

In the past three weeks – Hierarchical order: Husbands / Wives | Parents / Children | Slaves / Masters

### Hierarchical Order isn't Horrible...Necessary = Joy & Order...God's design

Practical – Nothing more practical than: Marriage – Family – our work...explain how this text applies

First word: Bondservants = Slaves | Slavery in the first century was quite different...American History

- Roman Empire was built and sustained by slaves – As much as 2/3 of the population were slaves
  - Owned by masters...part household | Bible = Educated – Managed – Tutored ...Some Abused
  - Church = Slaves – Freed Slaves – Slave Owners worshipped together in early church community

Nowhere in Scripture is slavery endorsed...understood as a cultural reality and part of our fallen world

- **No social safety net – welfare – Selling yourself into slavery was better than starvation...kindness**  
Slaves were roman empires workforce...and masters were managers = Relates | GOSPEL  
Slaves and Masters = honors the Lord | How much more should we?

<sup>22</sup> Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. **4 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

God's design for employees and employees to glorify Him by faithfully carrying out our work

God's design...employees and employees = glorify | Big Idea – Honor the Lord in your Work

Lots jobs (Odor Sniffer – Mermaid ⇒ CEO) Somewhere in between...persistent gripe – work is worst Lottery winners say – 'I'd quit my job then I'd \_\_\_\_\_' – First things out or their mouths is 'I'd quit;

Just like: Marriage – Families...cast a new vision for work - Back to beginning: work was not due to sin

**Genesis 2:15 – the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.**

- Part of created order – Wasn't the Fall - God created us for work, just as for relationship
- Not to guilt – Work is hard...struggle w/ motivation – Not...whistle like the seven dwarves all day
- Created to do – Gift from Lord – Bring Him glory – Bring us contentment, peace, joy...opportunity
- The greatest opportunity for evangelism is the American marketplace | What does look like?

### 1. Let your work be guided by your: Heart for the Lord

Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Paul addressing servants, formal letter, would have been revolutionary in the Roman

- Acknowledging value servants...big deal = Your work...no matter what = matters | Martin Luther Command – 'obey our earthly masters in everything' | Same as 'children'...more explanation...workers
  - *Not eye service*: Same zeal and passion whether the boss is watching or not...BOSS IS WATCHING
    - Yellow Lights and Cops | You're putting more value on how you're viewed than the work
  - *Not as people-pleasers*: Self-promotion | Little as possible for credit | Brownnosers | 'Yes men'
  - *With sincerity of heart*: Integrity – Honest and straightforward | Good attitude not grudgingly
- Not always fun...look last 3 words v. 22...gives us the why | 'fearing the Lord'...'reverence for'

Everything always points back to Jesus...it's our Heart for the Lord...Gospel!

Work with Persistence – Be Diligent – Be Sincere – Be Focused...focused on the Lord in your work

If you get to a place where you cannot both please God and obey your boss, you need a new job

- Violates biblical command or conscience b/f God...you shouldn't / can't stay | Little 'b' boss

### 2. Let your work be guided by your: Hope in the Lord

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. | Human nature...incentives matter

- What we spend time on - care about - influenced by result / rewards from our work = Not wrong
  - Kid who would eat stuff for money | 'I'll let you ask out my sister' – Different incentive  
Christians...we have the best incentive - 'work heartily as for the Lord'
- Don't overcomplicate this: it means, put your heart into the work | Telling this to servants!
  - Tough = Mundane – 'Why am I doing this' – 'Better things to do' – Tedious – Repetitive

We put our heart into it anyway, as though God himself were the one signing our paycheck

We don't always know what God is doing with our obedience...but obedience is never wasted

Yes...command, but it's more...promise from God = 'Receive inheritance as reward' – Heavenly

- Inheritance = Future ownership | Slaves: Got no inheritance | Anything went to the heir's estate
    - Almost all of Rome's workforce was working for someone else's future reward
- God promising slaves and workers alike...don't worry about your reward...I've got something for you!
- Keep your eyes focused on the great giver and your reward will be great!

There are earthly rewards | More meaning & Influence (Prov 22:29) – Cause others glorify (Matt.5:16)

- If you're working for earthly inheritance, great - Company - Retirement plan...whatever  
Make sure you don't confuse your earthly and heavenly inheritance: your true reward is in heaven
  - Which means: Your work should reflect the values of Christ, not just a desire for earthly success
- 'You are serving the Lord Christ' - When we serve Christ:
- Our conduct and character matters
  - Our inheritance is secure
  - Our place on the corporate ladder doesn't determine our place with God.
- Slave had little no chance...work being rewarded/recognized on earth...God levels the playing field

This attitude requires patience...and trust | I'm not being rewarded or recognized? Trust God  
If our only hope were in earthly inheritance, most careers would be setting us up for disappointment

- We can honor the Lord...working patiently no matter what our earthly inheritance looks like

### 3. Let your work be guided by your: Honesty from the Lord

<sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. **4 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.**

Bold – Slaves and Masters will both be paid back for their wrongs – No Partiality

Bold – Paul tells Masters to treat their servants justly and fairly...because they are servants to a Master

Simple – You will be held accountable for how you treat people

- All made in God's image, the way we relate to others...even workplace...matters

The workplace hierarchy is real, and it's good

- Different roles in marriage - Parents and Children, there are different roles in the workplace.

The roles are different but the aim is the same...Honor the Lord

So whether we're masters or servants or both, our goal is the same: to please our Master in heaven

- We have to read this verse with a Christian worldview to understand it
    - Because within our world and its current systems, there is lots of partiality – 'Not fair...yup'  
Thank God He didn't give me what was 'fair'
  - God doesn't show partiality, neither in rewards nor punishment
    - His response doesn't depend on the position, power, wealth, or influence of any person
- Prov 22:2 says that the rich and poor have one thing in common: the Lord is the maker of them all  
Just as redemption through Christ is available to all...challenged...articulate that it's easy...True
- Accepting the offer of salvation is easy – It could cost you everything- Its absolutely worth it
- No partiality - All are considered equal and are welcome in His kingdom...reward will be Christ
- We're made to reflect God's image and point people to him through our work
- Paul implores masters to treat servants justly & fairly...to take it to heart...bigger picture
    - In Christ – Slaves (employees) are free to serve their Masters = Honor God
    - In Christ – Masters (employers) are free to treat servants justly and fairly = Honor God

Cast a new vision for your work: The greatest opportunity for evangelism is the American marketplace

Whatever our profession, we were created work in a way that pleases God

### COMMUNION