

Arise | I Chronicles 22:6-16 | January 8, 2017

*Arise and **work!** The Lord be with you! (22:16)*

*Work - **Ergon & Poieo** are Greek words forming a constellation around *activity, doing, making, creating, working, accomplishing, bringing about*. **Ergon** is used 169 times in the NT; **poieo** 565. This week we will focus on **ergon** in the OT and Gospels.*

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Classical Literature: the noun **ergon** has the basic meaning to work, to be engaged on something... it means to create, to produce, to perform and also to process. **Ergon** denotes an action, by contrast either with inactivity or a mere word. 1147

Old Testament: In the LXX the word group is employed with the whole range of meaning of the classical Greek usages, serving with especial frequency to translate the Hebrew words **asah**, to do, to make, **paal**, to make, to do, and **abad**, to work, to serve. Synonyms for **ergon** are provided by the Greek word groups associated with **poieo** and more rarely **prasso**. What is new over against Classical Greek is conditioned by Israel's particular faith in God. **Ergon** is thus used right at the beginning of the LXX to describe the work of the divine Creator (Gen 2:2 f.). [NOTE: in Gen 1:1 ff., **poieo** is used.] 1148

Ergon also stands for God's works over and above the creation, and it then principally means the acts of Yahweh in history, through which he demonstrates to Israel his covenant-faithfulness (cf. the quotation from Ps 95:9 in Heb 3:9)... When **ergon** relates to the doings of human beings, it is able, within the compass of the LXX, to give expression especially to three major theological ideas. In most places where the word-group occurs, it has a positive meaning, namely, when it is used for the purpose of describing man's accomplishment of a task laid on him by God (cf. Gen 2:15)... But also in everyday life that work is judged positively which demonstrates itself to be obedient fulfillment of the divine will, of the law (cf. Exod 20:9 f. and Deut 5:13 f., where in the context of the Decalogue [Ten Commandments] a significant alternation of work and rest is ordained). This applies as much to one's ordinary sphere of work (cf. Deut 2:7; 14:29; Job 1:10; Ps 90:17) as to particular acts of obedience (Neh 13:14, a work of love; Ps 15:2, righteousness; Zeph 2:3; cf. Pss 7:4 f.; 18:21 ff.). 1148

New Testament: The basic meanings of the word-group in the NT correspond to those mentioned above in CL. **Ergon** stands alongside both **logos** [word] in Lk 24:19; Acts 7:22; 2 Thess 2:17; 2 Cor 10:11), and also **boule** (plan, intention; Acts 5:38). As a designation of the actions of the believer, **ergon** can be used synonymously with **karpos**, fruit. 1149

In the Synoptic Gospels theological usage of the word-group can be... a witness standing in Christ's service and sent into the world (Matt 9:37 f.)... "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good **ergon** and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:12)... **Ergon** is related to the work of Christ in Matt 11:2 and Lk 24:19, where it embraces his effective working in deed and word. 1150

In John's Gospel the word group is specifically used to illustrate the unique activity of Jesus, which is inextricably bound up with the working of God, the Father, as Jn 5:17 bears witness: "My Father is working still, and I am working too" (cf. Jn 4:34; 17:4). Jesus understands his working as the fulfillment of his divinely appointed mission (cf. Jn 9:4; 5:36; 10:25), which aims to awake faith in the One who has been sent as the Revealer of God (Jn 6:29)... In John therefore, the concept of working gains its specific theological structure from its Christological grounding, from its point of departure in Jesus' work as Revealer. 1150

Matt Woodley, *CTPastors.com Annual 2017*

How do you get a hyper-driven med student to slow down and deeply attend to the patient before her? That question bothered Dr. Irwin Braverman, the director of medical residents at Yale's University School of Medicine. Braverman noticed that his busy, tech-savvy, data-rich students zipped through their patient exams without stopping to observe the main focus of medicine—patients.

In 1998 he teamed with a local art curator and developed a novel mandatory course. First-year med students had to take a field trip to a local art museum where they gazed at various paintings and then described what they saw in great detail. Braverman tells his students, "Approach the work with an open mind, moving past first assumptions. Revisit the subject, again and again." One med student commented that these deep observational skills "made me notice things that my eyes had just not seen."

As a preacher, I ponder a question similar to the one that bothered Dr. Braverman: how do I slow down and deeply attend to the Word of God for my people? How can I—a busy, tech-savvy, data-rich preacher—find time and energy to revisit the text over and over again while noticing and addressing the needs of my people? And how can I help them do the same? 19

NOTE: In response to the above dilemma and in dealing with our "activity – *ergon*" how do we slow down and listen enough to hear what God has for us in the activity/work we will partake in the Lord's Supper this coming Sunday?

Ester Lightcap Meek, **Loving to Know**

The Eucharist [Lord's Supper] enacts a microcosm of the creation-fall-redemption-restoration drama of biblical redemption, and of Christ the Holy entering the void to deliver us to the gracious possibility of new being, recentring us to self-giving love. Christ invites us to his table to eat with him to eat what he provides. The point of the celebration of the Eucharist is that God himself comes and gives himself. In the Eucharist, the actual descent of God, as part of saving us and nourishing us spiritual, equips us profoundly for knowing by modeling knowing, and by forming us to be in the way of knowing. 467

Footnote #90: The language of “spiritual presence” reflects a Reformed middle position between the Roman Catholic (transubstantiation [where the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ]) and the Baptist (memorialism [a symbol or type]) views of communion. My experience has been that people have not understood how “presence” pertains, and the Reformed position has lapsed into the Baptist one. At least one aspect of the debate between a memorial and a more sacramental understanding is epistemology: if knowledge is information, then remembering information is what the Lord’s Supper involves. But if knowing is transformation, this makes better sense of an understanding of the Lord’s Supper, or worship, and of Scripture reading, as enactment, in which he comes to be really present. 467

When we understand knowing along the lines of the covenant epistemology paradigm, we may put ourselves in the way of the descent of God, the gracious invasion of the real, by enacting what is the case at the core of our being and of the world. May we be more specific about how we put ourselves in the way of knowing in receiving the Eucharist? To partake, you must *eat* and *drink*. Talk about embodied intimacy! This is also obviously mutual indwelling. You ingest the Person who is Truth descended, you invite the Real sacrifice for you. And the appropriate posture is to kneel or bow to eat and drink. You signify the honored role of the Giver, your need for his generosity, and your readiness for the gift. 467-468

Celebrating the Eucharist is rightfully the most strategic way to invite the real, one we may be intentional about practicing faithfully. It invites God and enacts his descent. We meet him on our knees and partake the gracious Gift. All this renders the celebration of the Eucharist, and to the gospel of Jesus Christ, rightful centrality in knowing and life. 468