate all you do in chapel. That's really great. Thank you.

Just leave it. Don't even have to sign it. You'll be left wondering, who did that?

Although you'll probably know now next year. Sorry, I gave it away. In other words, I'm worshipping God wherever I am.

I'm serving God wherever I am. I'm the fragrance of Jesus. I'm going to have that in my mindset.

Secondly, see that what you do, reimagine what you do is significant in your work. Whether you're changing nappies on a child and thinking, no, I'm actually not changing nappies.

I'm actually helping this child to be healthy and presented well to my family and my friends, because if I don't, they might walk away. Or maybe I'm an accountant and I'm doing a whole lot of numbers. Actually, I'm not just doing numbers.

I'm putting a strategy together. I'm providing information for others to help them do their work and advance and help in the flourishing of our work.

So whatever it is for you, reimagine it, see it differently, seeing that what I do matters to God, even if it seems insignificant to you, it's not to God. Don't expect thanks sometimes. It's hard to get that sometimes.

Just see that what you contribute to is to the greater good. Be diligent, be hard working, do what is required, but go above if possible. You know, work that extra five minutes and don't claim it on your time sheet.

I see that my wife tells me that we don't have time sheets at work, but where she works, sometimes people will just, you know, they put in extra five minutes and they left five minutes earlier. You know, where's the integrity in that?

Little things like that really make a difference. Look at the story of Joseph. His integrity is amazing.

When you see the bullying and harassment and the struggles and challenges that he had, and you look it through the eyes of his work, you go, wow, look at his integrity. Look how he stood up.

Remember Jeremiah 29, 7, seek peace and prosperity for the city. So connect to God, find significance in what you do, serve others, be the fragrance and love of Jesus. So tomorrow morning, what are you doing?

When you get out of bed, putting your feet down as you normally would, and you're going to say in your mind, in your heart, you can say that loud if you want, God, I'm here for you today and I worship you. We're going to pray now.

We're going to pray a little bit differently. We're going to pray with our eyes open. I'm not sure if you realize this, but there's nowhere in the scriptures that says you have to pray with your eyes closed.

That's something that was brought in during the period of Christendom to help people stay focused in prayer. Yeah, it can remove distractions, but I think we're in a world where we need to pray with our eyes open a lot more.

So I'm going to ask you to pray and use your heart and connect, and you're going to have it visually today. It's going to be up on a screen. Connecting with that, I know it's an American version, but you'll see some of the things here for Australia.

Thanks for having me tonight. Bless you.

Teach us to see our vocations and occupations as woven into your work in the world this week. For mothers at home who care for children. For those whose labor forms our common life in this city, the nation, and the world.

For those who serve the marketplace of ideas and commerce. For those who long for employment, it satisfies their souls and serves you. For each one we pray.

Asking for your great mercy. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.