

This morning we're going to read from 1st Timothy chapter 5, 1 through 6, 2.

Would you all stand again and join me for the reading of God's Word, please?

Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Honor widows who are truly widows.

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has her hopes set on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

But she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than 60 years of age, having been the wife of one husband, and having a reputation for good works.

if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself in every good work.

but refuse to enroll younger widows for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry, and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.

Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander, for some have already strayed after Satan.

If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them.

Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows."

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and the laborer deserves his wages.

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

In the presence of God and of Jesus Christ and of the elect angels, I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others.

Keep yourself pure.

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.

so also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

that all who are under a yoke as bond servants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers.

Rather, they must serve all the better, since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

Thank you.

Thank you, Penny.

Well, I didn't ask Penny to read all of chapter five just to make her life difficult.

That was a long passage of scripture.

But you'll notice a pattern that's pretty common to Paul when he gets to the end of his letters.

He addresses one command, one big command to several groups of people that are in different life situations.

So this command starts really in chapter 5 when he encourages Timothy not to rebuke but to encourage.

The root of that word is actually the same root as honor.

And then he breaks down how Timothy is to honor honor.

both widows and then elders.

And now we see that slaves are to honor their masters as well, addressing a uniquely Ephesian problem.

And we're looking at, by the way, those verses today, verses one and two of chapter six.

But it falls into a pattern of just this idea of

Honoring and showing honor to different groups of people within the church.

And before we dive into 6, 1, and 2, I just wanted to let you know that there's a unique way that we can be obedient to this text and to honor one another, especially brothers and sisters at different stages of life than us, in that this was supposed to be Walter Holtgrief's last Sunday with us.

Walter is in the military.

He's becoming a doctor.

And he was supposed to be shipped out on Sunday afternoon.

So he was thinking he'd be able to be here with us today and we'd be able to say goodbye to him and present him with a Bible and things like that.

But Walter got sent out on Friday.

So he got the news, I think, Tuesday that he was going to be sent Friday evening.

So we weren't able to say goodbye to him today.

But there is a Bible that we purchased for Walter that's out on the welcome desk, and you can sign your name and maybe a little word of encouragement to Walter.

There's also a highlighter there, so you can flip to your favorite passage or a passage that you think will be helpful to Walter in this stage of life.

He will be down in Texas.

Doing his time to pay back his debt there to the military.

And then I think his plans are to land back in the general area as a general physician at some point.

So we may see him again, this side of heaven.

We may not.

So make sure you say goodbye to Walter in that Bible.

Encourage him.

He was an encouragement to me.

I think one of the greatest ways that Walter encouraged me was we met a couple times just for lunch and then in my office.

And Walter, as a young single man, wanted greatly to honor the Lord in every area of his life.

Every area, even finances and just his heart for holiness and his heart for the glory of God in his life and through him was a great encouragement to me and really convicted me as well too and challenged me.

So appreciate Walter and the time that he spent.

I know a lot of you that were in Sunday school with Walter.

We're appreciative of him and got to know him pretty well.

So again, make sure that Bible will only be out here this Sunday.

We might bring it to Sunday school next week.

So some of you that were at closer contact with Walter can fill that out as well, but no guarantees.

So make sure you stop by the welcome table.

All right, let's ask the Lord for his help this morning because this is not an easy subject, nor is it an easy passage, even though it's only two verses.

I told Pastor Drew that this is the shortest text that I've tackled in 1 Timothy.

but it's not gonna be the shortest sermon.

So I'm not saying it's going long, but it's not gonna be the shortest.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help this morning as I speak it and as you hear it.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word that challenges us, that shows us your goodness and your glory, Lord, but also shows us our sinful hearts.

Would you do both this morning?

And would you help us to receive what you have given us humbly and for your glory?

We pray all this in Jesus' name, amen.

So the Bible is great for a lot of reasons, but one of the reasons the Bible is great is because nobody gets a pass with the Bible.

There's no culture, there's no political ideology or prevailing philosophy that isn't marred by sin, and God's word has critiqued and challenged cultures of the past, and it is critiquing and challenging our current culture and our own sinful hearts this morning.

So this is partly because there's nothing new under the sun.

The most fundamental things about us have not changed.

The most fundamental things about us don't evolve.

Again, King Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, says nothing new under the sun, especially when it comes to philosophies and ways of sinning.

This is partly also because the word of God cuts across generations and cultures because God inspired it.

So the word of God is inspired by God himself.

He knows us because he created us.

He knows cultures because he created us.

He allows them to be, and they're brought into being by his creation.

And he knows and knew what every people group needs to hear and what every culture needs to be hearing, what we need to be corrected.

Too often, we sit here with our iPhones and our internet and all kinds of technological advances, and we sit here in a position of what C.S.

Lewis referred to as chronological snobbery.

We look down our noses at previous generations because looking back, we can see their flaws very clearly.

And we sit here from our ivory tower and think about how much better we are than them.

The irony is that someone will be doing this to our culture one day.

And we need, if we're to avoid this, to see clearly in our day our own glaring flaws.

We need to hear the critique of God, especially God's word this morning.

And if we're really listening to Paul's instructions to slaves here this morning, 1 Timothy 6, 1-2,

I'm convinced we'll be just as shocked as the original hearers were by Paul's instructions, but I think for totally different reasons, all right?

So here's what we see in these two verses.

Paul instructs bond servants or slaves to respect and serve their masters for the glory of God and the good of their brothers and sisters in Christ.

All right, so the first thing we see in these couple of verses is a word on New Testament slavery.

So we kind of see it in these verses, but I'm also gonna help fill in the gaps.

All right, we really need to start with a word on New Testament slavery because it is fairly different than what we're familiar with in the history of our own country.

All the time, we need to understand the context that the original author is writing to, or the context of the original author writing to the original audience.

But especially with this subject, it's even more important.

First thing that we would see if we're putting ancient Roman slavery side by side with American slavery is that ancient Roman slavery is far more complicated and three-dimensional than American slavery was.

The NISB encyclopedia estimates that there were between about 50 to 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, and that as much as a third of the Ephesian church that Timothy was pastoring would have been current slaves, and that there would have been a large chunk

of freed slaves also in the church, right?

So you're looking at at least 50% of the church having at least at one time been in slavery in the Ephesian church.

In addition, at the time that Paul was writing 1 and 2 Timothy, there had been large

dramatic changes, dramatic improvements made in how slaves were treated in the Roman Empire.

So large legal changes regarding the treatment of slaves and what slaves could and could not do within that society.

Nearly all slaves in Paul's day could count on eventually obtaining their freedom.

And at one time, around when 1 Timothy was being written, the average age that a slave would have been freed was about 30, 30 years old.

And emancipation or the freeing of slaves was increasing at such a rate at the time that Paul was writing this that Caesar was actually trying to pass laws within their Congress there to slow down this emancipation progress because there was fear of economic collapse at the time.

So slavery was on the decline.

It was on its way out at this time.

But even in the midst of slavery happening, ancient Roman slavery happening, it was still there.

It was still an institution when Paul was writing.

But a slave's experience in ancient Rome was very different than a slave's experience here in America.

Slavery in Rome...

was not largely race-based.

Very little of it was race-based at all.

It was mostly economically based.

People would become slaves to pay off a debt, or they would willingly become a slave because their master had a more financially stable or secure position that they wanted to link themselves to.

Though, officially speaking, they were still, and legally speaking in Roman society, slaves were still viewed as property, slaves themselves could own property.

They could even own other slaves, and often did.

Around the time of Paul's writing, there were a number of rich and influential slaves, and that number was growing so large that there were actually talks and protests

Laws proposed to help limit how high up a slave can move because it was threatening like the old Roman money at the time.

Kent Hughes puts it this way, kind of summing up the state or treatment of slaves at the time that Paul is writing.

He says, Slaves were regularly accorded the social status of their owners.

From outward appearance, it was usually impossible to distinguish a slave from free persons.

Slavery was often preferred to freedom because of the security it offered, and a slave could be a custodian, a merchant, a CEO, and even a government official.

So none of this, I'm not giving you this information to justify ancient Roman slavery.

Like I said, people were still viewed and treated as property, but Roman slavery was generally more civilized and more humane than American African slavery that was practiced here in the States.

I point this out, one, to underscore just how horrific and detestable chattel slavery was in this country.

It was like...

unlike much of what the world had experienced up until that point.

There was some of that, depending on the culture.

We looked at this in our Old Testament overview or survey class.

The Assyrians, in particular, were brutal in how they took slaves out of their homeland.

But this was not necessarily the norm, and it definitely was not the norm in Rome.

I also say this to help us understand why the apostles, including Paul, approached the issue the way they did.

So we read this book, we read these couple of verses from our 2026 modern American perspective, and we start, again, looking down our nose at Paul and start passing judgment on Paul without really trying to put ourselves in his shoes or the shoes of the church at that time.

So again, and I don't think, we'll see here in a second, I don't think Paul's justifying slavery at all.

We'll look at actually how he views slavery from a couple different passages.

But he doesn't directly challenge it, and I think one of the reasons, well, I'm getting ahead of myself.

So I'm giving you this information so that we can try to put ourselves in Paul's shoes as he writes to Timothy and the Ephesian church.

So the issue of slavery, like I said, in the Ephesian church was complicated.

Some slaves wanted to be free, but didn't have the means to obtain it.

Some slaves had the means to obtain their freedom, but chose not to for financial reasons.

Also, the institution of slavery, again, was declining rapidly.

And it's clear from the scriptures why the apostles took the tact or the approach that they did.

They did because they were concerned about the eternal church

the eternal church, over and above the ever-changing societal institutions around them.

It's really not hard to discern Paul's priorities here in verse 1.

Look at chapter 6, verse 1.

Let all who are under a yoke as bond servants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Or again in Ephesians, this is Paul writing again to the Ephesian church, not just to Timothy.

We see Paul looking to orient God's people toward God's eternal judgment and reward rather than the here and now.

He says, "Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart as you would Christ, not by the way of eye service, as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord, not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord,'

whether he's a bondservant or is free, masters do the same to them.

And stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven and that there is no partiality with him.

And it wasn't just Paul.

Peter as well encourages the church to display the gospel, to show the gospel, the work of Christ, even when they're abused and mistreated by social institutions.

Peter talks both about the government and about slavery here in the same breath, which is he that far off?

Probably not.

He says, be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be the emperor as supreme.

And remember, the emperor here is Nero, who's burning Christians alive in his garden.

So be subject to that guy, whether it be the emperor as supreme or the governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a coverup for evil, but living as servants of God.

Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor.

And the very next verse, this is not a different passage, very next verse.

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect.

not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the unjust.

For this is a gracious thing when mindful of God.

One endures sorrow while suffering unjustly.

For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure?

But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps."

The apostles' priorities are clear and they're radical.

The church is not to prioritize its own rights over the reputation of Christ and the gospel.

I'll say that one more time because we've had very practical application of this in the recent past and we will most likely have to apply this again in the future.

The church is not to prioritize its own rights over the reputation of Christ and the gospel.

The church and Christians should not be known as subversive, rebellious, anti-authoritarian, or anti-government.

Government is established by God and is a good thing.

Institutional authority is generally a good thing and a gift from God for human flourishing.

Now, does this mean that Christians blindly follow all laws all the time and that Christians may never participate in revolutionary movements or actions?

The short answer is no.

We do participate in those things and we do obey God rather than man when it's necessary.

And it's sometimes necessary, again, to participate in subversive and revolutionary causes.

But that's another sermon.

And I have found when I come to passages like these that say one side very clearly, when I try to preach both sides, I end up preaching no sides.

So we're not going to preach that sermon today.

We're going to preach this sermon that Paul's given me here in 1 Timothy 6, 1-2.

If you want to talk about the subversive sides of when that's okay, shoot me an email or let's get coffee.

What's important to see here, before we turn to Paul's specific instructions that the apostles are to take and encourage others to take, this eternal view on the subject, right?

Before we look to the instructions, we just need to see that Paul's taking an eternal view, right?

An eternal view to this subject.

He's looking beyond the immediate.

to the forever, especially in regards to the church and the gospel.

He sees the church and the gospel at the center of both of our lives and of eternity.

So that's a word on New Testament slavery.

We see first in these couple of verses though, a word to those in servitude, right?

So a word to slaves or a word to those in servitude.

And the first thing that Paul makes clear is God's reputation first.

Paul gives this command in chapter one, let all who are under a yoke as bond servants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

So first, regard masters as worthy of all honor.

As we noted last week, when we were talking about elders, to regard is a choice, right?

To regard or to consider is a choice that we make.

It doesn't mean that these masters are worthy of all honor and character and action, but these servants, these slaves, are to treat them as such.

And all honor, just to point out the obvious, is all, it's comprehensive, it's to honor them with our words, right, our lips, and to honor them with

our actions, and our intentions towards them as well.

So Paul doesn't give the command.

He doesn't just give the command, but he also gives the motivation or the reasoning behind the command, right?

He says, so that, right?

Let all who are under a yoke of bondage regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Through the convergence of American democratic individualism, that's what our country was built on, it's a focus on the individual, and also this kind of neo-Marxist aversion to institutions, where we're suspicious of all institutions,

We're kind of exposed to this hyper individualism in our day that I don't think has been topped in history.

There might have been points where this type of hyper individualism meets where we're at today, but it's definitely at a peak.

The idea that we would give up our rights and our freedoms to benefit an institution or a person is generally unthinkable to modern Americans.

We might make sacrifices.

We might even make the ultimate sacrifice for our family or for our country, but that's our choice.

And there's no way we would ever tolerate being called a slave or being treated like a slave.

And yet Paul is encouraging believing slaves here to willingly and even joyfully give up their rights, continue to give up their rights, so that God and the gospel will have a good reputation amongst unbelievers.

And Paul has confidence that he's not demanding an unforgivable or an unredeemable sacrifice here.

He has confidence that he's giving this command properly because he knows that whatever these brothers and sisters sacrifice for the sake of God's glory and the gospel, God will give back to them.

Right, Ephesians 6, 7 to 8 makes this clear.

We saw this already, but let me just read it again.

Rendering service with a goodwill as to the Lord and not to man, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

You know, many of us have sacrificed for people.

We've given up time, money, effort, you know, those types of things for institutions, and we've been let down, right?

Or worse, people have taken those things and abused what we have given to them.

God doesn't do that.

There's nothing you can give up.

There's nothing you can sacrifice, even your own freedom to magnify God that he won't repay back to you in the best way possible.

I'm not saying it comes back in the same form that you gave it to him.

I'm saying that God will give you all that you need and then some, right?

And magnify you, especially on the day of judgment.

God will return it to you.

You can't out-sacrifice or out-give God in this way.

Giving up rights and freedoms,

For God's glory in the gospel here may seem a little abstract.

So maybe you're starting to be convinced like, okay, I'm supposed to give up or these slaves, you know, just thinking still through the lens of slaves here are supposed to give up rights and freedoms for God's glory.

What exactly does that look like?

That sounds a little vague and abstract.

It's like something somebody could twist and use for their own, you know, their own devices.

Well, Paul makes it really clear here in verse two, what he means.

He says, those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers.

Rather, they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

So he says that they must, they're giving up their rights, they're giving up their freedoms for the good of their fellow brothers and sisters.

The practical way, in other words, that God's glory

It's demonstrated.

It's through believers radically serving other believers and through a supernatural level of contentment that squashes bitterness and envy.

So Paul's calling these brothers and sisters who are slaves to be happy in seeing their masters, who are also brothers and sisters, succeed.

I mean, you can just sense that it would be difficult for many of these slaves, especially those that didn't have the means of obtaining their physical freedom yet to be sitting alongside other brothers and sisters who are masters.

That would be difficult, knowing and experiencing the freedom that we have in Christ, to continue to serve their brothers and sisters in this way.

And evidently, some in the Ephesian church were using their freedom in Christ as a reason to disobey their bosses and to slack off on the job.

And Christians were gaining a bad reputation as, again, being subversive, and anti-work here.

And Paul's saying that the best thing you can do for God's glory in the workplace is work hard and do your job well, especially if your boss is a believer, knowing that the success you're working for is staying within the kingdom of God.

I think a lot of times we get saved and all we want to do is read our Bible, pray and listen and sing worship songs.

And we go to work and we're like, oh, maybe I should start a Bible study at work and sing worship songs all day and be reading the Bible on my phone, supposedly on my phone, all day.

And the best thing you can do as a Christian in the workplace is do a good job.

Go and work hard and work well for your boss and have a good reputation as a hard worker.

That honors Christ.

Singing worship songs and reading the Bible, though good, are for you on your own time, not your boss's time.

Anyways, I'm getting out of the soapbox.

That doesn't mean that Paul, so while Paul's giving instructions here to the slaves to be more concerned with the reputation of God and the reputation of Christ in the gospel, it doesn't mean necessarily that Paul is indifferent towards the institution of slavery.

So again, he's talking to slaves directly here, but there's several reasons that we already pointed out.

that Paul may not desire at this time to directly address the institution of slavery.

Like we said, the imminent demise of slavery, the multidimensional nature of slavery.

Like I said, not all the slaves wanted to be free.

Also, just prioritizing the eternal over the temporal here.

But that doesn't mean that even in these writings, given all of those things, that Paul is indifferent towards the institution of slavery because we see even in these commands to the slaves themselves, a word to the masters or those in authority.

First, you see it in the fact that Paul emphasizes that the relationship here is that of brotherhood.

Notice how slaves and masters are to view one another, right?

He says in verse one,

Or verse two, sorry.

Those who are believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers.

And we know this goes both ways because we see equal treatment before God in Ephesians 6, 9.

He says, masters do the same to them.

Stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven and that there is no partiality with him.

God doesn't care if you're a slave or a master here in the sense that you're gonna be judged by the same standard and equally before him.

So not only, again, are believing masters and slaves brothers, but they share an impartial judge who will treat them both equally.

And Paul goes so far to say in Galatians 3.28, that essentially as far as worth and judgment go before a God, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you're all one in Christ Jesus.

This wasn't Paul abolishing gender or abolishing slavery or abolishing race divisions here, ethnic divisions.

He's saying, even as those things still exist, as far as worth and dignity goes, all the same before God in Christ.

So this is why, again, too, that Paul encourages Philemon, who was a master, to take back Onesimus, his runaway slave.

Onesimus ran away to Paul, ran away from Philemon to Paul.

Not sure why, we're not told.

And then Paul, after spending some time with Onesimus, sends him back to Philemon with these words.

He says, for this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant or a slave, but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother.

So we start to hear and sense Paul's heart for this relationship between master and slave, and we also start to understand that Paul sees that in Christ, this institution of slavery is on its way out.

The bell has sounded, its time is limited.

It can't endure when we view each other as brothers and when we have this sense of equal worth and dignity before God.

So again, Paul knows that referring to slaves and brothers is subversive to the institution of slavery.

He's not dumb.

He knows that if we're to view each other as brothers, the institution of slavery can only last so long.

But he takes it a step further in our passage.

When he refers to their service,

as an act of kindness.

You don't pick it up in the ESV translation because they were cowards and didn't translate it properly.

I shouldn't say that.

It's a difficult phrase in the context to translate.

But good service here is really a deed of kindness.

Literally, everywhere else, these two words...

especially kindness, is translated kindness.

Good is just kind of an attempt to make it work, I guess, with service.

But literally he says, who benefit by their acts of kindness are believers and beloved.

So Paul is saying here that these people who are your servants, they're not anybody's property.

And that the service that they willingly render is a goodness or a kindness that, again, is willingly given for God's glory and your good, so don't abuse it.

So don't abuse it.

They are willingly giving you their service, their time, their energy.

Don't abuse it.

Brothers and sisters, if you're a member of this church here or are in regular contact with this church, we are all recipients of acts of kindness.

People who willingly give up their rights and their freedoms to serve us.

So let's not abuse it.

Let's not abuse it, but show our appreciation by willingly serving others as well.

All right, so we're talking a lot about slaves and masters, and you're like, you know, slavery was abolished in this country, what, 150, 60 years ago, a long time ago.

Probably should have looked that up before I got up here.

You know, we don't have the institution of slavery here in this country now.

How does this apply to me?

What does this have to do with me?

Well, an important thing to see is that, and I'm not going to take the time because we're out of time, to proof text this for you, but the New Testament regards all of us as slaves.

You'll remember in John 8, Jesus comes to the Jews and he's like, you know, refers to them as enslaved.

And they're like,

What are you talking about?

Abraham's our father.

We've never been a slave to anyone.

We were freed from Egypt.

And even when people take us under occupation, like we're our own people before God.

And he says to them that they're slaves to sin, right?

That they're slaves to sin and that we're either slave to sin or we're a slave to God.

And Jesus left his kingly throne to become a servant.

to serve us and to set us free from our slavery to sin and to make us alive to God's righteousness.

Paul says in Romans 6, we know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.

And having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

Our king embraced servitude to rescue us, his people.

Our king, our God, embraced servitude to rescue us, his people.

This is the way.

So it's no surprise that we're called to embrace servitude for God's glory and our joy.

That we're called to embrace servitude for God's glory and our joy.

Jesus said in Mark 10, but it shall not be so among you.

The Gentiles lord their authority over you.

They rub it in your face.

They make you work hard and abuse their authority over you.

But it shall not be so among you.

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant.

Being a husband and a wife is servitude.

Being a parent or a son and daughter, in a sense, is servitude.

Being an employer or an employee is servitude.

Really, any loving relationship is a giving up of our freedoms, our choices, is a limiting of our freedoms and our choices for the other person.

If you don't believe me, and if you're a young person and not married, just try staying out till like one or two in the morning and not telling your wife where you're at the first year you're married.

You're giving up some of your freedoms, you're giving up some of your choices for the other person.

But we're called to embrace this servitude or this servant nature of these roles.

And we're called, real quick, New Testament view of servitude is one volitional, meaning that it's willing, right?

That we take on this role.

We take on this role of servant willingly.

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul says, for though I am free from all, though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all that I might win more of them.

It's willingly given, right?

This role is willingly accepted.

It's also loving, Galatians 5.

For you were called to freedom, brothers, right?

You were called to freedom, brothers.

Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another.

So our willingness to take on this role is a willingness out of love.

And lastly, it's worshipful in Ephesians.

Be filled with the Spirit, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Out of worship, out of awe, in awe of Christ, submit to one another, serve one another.

Out of reverence for Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

We need to go and learn what that means.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, as we get our eyes off of

the things that make life uncertain as we get our eyes off of the here and the now, the things that threaten our safety, our health, our life, our comfort, and we fix our eyes on you who gave up security, who gave up, humanly speaking, control,

to embrace a body, to put yourself in the hands of those who hated you and despised you for your people, the good and the rescue of your people, Lord.

Would you stir our hearts?

Would you help us to be in awe of your majesty demonstrated in Christ's meekness?

And Lord, would you give us a desire to know that kind of joy and beauty?

even if it means giving up security, even if it means giving up comfort, even if it means placing all of these things maybe in the hands of others, Lord, but ultimately in your hands so that you can receive the maximum amount of glory with our lives, trusting that you will give us the maximum amount of joy and satisfaction and beauty in you.

Lord, we need faith.

We need you to increase our faith to do that.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.