

JESUS' Design: The NEW Christian Family

Pt.5 - Colossians 3:18-4:1

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

NKJV - "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

ESP - "Amos, traten con justicia y equidad a sus siervos, sabiendo que ustedes también tienen un Señor en el cielo."

NLT - "Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven."

- Paul's great **THEOLOGY** is now working itself out very **PRACTICALLY**.

Your **Beliefs** ---> Your **Behavior**.

Your **Attitudes** ---> Your **Actions**.

Your **Doctrines** ---> Your **Deeds**.

Paul has been speaking on "putting off" the **OLD MAN**, and "putting on" the **NEW MAN** in chapter 3....."How should the **NEW MAN** look in the different **RELATIONSHIPS** of your life??"

My Christianity should make a difference in **my home**, in **my marriage**, in **my office**, in **my community** - 2 Cor 5:17

Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

AMP - MASTERS, [on your part] deal with your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that also you have a Master in heaven.

I. Paul gives them EARTHLY INSTRUCTION:

"Masters.." - Greek word "kurios" meaning here a human boss, owner, employer, master.

Bondservants

"Doulos" - Greek word for a servant, an attendant, and a slave; a 'bondman'

A "doulos" is a person under the bond of service;

A "doulos" is a person wholly devoted to the service of another;

A "doulos" is a person who has allowed their will to be completely swallowed up by the will of another.

"More than half the people seen on the streets of the great cities of the Roman world were slaves. And this was the status of the majority of 'professional' people such as teachers and doctors as well as that of menials and craftsmen." - Vaughan

"..give your bondservants

This was truly revolutionary in the ancient world! The Greek and Roman culture esteemed slaves as purely property which could be treated any way that their masters wished..even killed. (Seneca)

o what is just and fair,.."

#1 - PRACTICALLY: *As Christians put on the new man, they will be just and fair to those who work for them. It is a terrible thing for a boss to cheat or mistreat his workers, but far worse for a Christian to do it.*

#2 - HISTORICALLY: *Through the history of Christianity, there have been some who used these passages where Paul speaks to slaves and their masters to justify or even promote the practice of slavery. Others have blamed these passages for the practice of slavery. Yet one can never blame Christianity for slavery; it was a universal practice that pre-dated both Christianity and the Jewish nation. Instead, one should see that the abolition of slavery came from Christian people and impulses, and not from any other major religion and certainly not from secularism.*

a) HUMANLY: William McDonald of the New York Times wonders "*how an institution that spread a message of love . . . could also engage in brutality and persecution and turn a blind eye to slavery.*" And according to an article posted on the website of the Council for Secular Humanism, "*slavery was a close companion of Christianity and was not thought to conflict with religious doctrines.*"

Slavery was not invented by Christians and is not confined to only the history of Christianity. Practically every civilization since the dawn of recorded history has embraced owning other people. The practice thrived

for thousands of years in Mesopotamia, China, and the entire Greco-Roman empire. Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.), the Greek philosopher considered a giant of ancient wisdom, wrote that some men are born into a natural condition in need of masters to rule over them. Slavery was found throughout Africa and South America many years before Christ was born. Native North Americans enslaved rival tribes before Columbus made his voyage in 1492.

Slavery has played a role in many secular and Islamic worldviews. As Vincent Carroll and David Shiflett acknowledge, ". . . antireligious governments . . . revive[d] the ancient practice of human bondage to an unparalleled degree in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, China, imperial Japan, Cambodia and elsewhere." Even more recently, North African Arabs have enslaved thousands in Mauritania, and Muslim militias are currently capturing, transporting, and selling men, women and children throughout the African nation of Sudan.

- **b) BIBLICALLY:** Exodus 21:16 states, *"Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper's possession."* **God not only forbids slavery, He gives them the death penalty for it.** That's how serious God sees slavery as. Slavery is no different than kidnapping to God.
- Leviticus 25:39-43 says, *"If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale. You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God."* Here God says that a **poor person sells their self to get out of debt but they are not to be subjected to them in service as a slave.** They are also be freed after the year of the Jubilee. God calls them "My servants" and they are not to be sold in a slave sale.

In 1 Corinthians 7:21-23 Paul writes, *"Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—**although if you can gain your freedom, do so.** For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; **do not***

become slaves of human beings.” There is little doubt Paul detested slavery and wanted everyone to get out of it as soon as possible and desired no one to live in slavery.

- **c) HISTORICALLY:** Long before the end of the Civil War in the United States, **William Wilberforce** began the effort to abolish slavery in the British Empire. In 1788 Wilberforce presented to the House of Commons one hundred petitions to end slavery and in 1792 it finally passed 230 to 85. Sadly, the House reversed its vote in 1793 due to growing fears of the French Revolution that same year. **In 1807 the Abolition of the Slave Trade Bill finally became law and it was declared illegal to buy or sell human beings throughout the entire British Empire.** Wilberforce and the abolitionists cited biblical Scripture as sufficient reason to declare slavery sin. The two main verses mentioned were Acts 17:26 and Genesis 1:26. Clearly William Wilberforce and the abolitionists saw Christianity and slavery and incompatible.
- **The Church Fathers spoke out against the practice of slavery frequently.** St. Augustine saw slavery as the product of sin and contrary to God’s plan (Cf. The City of God 19.15), St. John Chrysostom (4th century) proclaimed that “in Christ Jesus there is no slave.. Buy them and after you have taught them some skill by which they can maintain themselves, set them free” (Cf. Homily 40 on 1 Corinthians 10). St. Gregory of Nyssa opposed the legitimacy of slavery in his homily on Ecclesiastes.
- **In many instances the Early Christians redeemed and freed slaves.** According to W. E. H. Lecky “St. Melania was said to have emancipated **8,000 slaves**; St. Ovidius, a rich martyr of Gaul, **5,000**; Chromatius, a Roman prefect under Diocletian, **1,400..**”(Lecky, History of European Morals)... The Trinitarians, founded in 1198 established hospitals for slaves at Algiers and Tunis in the 16th century and redeemed **900,000** slaves. The Order of Our Lady of Ransom (Mercedarians) redeemed **490,736** slaves between the years 1218 and 1632.
- **Slavery was outlawed in the United States in 1865, due in large degree to the Christians of the Abolitionist Movement.** Today slavery exists no more in Christian countries. However, slavery still exists today in Sudan. Christian organizations (e.g. Christian Solidarity International) currently buy Sudanese slaves, most of whom are black Christians to set them free.

- **#3 - MORALLY:** *Without making an overt protest against slavery, Paul seemed to understand that if he could establish **the point that slaves were equals in the body of Christ, full human beings with both responsibilities and rights** (that they should be treated in a manner both just and fair), then in time the whole structure of slavery in the Roman Empire would crumble - and it did.*

I. Paul gives them HEAVENLY MOTIVATION:

- "..knowing that **you also have a Master** in heaven."
- **#1 - PRACTICALLY:** *Every Christian master would do well to remind themselves that they themselves are slaves to their Master: Christ. Paul is here reminding them to treat their servants as they would like for their Heavenly Master to treat them.*
- **#2 - SPIRITUALLY:** *"..Lord.." is the Greek word "**Kurios**" meaning here "the Divine Master" - Christ.*
- *a paraphrase: '**so work for the true Master - Christ!**' " - Wright*
- *If we properly understand Christianity, we will realize that all true believers and disciples of Jesus are truly his **SLAVES** who have been **BOUGHT** and **PURCHASED** by three price of His perfect blood. He is our **MASTER** and He literally **OWNS US** as His slaves!!*

Ephesians 1:7 NLT - *"He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins."*

1 Cor 6:19,20 NLT - *"Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."*

Romans 6:22 NLT - *" But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life."*

- **PERFECT EXAMPLE: JESUS!!** He is our "Lord Jesus Christ", but He is just, fair, gracious and kind to us!

- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

- As a **WIFE**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing willing submission and respect to your husband?
- As a **HUSBAND**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing sacrificial and self-giving agape love to your wife?
- As a **CHILD**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing willing obedience and honor to your parents in all things?
- As a **FATHER**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing gentleness and encouragement to your children?
- As a **SERVANT-EMPLOYEE**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing diligence, hardwork, and honesty to your employer?

As an **EMPLOYEE**, are you living in the power of the "New Man", and showing fair treatment and compensation to your employees?