



Let love be genuine. Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.” – Romans 12:9

Two thoughts are running in my mind as I sit down to write this.

The one thought has to do with Labor Day that’s upcoming in a few days.

The celebration of Labor Day is somewhat unique to this country which is its origin. People always have and do work. Work (along with the home and government) is known and regarded as an “order of creation”, that is, work, home, and government are a kind of three-legged stool on which all of society is based and sits. Every society in every place for as far into the past as we can see and for as far into the future as we can peer is going to depend on the three realities. We find them in the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden, in all of history, today, and into the future. The three are the “Orders of Creation”.

On Labor Day we call special attention to labor....to work and its importance for the structure of society.

We periodically have some problems with that. I read a little article the other day in which people who weren’t working, who were depending on others to provide for them, were criticized and told to “get a job”. Even in the comics, teen age Jeremy in “Zits” this last summer has been encouraged by his dad Walt to get some kind of a job....any kind. Jeremy finally lands a job at the zoo about which he knows nothing and however badly he does that, “it’s a job”. We really do expect that of everyone except those in the most dire straits. This past week one of our grandsons who is a recent college graduate passed a test for which he has been studying and that has opened for him certain job opportunities for which he’s been hoping. We properly gave him congratulations. We love to work. It gives us a sense of accomplishment. The income maintains us and makes it possible for us to be generous and help others. Our nation and others keep careful track of employment and unemployment figures. There are whole professions (one of our daughters is an employment attorney) that are devoted to the orderly conduct of business and work.

The other thought has to do with the Reformation.

We sometimes forget that one of the main emphasis of the Reformation was on what was called, “the priesthood of all believers” with the emphasis on the “all”. The reformers insisted that all honest labor that served people in constructive ways was “godly” work / approved by

God from the Day of Creation and was to be respected and honored from a religious point of view regardless how human beings might consider it. Before Luther's time, people had been taught to believe that only the persons who worked and served in specifically religious vocations that directly served the church were to be more respected than other vocations.

But the Reformation changed that. In certain instances Luther reversed the valuation and taught that the lay vocations were more valuable in the eyes of God than "religious" work. He said that it could be more clearly seen that people who did that work were in fact serving and helping the neighbor more than people who devoted themselves strictly to religious concerns.

So what do you think about that? Can it in fact be true that the Christian love of which St. Paul speaks can be worked out where you are working? We all can certainly hope for that.

God bless us all,
Pastor T.