

Colossians 3.22-4.1

Gospel on the Job

1/3 People in GREEK and ROMAN Worlds were SLAVES

Some CITIES in Roman Empire MORE SLAVES than Free Citizens

60 MILLION THROUGHOUT ROMAN EMPIRE

People became slaves through various avenues: birth, parental selling or abandonment, captivity in war, inability to pay debts, and voluntary attempts to better one's condition. Race was not a factor.

Klyne Snodgrass

"Ancient society was as dependent on slavery,
as modern society is dependent on machinery"

SLAVES held all kinds of JOBS - ALL LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE

from Manual Labor to Doctors and Teachers and Administrators

Background Our TEXT > Apostle Paul > Slaves/Masters in Colossae

HOW CAN PAUL CONDONE THE EVIL OF SLAVERY?

Not Same as Chattel Slavery once Allowed in American SOUTH

Does Paul support Slavery? > NOT Endorse It > Not CONDEMN It

PAUL'S SEES NO LASTING BASIS TO SLAVERY

MARRIAGE based on CHRIST / FAMILY based on CREATION

Slavery their Present Reality - Many Slaves were Coming into Church

As Paul writes to Colossian Church – Xtian Faith was ILLEGAL

Small, Illegal Group NO SOCIAL Power to End Strong Practice Slavery

SADLY When Xtianity became STRONGER Force, Very SLOW Change

Took BLOODY Civil War to END Slavery in America

TODAY – More Slaves than ever in Human History – high est 50 million

1. Christ's Servants

Paul applied Gospel – Husb/Wives, Children/Father, Now Slaves/Masters

a. New Freedom in Slavery

SLAVES were EXPECTED to Follow the RELIGION of their MASTER

Paul tells Xtian SLAVES have HIGHER MASTER – LORD JESUS

v. 22 with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

v. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

v. 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

MESSAGE > Best Way to LIVE your LIFE is to FOCUS on JESUS

ROMAN Aristocracy THOUGHT they OWNED their SLAVES

But they were BLOOD BOUGHT CHILDREN of KING Jesus

PAUL saw BEYOND his PRISON Cell to the GLORY OF GOD

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1.13,14

Paul Urges SLAVES to do the SAME - LOOK BEYOND THEIR SITUATION TO SEE THE
GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS

It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3.24

"Exactly the same principle can be applied by contemporary Christians to their work and employment. Our great need is the clear-sightedness to see Jesus Christ and to set Him before us. It is possible for the housewife to cook a meal as if Jesus Christ were going to eat it, or to clean the house as if Jesus Christ were going to be the honored guest. It is possible for teachers to educate children, for doctors to treat patients and nurses to care for them, for lawyers to help their clients, shop workers to serve their customers, accountants to audit books and secretaries to type letters as if in each case they were serving Jesus Christ" John Stott

Roman Empire SLAVES could Save their Money > Earn their Freedom Temporary

Opportunity of being a SLAVE = PLACE OF SERVICE

IF Freed Where would they GO? WHAT WOULD THEY DO?

Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you--although if you can gain your freedom, do so. For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to...What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. For this world in its present form is passing away. 1 Corinthians 7:20-24,29,31

b. New Focus on Standards

1) Obedience v. 22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters

Basic Xtian DUTY - DO WHAT YOU ARE TOLD AT WORK

A king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant incurs his wrath. Proverbs 14.35

Paul tells EMPLOYEE & EMPLOYER to be More Concerned about
Their RESPONSIBILITIES THAN THEIR RIGHTS

NOTHING MORE TRAGIC FOR GOSPEL - "My Boss (or Employee) said they were a
Christian, but I can't tell by their performance on the Job"

If THAT's what a Xtian looks Like > then I am NOT Interested!

2) Respect v. 22 but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord

Employee needs to See EMPLOYER as in Place of CHRIST

Placed there by HIM for HIS Purpose – Give Willing Submission

NOT to be PHONY or only for SELF ADVANTAGE - KISS UP

All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect...
Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them 1 Timothy 6.1,2

Don't Talk STINK about JOB / Workers – Shameful for BELIEVERS

3) Wholehearted – these are SLAVES! Commanded to give Heart!!

Slaves, obey...with sincerity of heart Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as
working for the Lord, not for men Colossians 3.22,23

LATIN WORD "SINCERE" = LIT. without wax

Dishonest Potters Ancient World Covered Cracks/Flaws w/ WAX

Wise BUYER held Pot to SUN i.e. Cracks covered w/ Wax Shone thru

Be PERSON others Do Not See Thru > Real, Sincere, Integrity!

Such a Slave was SHOCKING!! Really!? Slave LOVING the Master?

If you Really LOVE the LORD > Must ALSO LOVE your Neighbor

Cannot LOVE God CanNOT See and HATE People you CAN See!

See how BIG these Little Verses Are? About Much MORE than JOBS Verses about MORE than
Slaves/Master or even Employees/Employers

Verses about All of Life – Every Person – Everything We DO in LIFE

"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart" 1 Samuel 16.7

IN Christ > NO Distinction between SACRED AND SECULAR

ANY Work – Home, Job, School, Church - SEEN by Him & FOR Him

Everything we do involves a direct encounter with Jesus Christ. He is the origin and the recipient of every act...no act is mundane and no person is unimportant. Power must be used for him, not against him. And all of us stand on equal footing with the same Lord, who cares deeply how we treat each other and will hold us accountable. Klyne Snodgrass

4) Trustworthy CAN PEOPLE you SERVE COUNT ON YOU?

v. 22 not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers

Does Boss Need put CAMERAS in your Office, on your Computer?

v. 22 REALIZE GOD'S VIDEO CAMERA IS ALWAYS RUNNING

He SEES IN THE DARK & DEEP Down into our HEARTS & MINDS

Jesus: "The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come & share your master's happiness!' Matthew 25:20

What is BEST WAY be GOOD WITNESS for JESUS on the JOB?

Wear Xtian T-Shirts? BIG Bible to Work? Give out Tracts?

BE a GOOD WORKER - ACT like EMPLOYER is GOD

...then the T-shirts, Bible, and Tracts will Gain a Hearing

5) Accountable

v. 24 you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving

v. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

REWARDS do Matter - COMPENSATION IS BIBLICAL

SYSTEM which Rewards Employees for Good WORK / GOD'S WAY

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Corinthians 5.10

2. Mastered Masters

a. Do the Same

Not Unusual someone in 1st C speak Strong Commands to Slaves: OBEY!

Shocking if Anyone spoke JUST as Strongly to their MASTERS!

4.1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Both Slave & Master are CHILDREN of GOD – Accountable to HIM

Like the SLAVE the MASTER NEEDS TO LOOK TO JESUS - NOT HIS
OWN POWER AND SUPPOSED IMPORTANCE

We typically show favoritism to the rich and powerful, but little respect for the poor and powerless. Both are sins. Klyne Snodgrass

Employer & Employee both Only FULFILLED IN CHRIST

Poor Slave goes to REFRIG, Looks HUNGRILY Inside – Nothing There! Rich Master: Refrig
FULL of Food- NOTHING looks GOOD

WE HAVE so Much but - WE ARE STILL EMPTY / UNFULFILLED

b. Don't Threaten

v. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done

Slaves were sometimes whipped, mutilated, and imprisoned in chains, their teeth were knocked out, their eyes gouged out, they were even thrown to wild beasts or crucified, and all this sometimes for the most trivial offenses. John Stott

Do NOT NEED to MAKE them UNNECESSARILY INSECURE

Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God Leviticus 25.43

Practical: Negative Threats makes Worker do Less Not More

c. Don't Discriminate v. 25 “and there is no partiality”

SUREST way to DIVIDE TEAM / WORKFORCE > Favor SOME

For God does not show favoritism. Romans 2.11

I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus ...keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism. 1 Timothy 5.21

Child will Rightly CRY OUT "that's not fair" – Sense of JUSTICE

Reflection of IMAGE of God in Child > God will Make RIGHT!

3. Gospel Opportunities

Vs in Colossians Knowing JESUS Impacts all our RELATIONSHIPS

Marriage - Children - JOB / ALL Now Places of XTIAN Service

Transforming Power of HOLY SPIRIT Seen in EVERYDAY World

JOB: Spend MOST Waking Hours Week, Best PLATFORM for Gospel

A slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave. Aristotle

Churches were FILLING with Slave & Masters – Finding True Freedom

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3.28

God was Making a NEW SOCIETY – Liberation and Hope in Christ

NOTHING IN ALL GREEK / ROMAN LITERATURE EVER Suggests a Slave is BROTHER of his MASTER – Shocking Idea!

Perhaps 1st C World NOT Ready HEAR News of Liberation for Slaves
ROMAN EMPIRE had to be BROUGHT DOWN FIRST

All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, *so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered* 1 Timothy 6.1,2

Paul > EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE IS TO BE ANALYZED
FOR what it does to FURTHER the WORK of the GOSPEL

PASTOR in MANHATTAN - RODE A BUS TO WORK
Got to Know DRIVER - XTIAN MAN - SHARED THEIR LIVES
ONE DAY PASTOR to Driver: "How you Doing?"
Driver "NOT good, tired of this boring job, yours exciting"
Pastor "come in the bus early and pray, see it as sanctuary"
Weeks Later PASTOR SAW DRIVER "How's it been going" DRIVER
"Great, it is wonderful driving the sanctuary of God"
Same Bus / Driver / Route / Boring Job > Holy Ground of God

NO Matter how BIG You ARE- God is BIGGER

4.1 “you know that you also have a Master in heaven”

Jesus: “...whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”Mark 10.44,45

Gave Life for Slaves & Masters / Moms & Dads / Children & Ohana

HE stands in Risen Glory Ultimate Master - Equal Opportunity Employer 1847 French CAROL >
tr English 1855 > Popular USA esp North v. 3

Truly He taught us to love one another; / His law is love and His Gospel is Peace / Chains shall
He break, for the slave is our brother / And in His name, all oppression shall cease / Sweet
hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we / Let all within us Praise His Holy name / Christ is the
Lord; O praise His name forever! "Oh Holy Night"

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