

Amen. You can have a seat. I don't know if you've noticed it, but most people act differently according to who they're around. For instance, if you're around guys in a locker room, they're gonna laugh at crude jokes, but the same guy might act differently around. A woman may act differently at a bible study with her friends than she does at a Party with the same friends.

A man might act differently at work than he does at church. He might talk differently at work than he does at church. I don't have that problem. Kind of the same everywhere I go. Sometimes it can seem like people are suffering from a personality disorder.

Even Christians, and the world watches that and wonders why when we see people who are supposed to be set apart different, who try to blend in so hard sometimes. Being different is one of the hardest things about being a follower of Jesus Christ because none of us like being different. We don't like sticking out. When we change I changed schools every year When I was a kid, my parents moved and we would I would enter a new school every year and the the 6th grade was a little different. My dad was in a mental institution at that Like my mom took us shopping and she bought me these new clothes and they were long, long sleeve pearl button western shirts.

And when I got to school, every kid had gotten a memo but me. They were all wearing t shirts and white Shoes and jeans, and I am showing up looking like I came off of the Grand Ole Opry. Wrong clothes. And when you're in 6th grade, that matters. And I was feeling like I was going to die all day long.

I went home and and threw all those thing and tried to find a white t shirt to wear the next day, but it was too late. I already had my new reputation. When When we become Christians, we gain a new identity. We get to be somebody new. We are adopted and and if Western shirt and pearl buttons stick out.

Try wearing a white robe everywhere you go, and as a Christian, that's the way we are opposed to stand out from everybody around us. We quite literally become citizens of heaven, foreigners in our own country, And I got tickled the other day. I know, Mindy Mindy still has her accent. I lose mine too quickly, but she still has her accent from Texas and she was talking to somebody the other day and they said, I just love your accent. Where are you from?

Is it Australia? And I just got so tickled. I thought, boy, you got not only wrong continent, but anyway, Our assignment is to live as ambassadors in a foreign country where we should stick out like everyone around us thinks They do. We should stick out on purpose. We should stick out because this is our assignment.

This is our post. We are literally foreigners in this land and we are here to represent Jesus. We're called to reach and teach and most of us get that that involves Sunday mornings. We all understand that Sundays we're gonna come in, we're gonna, you know, dress right, we're gonna try to talk right and treat everybody pretty decent. Most people and it affects our homes.

But a lot of people see a separation between the time I get in my car to go to work or go to school into my normal life and our Christian life. Work, school, daily activities, we tend to put those in different boxes. We tend to speak differently and talk differently and act differently, but is that what God is asking us to do? Today in our walk through Ephesians, we hit a chapter that's a little bit more difficult for us, and it involves some things that are not pleasant. So Jesus is going to take us on a walk today to school and to work.

He's gonna go with us into our daily life, so would you please stand with me for the reading? We'll be in Ephesians chapter 6. Will begin in verse 5. Ephesians chapter 6 verse 5, slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ.

Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm as though you were working for the Lord rather than People, remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. Masters, treat your slaves in the the same way. Don't threaten them. Remember, you both have the same Master in heaven and He has no favorites.

Let's pray together. Father, we come to this this verse, this chapter, and and as we examine it, we see things that are life changing. I pray that you would speak to us this morning, that your word would transform our hearts and and our wills would line up with yours. Father, change us so that we would leave this place ready to do your will. In Jesus' name, amen.

Thank you. Please be seated. In the areas around Ephesus, this These verses have this word slave. Slaves and masters, and that's a strange word for us to hear in America. These slaves and masters in Some parts of that country and some parts of the Roman world, slaves outnumbered the free people in the areas that they were in.

Historians There were around 6,000,000 slaves in Paul's day. That is a lot of people in slavery. The slaves were made of 2 main groups. Many were prisoners of war in areas that Rome had had conquered, and then many people in that day would sell themselves into temporary slavery, for the purpose of getting out of debt or being able to survive because they couldn't make it on their own. Even in the Jewish culture, If you read in the law, Jews could sell themselves in slavery to another person for a period of time.

And then there was when we sang this morning, when we started talking about the in the days of Elijah, and then we we talked about the year of jubilee. We sang that year of jubilee. Well, that was the year that All the slaves were freed. The year of jubilee was the year that every once in a while they would just say, okay, wipe the slate clean. Everybody's free and the Jews would be restored back to their lands and back to their lives.

This passage is really speaking in a broader context, speaking to people who work and those they work for, but we can't skip over this word for slavery. In America, slavery's than abolished, and largely because of some of the verses like we are reading this morning. People read these

and think if we're if we are no longer supposed to treat our slaves any differently than we are treated by God, then then slavery itself was called into question. And as the world became, followers of Christ and as more and more people rose up, then more and more people protested against That God didn't call the early church to correct the secular world. He didn't call us to go to war, but he did call us to react differently in our own hearts no matter what our social status happened to be.

As a matter of fact, our hearts were so important God didn't even correct the slave and the master. He didn't see them as any different. He said, here you are. You are my child. This is the position you're in, but it's really inconsequential whether you are in chains or whether you are free.

What is consequential is your relationship to me and how you live that out around you. The gospel had a tremendous impact in shattering the chains of slavery, and eventually the gospel even conquered the Roman Empire at one point. But here we see a truth highlighted throughout scripture that God is not as with our temporary physical circumstances as He is with our eternal circumstances. The temporary Chains of slavery were not as important to God as the eternal chains of slavery to sin, and so he called us to come and to see these verses. And and even though we use the term slave and master this morning, we're gonna use the term workers and bosses as as interchangeable with those.

The principle is no matter whether you're a person with very little power or you're a person with a whole lot of Over many people, we have a code of conduct that Christ calls us into. From a mail clerk to the CEO to a house God is speaking to every person in this room, and he's letting us know that the way we complete our work, the way we complete our assignments, whether it's at School or at work or at home matters to him. Our everyday life matters to him, and the way you Conduct your everyday life. The way I conduct my everyday life speaks louder than any sermon I could ever give, any sermon that we could ever share. In verse 5, he says, slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear.

Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. He says, slaves, your job is not to be free. Your job is to serve Christ right where you're at. In other words, you are free and now serve Christ just right where you're at. We serve the ones over us like we would serve Jesus.

So if we apply this to our work, than whatever our boss is like. Whatever is going on at work, we still do our job. We serve the person over us like we would serve Christ if he was there. He says in verse 6, try to please them all the time, not just when they're watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart.

Work with enthusiasm as though you're working for the Lord rather than people. We do this not because they're good. We do this not because our bosses deserve it. We don't do this just when they're treating us well or when they're watching us. He said, all the time, every time you work like you're working for the Lord.

Sometimes the job environment's not healthy. Sometimes you have an abusive situation or it's a violation of your conscience, and certainly we have the freedom in America to change our job. But what we do, whatever we do should be done for him. Colossians 3:17, it says, and whatever you do or say, do it as of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to him through him to God the father. Our daily life is to be lived for Christ at home, at work and the church.

Whether you're sales, you're cleaning, you're you're serving, you're a student, you're doing chores, cooking, whatever it is, is all done for Christ and done in the name of Jesus, and it pleases him when we do it well. Verse 8 says, remember the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do whether we are slaves or free. Our daily work is now equated with the good that we are doing. God's given us a task, an assignment, and it's not just church stuff. He said the way that we conduct our daily work, our daily lives is also an offering to him, that he is pleased with what we do for him through the day, whether you're a boss, you're a teacher, whatever you are doing, whatever your situation, whether your family notices or not, whether your boss notices or not, whether your teacher notices or not.

We are supposed to do what we do like God is noticing all the time. Monday morning headed into our week tomorrow morning is just as much a day of worship as a Sunday is because what we do reflects on our Lord and Savior. Then Paul writes to bosses and he gives this little short clip to the bosses, and it's in one word you could just say ditto. In other words, bosses, you masters, you do the same thing. You act the same way.

He says in verse 9, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them. Remember, you both have the same master in heaven, and he has no favorites. What's God doing? He said, you know what, boss?

You know what, slave master? I love him just as much as I love you. I love her just as much as I love you. That is my child, and the way you treat those who work for you, the way you treat your slaves, so to speak, because some of us, you know, when you're working, sometimes it feels like you're a little bit of a slave, doesn't it? The way you treat them matters to me because you're interacting with my child.

Respect those working for you. Treat them with dignity. Be honest, be kind, be generous, lead them in a way that honors your father. Inspire them, motivate them. God said don't threaten them.

Don't use your authority to beat them down or to command. He said, treat them like you would want to be treated by me, and so we see this inspiration model. Model the work ethic you want to give them. Treat them in a way that makes them want to do their best. And if you work or you lead with an attitude to please the Lord, if you do your best, I can guarantee you people around you will notice.

Your boss, your teacher, your family will watch a living testimony for Jesus Christ. When I was, in youth ministry years ago. The me and the music minister were gonna go scout out a mission trip to Seattle. And so we hopped on a plane. It's right after 911.

We hopped on a plane. We went to Seattle. It looked like you entered a third world country. There are people standing there with their machine guns and stuff. And and, we walked through the airport and, went on our trip.

We wanted to scout out the area. Went to Pike's Market. I don't know if you've ever been there, but we were kinda looking for places we could go in the city and we parked and walked around for a while. We came back and our car was com was gone. Like, I know this is where we parked.

I don't know if you've ever misplaced your car, but I was pretty sure it was right there. We walked up and down everywhere we could see, and finally some homeless Guy sitting in the doorway said, you know, like what? What are you laughing at? He's like, your car, they towed it. And I'm like, why?

Who? What? And there were he said, look. And he pointed underneath the parking sign that said parking in a little bitty 3 by 5 sign. It said no parking between the hours of, like, 3 and 4.

In in in other words, they just had a racket. And so every every day at 3 o'clock, somebody come through the cars. And I said, well, who got it? And he pointed to a big sign. It was a Big old billboard right across the way, it had a big Christian fish on it, it said Christian towing.

I'm like, oh, how awesome is this? I'm I'm sure they're gonna understand when a pastor and the and the music minister walk up and say, look, this was just a misunderstanding. We're here on a mission trip. 15 blocks we walked to get there, and we got there and I said, look, this is just a misunderstanding. We're here on a mission trip.

I'm a pastor. He's a pastor. We're just here trying Scott out for these kids, you know, who love Jesus, wanna come help. He's like, look, I'm just gonna stop you right there. We're not Christian.

We bought the company a while back and so you owe a \$180. Like, well, you need to change your sign. That I don't know if I I can't remember in my head if I said that or not. But I was thinking, you need to change your sign. Have you ever met a Christian who needed to change their sign?

You're like, you know the way you're acting right now? Just don't tell anybody you're a Christian because right now, you're not that's not doing anybody any When I looked up at that sign, it was all over Seattle. I saw every time I saw that sign, I'm like, no, you're not. No, you're not. You know, it was a lie and and everybody knew it, and I'm gonna tell you something.

One of the biggest challenges to church are Christians who wear the sign but don't act like it. God is calling us here. If we're gonna call ourselves Christians, we need to act like we need to be Christian no matter where we are. We don't slap a Christian fish on the back of our car and then drive like the devil. And I was listening to a major preacher, like everybody would know his name.

I don't wanna talk bad about him because we're on, you know, we're online. But He said, that's the reason I don't put a sticker on the back of my car. I'm like, because you already know you're gonna drive like the devil so you don't wanna misrepresent. But what God's going a little bit deeper than that. Don't just hide the fact you're a Christian, be a Christian Even in your driving, even in your working, even in the way you lead others, it's not that you have a symbol on the back, it's that God's We're not worried about the person behind us.

We're worried about the one over us who controls our eternity. Don't slap a Christian label on your life and live like the devil. He said the way you live, the way you work, the way you lead matters. My favorite example living these verses out is Joseph, and Joseph was in the old testament. He was a favorite son of Jacob, and he was a young man that God already started blessing.

He was the favorite son, and and God gave him these dreams. And when he did, he gave him these dreams that he was gonna be over his brothers and over even his parents. And as he had those dreams, his brothers began to be more jealous as they saw the favoritism of their father, and they saw the blessing of God on his life, so they decided to kill him. And so his brothers got together, and they grabbed him and they threw him into a pit. They were gonna kill him, and and then they saw a band of traitors coming, and they so they sold their brother into Slavery.

Now then it wasn't like selling him to, you know, work at Walmart. This was slavery, and it will he had no chance of ever getting out. He was sold like a used car to the highest bidder and he would ended up being the slave to an Egyptian officer, the captain of pharaoh's guard called pot named Potiphar here. He could have chosen to be bitter and angry. Joseph could have said this isn't fair.

My position's not being I am I'm in. I'm a slave and and God what are you doing but in Genesis 39 2, It says the lord was with Joseph. I want you to notice God did not free Joseph from slavery. Said God was with Joseph and he blessed Joseph and as Joseph was working in Potiphar's household, he did everything excellently until the point that Potiphar noticed and he put him in charge of his entire household and to all Potiphar had to do was decide what he wanted to eat that day. Joseph took care of everything else.

And Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of attempted rape. Joseph was thrown into a royal prison, and so the slave is now a slave who's also a prisoner. And as he is in prison, we would think, okay. Well, now Joseph It's gonna he's just gonna sit back on, you know what? I tried, and you didn't recognize me.

I tried God, but look what you've done. Joseph didn't do that. Again, he could have chosen to be angry, he could have chosen to complain, he could have chosen to do the bare minimum, and many of us are tempted at work to do that. When we don't feel honored, we don't feel recognized, we are tempted to just cruise, But in Genesis 39:21, it says, the lord was also with Joseph in prison, and he showed him his faithful love, and he gave him favor with the warden. And pretty soon the warden noticed what Joseph was like and he put the whole prison under Joseph's leadership.

So Joseph, this slave who's now a prisoner, is in charge of the entire prison, and while he's there, he interprets a couple dreams for the baker and the cup bearer to pharaoh. And as those dreams are interpreted properly, the cup bearer goes back to work with pharaoh and promptly forgets Joseph. Again, Joseph could have chosen to be bitter. He could have chosen to be angry. He could have chosen to be overlooked, but he kept doing what he was doing for the Lord.

And after a little while, after Joseph had spent over a decade of his life in slavery and in prison. He was brought out to stand before pharaoh and interpret pharaoh's dream. And as he did and interpreted pharaoh's dream. Pharaoh took this slave who was also a prisoner and he placed him in charge of the entire land of Egypt. As a matter of fact, at that point, Joseph was almost in charge of the entire known world.

Most of you know the rest of the story. A great famine fell on land and there was such hunger that his old family, where they were, his brothers were forced to come to Egypt to buy grain, to eat, to survive. Who was in charge of Egypt? Joseph. So when they came before Joseph, he was standing there and he was dressed and he was all grown up.

He was no longer their little brother. He was a man in charge of their known world, in charge of their destiny. Powerful leader that stood before them could have lorded it over his brothers at that point. He could have thrown them in prison. He could have punished them, but instead, he tested them to see if their hearts had changed.

And He fed them, and he told them that he was their brother. The family was saved. As a result of the family being saved and being brought in. Pharaoh told Joseph, bring your whole family up and we'll give them the best than in Egypt, and as he did, they came to Egypt and they multiplied until the he the Egyptians were afraid of them, and then Guess what the Egyptians did? They put them in slavery.

For 400 years, the entire nation of Israel was slaves. Was that out of God's will? Absolutely not. Was God's plan to take them and and give them a place to grow as a nation until he was ready to deliver them and bring them to the promised land. What was the secret?

How could Joseph do what he did? It says in Genesis 50:20, Joseph spoke to his brothers and he said this, you intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this

position so I could save the lives of many people. See, Joseph saw his whole life in God's hands. And if God chose for him to be in slavery, then he was in slavery.

If God chose for him to be in prison, then he was in prison, and if God chose for him to be in charge of Egypt, he was in charge of Egypt. In every place God put him, he acted the same way before the Lord doing the best job he could with what God had for him. For your life this morning I want to tell you something. I don't know whether you feel like you're in prison, whether you feel like you're a slave, or whether you feel like you've been forgotten. God sees than you.

He knows right where you are, and he is working on your behalf. What can we learn from Ephesians in this this kind of Example from the life of Joseph. Number 1, do what you do for God. Do what you do for God. When you are doing it, it is easy to look at the person you're responsible to.

It's easy to look at the people who are supposed to be checking your work, and if nobody notices, then no harm, no foul. But God says do what You do like you're working for me. Don't let Satan get you feeling like sorry for yourself, so you start slacking off. Do your best. Don't do it for the boss, don't do it for the employer, don't do it for the company.

You do it for the Lord because he's the one listening. In the old song, whistle while you work. Yeah. It's been a few minutes since you probably saw that. We're gonna change that to worship while you work.

Go to work as an act of worship, and while you're there, what you do is Also an act of worship that we're giving to the Lord. The average person spends a third of their life at work or school. A third of your life is gonna be in this place where sadly too many people act differently than they do at home or at church. God says don't. Live your life there.

Live your life there as an example because I'm gonna tell you something. For those of us who wanna see people come to Christ, if you're not if you're living like the devil at work and you turn around and invite somebody to church, I can tell you what their answer's gonna be. No, thank you. Whatever's happening in your life, I don't want none of that because I don't see it. The place we're gonna have the most impact is gonna be school and work.

That is where we're gonna see the most people, meet the most people, and that's where God has chosen for us to represent him. It means we use every opportunity to bring him glory, including our 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. Remember, we are working for the King of Kings. Number 2, don't let circumstances determine our obedience. God's telling slaves to work like they're working for him than you and I do our work like we're working for him.

Jesus came as a humble child, lived a humble life, than he served others the entire time he was here. He never even owned a home. When somebody said, I want to follow you, he said, I don't even own a place than I can lay my head down. All of us are better off than Jesus was. He was mocked and ridiculed when he did nothing but bless and heal.

When he encouraged others and lifted others up and healed others, even brought life to others, then there were people who responded by wanting his death, and calling for his death. He served his his disciples even though he knew they were going to fail him. He gave his life on the cross to honor his father and to purchase our freedom. We've been redeemed by that blood. So you and I are in a great debt to our savior and Lord and so when he says, you work like you're working for me, he's saying work like the one who saved your for the you're working for the one who saved your life.

What difference do temporary chains make for us? Whether we're working at a job we don't Enjoy or whether we're working for a job that we love, we do the work God called us to do and we do it for him. Slave, free, job we love, class we like, 247, 3 to 11, Whatever your shift is 247, we are working for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Number 3, your reward is coming. I know work's not easy.

Bosses are not always kind. I worked for a guy for almost a decade whose nickname was a curse word, and, and he deserved it. People are not always kind. They're not always reliable. People are not always acting like they should.

God says, that's not your concern. It's not my concern. What We do we do for the Lord. We don't do it because our boss will recognize us. We don't do it so the customer will praise us.

We don't do it so our husband or our wife will notice. We do it because he notices, because he's the one who said when you're doing this, when he's Talking about your work, get this. You talk about a retirement plan. God says, I'm watching what you do every day, and I can assure you, you will be rewarded. He's not just saying when you go out and you help a little old lady cross the street.

He's not just saying when you find someone and give them a meal or a sandwich, he's saying even our daily work is an offering. Even our daily work is being noticed by our god. Joseph was a slave. He was in prison with no rights, no future, and no hope, but God was watching and God was leading and God was arranging his future. Along the way, god was fulfilling promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that one day he would their people Would outnumber the stars in the sky, God said.

You're gonna be able to have so many descendants that that it's gonna look like you looking up and trying to count those stars. And in Egypt, that promise was fulfilled as millions of Hebrews Came out of the into the promised land, but they had to be slaves first. Sometimes God places us somewhere that doesn't seem ideal, but we can trust that our God has a plan. One day, when your body fails, you're gonna get a new body. Praise the Lord.

One day, death won't be coming for you anymore. One day, sickness will be done away with. On that day, there'll be no more tears, no more bosses. There's not gonna be any more working to do at your at your chores. One day, God said, all that's going away and you'll be left with this.

You'll be left with what you did for me. You're going to be left with this offering that you've given me. All the work, all the rewards that you've placed in heaven that I've been keeping for you are now yours. He has a place prepared, A place to honor you, a place to lift you up, a place to reward you, and your daily work is gonna be rewarded. Work for Jesus.

Remember, he never God, Joseph. He will never forget you. He loves you. He sees you. Would you bow your heads and close your eyes for just a moment?

I don't know what your work is. I don't know where most of you work. I don't know what your boss is like. Or if you're a boss, I don't know how you Treat your employees. But here's what God says, everything you do should be done for me.

In that relationship of of our heavenly father. We are his children, and he promises So he's looking after us. But if you don't have that relationship, then you don't have that promise yet. And so I wanna invite you to to put your faith and your trust in in Jesus. The one who came and gave his life for you on the cross.

The one who loved you so so much that he endured all that he endured because it would please his father and it would rescue you. So he came and he paid the price That you and I couldn't pay on the cross, the price of your sin. I'm gonna invite you this morning to turn from the way you've been going, to repent, to turn, be sorry for your sins, and to turn to Jesus this morning. To let him wash you Clean and and set your feet on a solid rock and get you out of the mud and the mire that you've been in. To trust God that he would give you a new life and adopt you this morning.

If you would like to do that, then I'm gonna ask you to pray with me right now to put your faith and trust in Jesus. Dear God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for sending Jesus to die on that cross in my place. Jesus, thank you for saving me. Would you please forgive me of my sin?

Would you help me to follow you all the days of my life until I stand before you face to face? If that is you this morning, if you've prayed that for the first time, you just put your trust and faith in Jesus, would you just raise your hand and say, hey, pastor. I pray that with you. Awesome. Thanks.

Some of us in here have a tough situation. You've been going along and it seems like nobody notices and nobody cares, but I hope you've heard this morning that God does. That he sees you. He knows you and he cares deeply about every day of your life, every moment of your life. Father, we come to you this morning Giving our offering of our lives.

Not just in this room, father. Not just when we're singing praise songs, but When we're doing the work that sometimes can be so dull and so hard. Father, when we're doing the work with people that don't Seem to appreciate it. A company that doesn't seem to reward it. Help us to do it like we're doing it for you.

So that your name would be made great at work. So that your name would be made great at school. Father, help us to lead others in a way that honors Christ, It helps them see Jesus in us. It would see a little glimpse of of your love and your care for them through our love and our care for them. Help our daily life be an offering to you every single day in Jesus name.

Amen.