

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Slaves, Honor, and The Name

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Keywords: Slavery, employees, honor, obedience, The name of God, Gospel, Reputation

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: In Paul's continuing instruction related to proper honor he now focuses upon believing slaves. To combat the destructive teaching of the false teachers he shows how disobedience and disrespect by slaves only serves to blaspheme the reputation of God.

Dismiss

I. Introduction.

- A. Read 1 Timothy 6:1-2.
- B. This passage is a continuation on honor and respect.
 1. Widows are to be given respect, elders are to be given respect and even double honor.
 2. And now, masters are to be given full honor by their believing slaves.
- C. We also have another glimpse into the way the false teachers worked in the church.
 1. Paul is not merely teaching on these things randomly.
 2. False teaching almost always encourages disrespect, disobedience, and resistance rather than submission.
 3. It is flesh driven rather than Spirit driven. Which is why Galatians 5 says that the deeds of the flesh are things such as fighting, factions and dissensions.
 4. It is like what James says in chapter 3.
 - a. Worldly wisdom is seen by the presence of selfish ambition, envy and disorder.
 - b. Wisdom from God always exhibits a spirit of purity and peaceableness. Gentleness and full of mercy are clear evidences of godly teaching.
 - c. One is self driven, and one is gospel driven.

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- d. The Christian message is not one of rebellion and uprising, but of submission and hope in something greater than this age.
- D. A word about slavery.
1. Slavery was pervasive in the Greco-Roman era. Approximately 1/5th of the population at that time was made up of slaves. Entire economy was dependant upon it.
 2. Slaves held many positions, from the lowly farmhand to teachers and even doctors. A household slave was many times loved and honored as they were so intimately involved in the home.
 3. But even at the best, they were slaves. Property with essentially no rights and no legal status. One's experience as a slave was completely dependent upon the type of master they had.
- E. Slavery and the Word of God.
1. There is a lot of debate related to slavery and the bible.
 2. In our own country there was a huge debate prior to the Civil War and one that continues even to this day. It centers on the nature of slavery and whether it was right and acceptable.
 3. One well known puritan, Cotton Mather wrote an entire treatise in favor of slavery and another one calling for Christian masters to train their slaves in the ways of Christianity.
 4. I can say with certainty that slavery is a product of the presence of sin.
 - a. We see no mention of it in the original created order, it was something that occurred as a result of the Fall and therefore has no permanent place in God's will.
 - (1) Consider the image of God, man is the apex of creation.
 - (2) Permission is not the same as command. It is here that motivation becomes a huge consideration. "Why am I doing this?"
 - b. Though the New Testament speaks about slaves and masters, it does not instruct the Christian to take slaves. It is dealing with the reality, without commanding the action.
 - (1) Paul has condemned the practice of slave trade in 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (2) Anyone who traffics in slaves is "lawless" and "disobedient."
- c. Even in the Old Testament , where certain aspects of slavery were clearly allowed we find clear standards of treatment with severe penalties if they were broken. One thing that was condemned was the whole idea of "man-stealing" which would be punishable by death (Exodus 21:16f).
- F. In our passage we find two commands, one general and one specific.
 - 1. All Christian slaves are to consider their masters worthy of all honor.
 - 2. Second, all Christian slaves who have Christian masters are to serve them even more and with full honor.
- G. But behind all of this is the message that we all need to hear. That what is at stake is the reputation of God and the glory of the gospel.
 - 1. So it matters not whether we find ourselves as slaves today or not.
 - 2. What matters is that if we profess to be Christians then our lives are to be constantly aligned with what exalts the name of God and what befits a people of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

II. We are to live in a way that exalts God and propels the Gospel forward.

- A. The slave and the employee in general.
 - 1. Explain the basic relation between this and employment.
 - 2. Notice the broadness of the command—all under the yoke...
 - a. There are no exceptions in the mind of Paul and in the mind of God.
 - b. Are you a Christian? Are you a slave? Then you are to do this...
 - c. It is significant the when Paul led Onesimus to the Lord he then sent him back to his master. His desire was that Onesimus be freed, but he recognized where the authority and decision lay.
 - 3. Notice also that right action starts in the mind.
 - a. Consider/regard. It is a decision that rests fully in you, not the master/boss.
 - b. The command is to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (1) Again, it is all encompassing. No room here to wiggle or debate. No ability to withhold a bit of respect out of hate or spite.
 - (2) Not requiring the boss to be actually worthy of this, it is simply your decision to treat him/her in that manner (cf. 1 Peter 2:17ff).
 - (3) Also notice that it is to be directed to their “own” master. There is that tendency to think that you may still be that exception.
- c. So, a slave is to adopt a determined outlook of mind.
- (1) This mind set removes excuses. There is no room for "but" rather it is a call from our true Master to those whom He has purchased.
 - (2) Once this is done in our mind 90% of the battle is won.

There is a passage in 2 Kings 5 about a man, Naaman, who was a captain in the Aramean (Syria) army. Had taken captive a little girl from Israel. He had leprosy. When she learned of his disease she said this to his wife, “I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy.” (2Ki 5:3) The result was that he ultimately was given the cure by the great prophet Elisha and he came to faith in God.

Dr. Ryken says this regarding this little girl. “This all came about because the little slave girl was an on-th-job evangelist. She wasn’t pushy. She didn’t leave tracts on her master’s pillow. She didn’t go around pointing out people’s sins. Instead, in the most natural way, as she cleaned up the breakfast dishes or did her daily chores, she gave a testimony of God’s saving power. God used her testimony to bring her master to saving faith.”

- d. Other passages that speak to the slaves/bondslaves/servants attitude and responsibilities.
- (1) Ephesians 6:5-9.
 - (2) Colossians 3:22-4:1.

Principle: Freedom does not define the Christian in this world. We wait for the world to come where all is right.

B. The slave/employee toward fellow Christians.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

1. What if you find a bumper sticker on the back of your boss' car that indicates he is a Christian. Does this change the relationship?
 2. Imagine being a slave and your master was also saved. You would attend the same gatherings. Think of the potential problems that could arise.
 3. Maybe it was the slave who was responsible for their master becoming a Christian.
 - a. Christian slaves are to view their new spiritual relationship to their masters, not as something that places the onus upon the masters but as something that places new responsibility upon themselves.
 - b. We know it was a problem simply by the tense of the verb. Paul wants this activity to stop immediately.
 - c. It is easy to interpret some point of responsibility to flow away from us instead toward us.
 - d. Perhaps Christian slaves were looking down upon their Christian masters because they believed that devotion to Christ should compel their masters to free them from the servitude.
 - e. The question is seldom what “they” are to do; rather it is almost always what “we” are to do.
 4. Instead of disrespect, the attitude is to be full respect.
 - a. *Alla* makes the stark contrast. "Serve them all the more."
 - b. The gospel calls me to own my responsibilities before I argue for someone else's.
 - c. What they should do is treat each other with deep affection, as if they were dear brothers and sisters in the flesh.
 - d. There is simply no excuse for a Christian to be disrespectful in the workplace. But most certainly not with a boss who is a fellow Christian.
- C. The purpose is God-centered, not man-centered.
1. The Name of God is at stake.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- a. Showing full respect is necessary to the missionary purpose of the church; it is simply being missional. This is the meaning behind the “so that” of vs 1.
- b. God cares about His reputation. He is concerned about what outsiders think of Christianity.
 - (1) We are to live a quiet life (1 Timothy 2:2,4).
 - (2) Elders are to have a good rep with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7).
 - (3) The church is to provide for widows so that they may be without reproach (5:7).
- c. When Jesus teaches us to pray the very first thing instructed is this: “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name....”
 - (1) Not a statement of fact, it is the first request, the first desire that is to be on the lips of every Christian.
 - (2) It is a desire that God would work in us that His name would be more exalted, made more holy and esteemed throughout the world.
 - (3) It is the heart cry of missions, to go where God is not named, where He is not cherished and worshiped.
- d. The glory of salvation is not our forgiveness. The glory of salvation is to be able to know God as he is and to delight in Him in all of His perfections.
- e. The concern Paul has is that God and the Gospel would be spoken against, literally, blasphemed.
 - (1) To see lazy, disrespectful, rebellious slaves is an utter contradiction to the Gospel.
 - (2) To take the name “Christian” upon yourself and then act in this manner is to deny the very Master who bought you with His blood.
- f. We must understand that this is the point behind the command. It is the reputation of God, not our comfort, not our rights, not our pleasure.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- g. The question for us in our lives is this, “How is this action or attitude expressing the glory and greatness of God’s name?”
- h. Or, “How is this action or attitude expressing that my delight and hope is in God alone?”
- i. Paul is likely echoing Isaiah 52:5 here, “Again the LORD declares, “Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.”
- j. In Exodus 34:14 God commands Israel to worship any other god, for His name is “Jealous.”
 - (1) And that is exactly what He is, He does not share his glory with any other.
 - (2) Isaiah 48:11.
 - (3) Ezekiel 36:23.
 - (4) Ezekiel 39:25.
 - (5) Exodus 9:16.
 - (6) This is picked up by Isaiah in 63:12 where he says that God led Israel out of Egypt to make for Himself a glorious name.
- k. Listen to how the Psalmists describe this:
 - (1) For Thy name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. (Psa 25:11 NAS)
 - (2) Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name; And deliver us, and forgive our sins, for Thy name's sake. (Psa 79:9 NAS)
- l. John Piper says it well when he writes, “God’s first love is rooted in the value of his holy name, not the value of a sinful people. And because it is, there is hope for the sinful people—since they are the ground of their salvation, God’s name is.” (*The Pleasures of God*, p. 108)
- m. This is part of what it means to take the Lord’s name in vain.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (1) Israel was the people whose God was YHWH. They were identified with Him.
- (2) So, when they took Him as their God, and then they disobeyed Him, it was taking His name in vain.

n. It is no different for us:

(Think "christian") . Consider the time I was sent by my father to do a job as a painter's assistant. Woke me up and informed me I had a job that started in one hour. "Don't you shame me." My father's reputation was on the line by my actions for I bore his name. This is why a foolish son or daughter is a grief to the parents in Proverbs 10:1.

- (1) 2 Timothy 2:19.
- (2) We must "Call on the name of the Lord" to be saved (Romans 10:13).
- (3) In the end every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus (Philippians 2:9-10).
- (4) Therefore everything we do is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17).

o. But it is not only the name of the Lord that we defile. It is also...

2. The gospel we believe and proclaim.

a. At the core of all Christian teaching is the gospel. If it is not present, then the doctrine is not 'Christian.'

- (1) I remember laughing at a dirty joke once. One person commented to me, "I thought you were a Christian." Cut me to the quick.
- (2) There are those who I just wish would be quiet for their lives deny that Jesus is the one who bought them. They do not serve Him, they serve their appetites.

b. Titus 2 picks up this same idea.

- (1) vss 1-5.
- (2) vss 6-10.
- (3) What is this doctrine? Vss 11-15.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

- (a) A holy life.
- (b) A hopeful life.

III. Conclusion.

- A. There are two compelling reasons to work in a manner that pleases God. First, God is your master (Eph 6:5-8). A Christian slave belongs first and foremost to Christ, and by serving our earthly masters we serve Him (just like wives, husbands, children).
- B. Second, we are called to walk the same path our Lord did. Phil 2:7, Jesus became a *doulos*. Why? So that He might serve us. He is our servant who bore our sin upon himself.

Small Group Questions

- What does this passage teach us regarding our circumstances versus our mission?
- What are challenges that you face in applying this in your own life? How can the CG help encourage you and hold you accountable?