



Outward Group Discussion Guide

August 23, 2026

SUMMARY

Drawing from 1 Timothy 6:1-2, this sermon challenges the cultural assumption that true freedom means self-rule. The speaker begins with the children's story "Yertle the Turtle" to illustrate humanity's instinct to throw off oppression and govern itself, then uses Paul's instructions to slaves in the early church to unpack a deeper theological truth. Rather than condoning slavery, Paul calls believers in the worst of circumstances to model Christ-like honor and service as a witness to the watching world. The sermon confronts the uncomfortable biblical reality that all humanity is enslaved to sin by nature, and that no person is truly fit to be their own master. The good news, however, is that Christ offers a new kind of yoke, one that is easy and light, because it is the role humanity was actually designed for. True rest and freedom are not found in self-rule but in willing submission to Christ's authority.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul instructs slaves to regard their masters as worthy of all honor so that God's name would not be reviled -- in what areas of your own life might your attitude or behavior be either honoring or undermining the reputation of Christ among those watching you?
2. The sermon draws a distinction between Paul condoning slavery and Paul addressing how Christians should live faithfully within unjust circumstances -- how do you navigate the tension between accepting your current circumstances and working toward change, while still representing Christ well?
3. C.S. Lewis argues that the problem with slavery is not that men are placed in subjection but that no man is fit to be a master -- how does this reframe the way you think about authority, leadership, and power in your own relationships and community?
4. The sermon suggests that Scripture, not cultural progress alone, is the backbone of abolition movements and the concept of inherent human equality -- how does understanding the Bible as the source of human dignity change the way you

engage with questions of justice and ethics in today's world?

5. Peter writes in 2 Peter 2:19 that people are slaves to whatever has mastered them -- what patterns, desires, or habits in your life reveal what is truly mastering you, even when you believe you are in control?
6. The sermon presents the idea that those who feel enslaved are actually free in Christ, while those who feel free may still be enslaved to sin or self -- which of these two groups do you most identify with, and what does that mean for how you live day to day?
7. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28-30 that his yoke is easy and his burden is light -- if that is true, why do so many people, including Christians, resist submitting to his authority, and what fears or assumptions might be driving that resistance?
8. The sermon challenges the deeply American idea of self-mastery and independence, suggesting that no one is fit to be their own master -- how has the cultural value of personal freedom shaped the way you approach your relationship with God, and where might that need to be reconsidered?

9. Paul addresses both slaves with unbelieving masters and slaves with believing masters, calling both groups to faithful service -- what does it reveal about the nature of Christian witness that Paul's instructions do not change based on whether the master deserves honor or not?
10. The sermon closes with the question of whether we are willing to give up the throne and submit to Christ's authority over our time, family, money, and plans -- what is the most specific area of your life where you have been most reluctant to surrender control, and what would it look like to place that under his yoke?