

Slaves and Masters

Ephesians 6:5-9

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Scripture readings prior to the sermon:

Philemon 1-3, 10-16; 1 Peter 2:18-25; Galatians 3:26-29

Good Morning!

It is, as always, an honor to be able to come and serve you, brothers and sisters of Abiding Grace Church.

Our Scripture text for this morning is from Ephesians, chapter 6, verses 5 through 9, and this morning, I will read initially from the New American Standard Version of the Bible. Ephesians 6:5-9:

⁵ Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not by way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ⁷ With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. ⁹ And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

[PRAY]

Slavery.

Slaves... And masters.

The mere mention of these words causes all kinds of images to run through our minds.

We need only go back a couple of years to the box office success that was Steve McQueen's 12 Years a Slave, a period drama film and an

adaptation of the 1853 memoir entitled Twelve Years a Slave by a man named Solomon Northup, a New York State-born free African-American who was kidnapped in Washington, D.C., in 1841 and sold into slavery. Northup worked on plantations in the state of Louisiana for 12 years before his release, and the story is full of beatings, rape, lynching (however failed), and multiple Southern whites who used the Bible to justify some of these said atrocities.

We as a church have been in this epistle to the Ephesians for some time, and we are coming to the end of a main section, and beginning to wrap up the epistle, as it were. How do we know?

Well, Paul begins verse 10 with: "Finally..." And so after next week's Easter service, Pastor Mike will dive into verse 10 as we begin to discuss spiritual warfare and to close out this epistle.

The larger context of our text for today begins in Ephesians 5:21 → *"Submit yourselves, one to another."* And we see that Paul is speaking here primarily into household situations. What do I mean?

Well, let's remember that for most of human history, this is how the world economy functioned, by households. The economies of the world were primarily agrarian and local; the Industrial Revolution doesn't occur until late 18th Century; and, of course, Al Gore doesn't invent the internet until the 1990's...

So, the Apostle Paul, as he is providing for us an extended treatise on how *"to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called"* – that is, the call of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:1), Paul here in Ephesians 5 and into chapter 6 lays down for us the principles for the Christian household:

Wives, submit to your husbands (5:22); husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the Church (5:25).

Children, obey (submit to) your parents (6:1); fathers, don't provoke your children (6:4).

And here in our text today: Slaves (NASV), or bondservants (ESV), obey your masters (6:5); masters, treat your slaves well (6:9).

So, we see God's word, the Bible, regulating, informing – sanctifying! – every aspect of our lives, our families, and it is intended to permeate and sanctify our culture as well...

At this point, you say: Wait a minute, Brother Steve! What about slavery?! What do you mean by “sanctifying our culture”?

What is this, “Slaves, obey your masters” stuff? Why doesn't Paul here just denounce slavery as a morally evil institution that is **obviously** incompatible with the Christian faith? If you read the New Testament epistle of Philemon (a portion of which was read a few minutes ago), you might ask: Why doesn't Paul use his authority as an Apostle of Jesus Christ to **demand** that Philemon immediately release Onesimus, his runaway slave?

Here's the reality of our situation: Even if **you're** not asking this... The skeptics are! This issue of slavery in the Bible, specifically, the fact that the Bible does not clearly and unequivocally condemn the institution of slavery as an obviously moral evil is a significant and often difficult apologetics question.

Doug Wilson, in his book Black and Tan¹, recounts the following:

*“The embarrassment of evangelicals over the plain teaching of the Bible can be put to an adept use by [unbelievers and skeptics]. Dr. Jerry Falwell was once in a television debate with a liberal Episcopalian bishop, and sad to say, the liberal bishop mauled Dr. Falwell. They were debating some issue like abortion or sodomy, and Falwell was maintaining the biblical position, and the bishop responded by saying, ‘Yes, but the Bible allows for **slavery**.’ Now what was Dr. Falwell going to do on national television? Does he say that the bishop is correct, the Bible does allow for slavery, and that he has no problem with it? We can see the headlines of the New York Times now: ‘Falwell Fires on Ft. Sumter.’ Or perhaps he could have said that the bishop was wrong – but the good bishop was right. So he did the only thing he could do in such a situation, which was to hem and haw.”*

Brothers and sisters, we are called to make a defense.
So, let's talk about...

¹ Douglas Wilson, Black and Tan (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2005), p. 45.

SLAVERY IN THE BIBLE AND IN HISTORY

Now, I've been a little unfair to this point, because I've used the terms "slave" and "slavery" without definition or distinction. And herein lies the rub.

In a discussion like this, it is quite likely that **our** definitions and images of slaves and slavery are different from the Apostle Paul's; Paul, of course, had never seen the movie 12 Years a Slave. We remember that Paul is writing in the 1st Century into a Greco-Roman culture. We, however, are 21st Century, post-Civil War Americans who watch movies like 12 Years a Slave. And, as such, our understandings of the meaning of the word "slave" – *doulos* in the Greek – have, shall we say, nuances...

At this point, let me delineate three very broad "types" of slavery as we find them in history:

The first is the God-ordained slavery described in the Old Testament nation of Israel, which was heavily regulated by God through the Mosaic Law.

The second is the **absolutely heinous** form of slavery practiced throughout the course of history but most notably in the West during the 18th and 19th Centuries, a practice which ultimately led to the Civil War here in the United States.

Let me pause here to state in the clearest of terms: Slavery that is based on the belief that persons of one skin color or ethnicity are, in some way, superior to persons of another skin color or ethnicity; and that is characterized by vile atrocities, such as kidnapping, man-stealing, the tearing apart of families by force, the consideration of human beings made in the image of God as mere property, beatings, torture, lynchings, rape, etc., is utterly and unashamedly condemned by the Bible and should be rejected by any and all Christians.

Please, let me say again: The form of slavery based on the belief that persons of one skin color or ethnicity are, in some way, superior to persons of another skin color or ethnicity, and that is characterized by vile atrocities, such as kidnapping, man-stealing, the tearing apart of families by force, the consideration of human beings made in the image of God as mere chattel, beatings, torture, lynchings, rape, etc., is utterly and unashamedly condemned by the Bible and should be rejected by any and all Christians.

I do not have time this morning to walk us through all of the Biblical texts in both the Old and New Testaments to prove this point, but any good Study Bible or commentary worth its weight in salt will outline this clear argument.

The third broad category of slavery to consider is, say, characterized by the secular Greco-Roman slavery of Paul's time, which in many respects was the basis for the economy of that day.

So, let's talk first about the Old Testament "slavery" as regulated by God through the Mosaic Law:

If you remember the story from the book of Exodus, of course, the Israelites were delivered out of Egyptian slavery (we'll come back to this) – the Israelites were delivered out of Egyptian slavery by God's strong arm of judgment against the Egyptians and Pharaoh.

And as God brings His people out of Egypt and into the Land that He had promised to Abraham – the Land of Israel – we Americans might expect God to set up an economy in Israel that is without slavery in **any** form, even if it is most properly understood as a type of "indentured servanthood" (which it is).

So, why doesn't God establish an Israelite economy without "indentured servanthood"?

Well, there are a handful of arguments that can be made here, but let me give you just one of them...

In case you haven't noticed, here in the United States, we have lots of laws. More and more laws each and every day, right? And, for the most part, many of us feel – especially in this day – that all of these laws are nothing but a huge burden for all of us to bear, and we wonder when the whole thing is going to stop.

That being said, one aspect of modern law is what we call bankruptcy law. Now, these bankruptcy laws are so many and so complex that it is difficult, frankly, to number them. In fact, one legal website I visited as I was preparing this message – and, yes, bankruptcy law is so complex that there are law firms whose **only business** is bankruptcy – one website has this disclaimer, "[Bankruptcy] law often changes. Each case is different. Please use [this]... information carefully since the law is constantly changing and the information may not accurately reflect any changes in the law that occurred

following the creation and publication of [the brochure available for download].”

Now, in ancient Israel, no such law – no such insanity, really! – existed. (Because, frankly, God’s not insane!) So, what does God do? God provides a simple means for His people to deal with something as simple as paying back a debt that is owed, one person to another. And – again, I don’t have time to lay all of it out – I note here that this indentured servanthood in Old Testament Israel was, indeed, God-ordained and heavily regulated in terms of ethics; there was **ample opportunity** to purchase one’s freedom; all those in debt were to be released and their property returned to them in the Jubilee Year; in short, this form of “slavery” was **highly moral**.

Now, this is in **stark contrast** to the slavery **out of which** the Israelites were delivered when they were in Egypt! Make no mistake: The Israelites were **enslaved** and **oppressed** in Egypt. The book of Exodus recounts “taskmasters” that were set over the Israelites for the purpose of “*afflicting them with heavy burdens.*” The Egyptians “*ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field.*” (Exodus 1:11-14) And, as you read further, you remember that Pharaoh simply continued to capriciously increase the Israelites’ burden as the Plagues kept coming and coming.

Do you see that it is **this** form of slavery described in the book of Exodus that closely resembles the **second** and **heinous** form of slavery to which I referred earlier...the form of largely unchecked slavery that led to the Civil War in the United States, which itself – I personally believe – was an act of judgment on our country for its atrocities in this regard?

Let’s briefly make this case:

- First, and most obviously, you had one ethnic group – the Egyptians – who were severely persecuting another ethnic group – the Israelites. And why? Well, simply, because they were Israelites: they didn’t **talk** like Egyptians, **look** like Egyptians, certainly they didn’t **worship** like Egyptians... “There seems to be a lot of them, and I need some cities built... So, hey, I know, let’s enslave them.”
- Second, if you were an Israelite, there was obviously no possibility of gaining or earning your freedom. This slavery was **not** about paying

off a debt in any way! This was, “Hey, you’re a convenient form of cheap labor for me, and if you don’t obey, then I will just kill you and replace you with one of your children.”

- And speaking of children, the Egyptians – if you remember – were so ruthless that at one point – about the time of the birth of Moses – the Israelites were becoming so numerous that the Israelite midwives were ordered by the Pharaoh to slaughter all of the baby boys who were born. (Exodus 1:16)

This is worldly, devilish, **demonic** slavery – again, not very dissimilar to the images of slavery that many of us have in our heads, am I right? And it is decidedly **NOT** the type of indentured servanthood that God ordained for his covenant people in the Land of Israel. This second form of slavery is **easily** condemned by the God’s word.

Now, that was ~1,500 B.C. Fast-forward to the 1st Century, the Apostle Paul’s day... Again, why doesn’t the Apostle Paul clearly denounce the Greco-Roman economic culture, which was heavily based on slavery? Why doesn’t Paul tell all of the slaves: “You’re free! No longer bound! **Demand** your freedom now!”

Some sources identify that one out of three persons in Italy was a slave – one out of three! – and one out of five persons in the **world**, on average, was a slave. In such a culture, why doesn’t Paul **command** Philemon to free his now-brother in Christ, Onesimus, which might cause a ripple effect of freedom throughout the Roman Empire?

It simply has to do with the **essential heart of Christianity**.

WHAT IS THE ESSENTIAL HEART OF CHRISTIANITY?

Christianity is **spiritually redemptive** in its essence.

Christianity focuses on **one universal problem**: sin, the sins of all men and women, which are a manifestation of the rebellion of human beings made in God’s image against God Himself.

And Christianity deals with sin by way of the substitutionary atoning work of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who...

- Was crucified in our law place under the wrath of God...
- By His death, Jesus Christ propitiated – satisfied, appeased – the wrath of God that we deserved because of our sin...
- By His death, Jesus Christ expiated (or removed) our sins from us as far as the East is from the West...
- By His resurrection from the dead on that first Easter Sunday, Jesus Christ justified us in the sight of God that we might be considered to be righteous and fit for heaven...
- And by His Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ calls us into fellowship with one another, and He sanctifies us and conforms us into His own image, that we might bear spiritual fruit for God.

That is Christianity. Christianity is **NOT** – in its essence...

- An economic system, seeking to subvert the Greco-Roman economic culture by **demanding** freedom for all of its bondservants...
- Christianity is not a political system, seeking to subvert the concept of monarchial rule by taking Galatians 5:1 out of context – "It is for freedom Christ has set us free! Now, let's go and throw some tea in the harbor in the name of Jesus!"
- Christianity is not a health care system, seeking to suppress all progress in medicine by declaring – again, out of context – "Jesus is our Healer! Jesus took up our infirmities! No doctors necessary!"

BUT! And, please, hear me on this:

We **do joyfully affirm** that the transforming power of the Gospel indeed **DOES** sanctify – makes HOLY – the cultures in which it holds sway!

The Gospel **DOES** sanctify our economics by taking the concepts of **submissive obedience** and **servant leadership** and by applying them so that there can be a mutual love between...

- masters and slaves... employers and employees.

And sweat shops where small children are abused and malnourished **become extinct**. Brothers and sisters, look around at Western culture! Where are the sweat shops in the West?

Gone!

Why? Because over the centuries, the **Gospel** has permeated and, yes, sanctified Western culture! The eradication of abusive sweat shops is a **gift of grace** to us here in the West! It is decidedly **NOT** because Western white people are inherently more distinguished or superior than anyone else!

Where are the slaves in America? In England?

Gone!

Why? Well, let's ask William Wilberforce – an absolute **giant** of the Christian faith – why he labored and labored in England for its eradication!

*"Let us not despair; **it is a blessed cause**; and success, [before] long, will crown our exertions. Already we have gained one victory; we have obtained, for these poor creatures [speaking of the slaves], the recognition of their human nature, which, for a while was most shamefully denied. This is the first fruits of our efforts; let us persevere, and our triumph will be complete. Never, **never** will we desist till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name, released ourselves from the load of guilt, under which we at present labour, and extinguished every trace of this bloody traffic, of which our posterity, looking back to the history of these [so-called] 'enlightened times,' will scarce believe that it has been suffered to exist so long a disgrace and dishonour to this country."*²

The Gospel **spreads** and **sanctifies**! Like a bottle of sweet-smelling perfume placed in the corner of a large room – eventually that glorious aroma will spread to **all** the corners of the room, and we all – **all** cultures, and **everyone in** these cultures, Christian or not – are able to bask in it!

The Gospel sanctifies our politics, too! I personally believe that is the Gospel that has moved Western culture away from monarchy. Others have written on this topic, and it could be a long discussion for another time...

² William Wilberforce, Speech before the House of Commons (18 April 1791), emphasis added.

But, quickly, think about our three-fold form of government with the Judicial, Legislative, and Executive branches.

Now hear Isaiah 33:22:

For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; He will save us.

I previously mentioned Jesus' healings...

Have you ever wondered why Jesus told those whom He had healed not to say anything? (Not that they listened very much...but that's not the point.) It is simply because Jesus doesn't want to be known **primarily** as a **healer** and a **miracle worker!**

No! Jesus wants to be known as the **Savior**. And it is only after He suffers and dies on the Cross and rises again from the dead that He says, "Now, go! Go and tell everyone Who I am and what I have done!" And that message is a message of salvation from sin, and **THAT** is how we proclaim Him!! **That** is our message.

So, let's actually get to the text this morning. I conclude this section by saying, again, that Christianity, in fact, does **sanctify culture** – Christianity does **ultimately** lead to the abolition of slavery, for example – but only **indirectly** through: the preaching of the Gospel; and the conversion and sanctification of the lives of the individual persons in that culture.

And this is why both the Apostle Peter and the Apostle Paul simply regulate the conduct of both slaves and masters in the New Testament.

And, in passing, at this point, I will just note (and I believe many of you will agree): Today, we are seeing in our country the deteriorating effects of a culture that is **moving away from** Christianity and its sanctifying effects...

Anyway, let's finally discuss...

THE BIBLE ON THE MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONSHIP

Again, acknowledging that the Gospel is essentially concerned with the spiritual redemption of sinners from the effects and consequences of their sin, and that this same Gospel then has a permeating and sanctifying effect on

the culture, the Apostle Paul outlines for the Ephesian church (and for us) what a “Christian master-slave” relationship should look like.

First, as we look at Ephesians 6:5, we see that the ESV translates *doulos* in the Greek as “bondservants” rather than “slaves,” which you will find in the King James or the New American Standard Versions of the Bible. I actually think this term “bondservants” is helpful; there’s a little bit of interpretation here along with the translation... The ESV translators are trying to draw the distinction between the different forms of “slavery” that we touched on earlier. You see, in the Greco-Roman economy and world into which Paul is writing, for example, there was ample opportunity for *doulos* – bondservants – to earn their freedom. Paul actually acknowledges this in 1 Corinthians 7:21; Paul writes:

*Were you a bondservant (again *doulos*) when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.)*

(As a brief aside, I am not in any way saying that there were not atrocities that could be found in the slavery of the 1st Century Greco-Roman economy, and I am also not in any way saying that God summarily endorses the Greco-Roman slave-based economic system of Paul’s day. I am only saying that there were some distinctions, which we’ve already discussed.)

And some of these distinctions form the basis for why this text is important for us today. This text speaks into the lives of those of us who are working – whether employer or employee – and outlines for us what either our **submissive obedience** or our **servant leadership** should look like as we seek to honor God in our workplace.

Paul says in verses 5 through 8:

⁵ Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ; ⁶ not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

So, from these verses, what is the overarching principle that governs how we should function as employees? Well, it's simple; the overarching principle is this: We work **primarily** for God and only **secondarily** for our employer, our "earthly master." Whatever work we do, we do **for** God; and, ultimately, it is **from** God we will receive our reward (and that comes on the Last Day as we stand before Him to give an account).

Question: How would our workplaces be transformed if everyone there simply had a mindset that they work primarily for **God** and will one day have to give an account to Him with regard to their attitude and conduct!?

And I note here that this is not a new mindset for Paul, right? We remember that Paul is wrapping up this larger section of this epistle that began way back in chapter 5, verse 21, right?

How would our households be transformed if we – I – if I could just keep at the forefront of my mind that whatever submission or leadership goes on is submission or leadership that is **primarily** accountable to God?!

- Eph 5:22 – *Wives, submit to your own husbands... How? ...as to the Lord.*
- Eph 5:25 – *Husbands, love your wives... How? ...as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...*
- Eph 6:1 – *Children, obey your parents... How? ...in the Lord*
- Eph 6:4 – *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction... How? ...of the Lord.*

We see over and over again in this text and throughout the entirety of the Bible that we, as Christians, are to have the long view of the Last Day in our sights whenever we do anything:

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to... What? ...all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

So, here in chapter 6, verse 5 and following, we see the same thing: The bondservant – we, employees – must have the long view of the Last Day in our sights, remembering that it is **God** for whom we work and not mere

men. And if we're working for the One True God, what workers we will be, brothers and sisters!

- We will work with fear and trembling, knowing that we must give an account **not** to our boss, but to our **God** on the Last Day!
- We will work with sincere **hearts**, doing the will of God **from the heart**, not by way of mere eye-service, knowing that our God is **primarily** concerned about the condition of our hearts and not external appearances!
- We will not work as mere people-pleasers, again, remembering that it is God whom we ultimately must please.

I pause here to say this: I have known people – brothers in Christ – who have quit jobs, and even lost jobs, because they had the courage to say No to an employer who was asking them to do something contrary to godliness, whether it was to lie, or cheat, or steal, or falsify information...to “enhance the bottom line” or to “propagate some sort of narrative.” (This is all true.)

You see, neither the Bible, nor Abiding Grace Church, in proclaiming this doctrine of submission, is endorsing some sort of a “door-mat” mentality. Not door-mat wives. Not door-mat children. Not door-mat employees. The glorious doctrine of Biblical submission is **liberating**, not **enslaving**! It is all of the un-Biblical, ungodly, **false** constructs being propagated by the **world** that need to be transformed by the inspired word of God! This word is what we need as a culture! This word is our only hope! (Amen?)

Paul ends this paragraph in verse 9 with an incredible promise, doesn't he?

[Bondservants, know] *that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.*

Know this, brothers and sisters: You are destined for a reward from your God for your efforts, whether you die as a bondservant or you have gained your freedom. God sees you; God knows you; God has seen what you have done for his glory – yes, even in your secular job – and He stands ready to reward you on the Last Day. So, whatever situation you're in, whatever job

you're in: work to the glory of God, and maximize your reward. This is what should be motivating us on a day-to-day basis: the reward that God is storing up for us when we see Him face to face. It's really that simple.

Finally, we come to verse 9 of Ephesians 6:

Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

Like husbands. Like fathers. Now masters – employers, managers, supervisors, Elders, whatever your title is when you hold some sort of authority over others – the principle is simple: We are not the ultimate authority in any way, shape, or form. Our authority is a delegated authority.

And Christ is our Example.

Lead as a servant – **the** Servant – Who gave up His life that **slaves to sin** like us might no longer be enslaved. Let us lead with fear and trembling, knowing that we also will give an account to God for our conduct. Let us lead with a sincere and caring heart – not with threatening – remembering that on the Last Day, as Paul says:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

Let us lead knowing that we also have a reward that is waiting for us.

And in all of these things, let us **all** serve and lead in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Who has demonstrated Himself to be the ultimate Servant Leader.

[PRAY]

As we get ready to celebrate the Lord's Supper together, let me just spend a few moments declaring why...

IT IS MY JOY TO BE A SLAVE

In Romans chapter 1, verse 1, Paul writes this:

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...

There it is: the Greek word *doulos*, and Paul unashamedly – I argue, joyfully – applies it to himself.

And who is his Master? None other than Jesus Christ.

It's a bit of an ironic thing, isn't it, when you have a good boss, or coach? Have you ever heard anyone say, "I want to play for **that** guy!" Or, "What a great boss **she** would be. I want to work for **her**!" Of course you have. Perhaps you have even said such a thing at some point in your life. You see a man or a woman: maybe not even Christian, but... What? Principled. Strong. A person worthy of being followed. And you think to yourself: "That is someone I want to follow. That is someone that I can **trust**."

Well, friends, you have come to the right place. And it ain' t me. I'm following just like many of you are. Following Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God. And I am not ashamed to be called His slave, and here's why.

In 1 Peter 1:18-19, Peter tells us that we:

...were ransomed... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Jesus bought me with His blood. It's Palm Sunday, you know? And on Palm Sunday, we boldly declare that our King Jesus has redeemed us out of our slavery to sin and freed us to obey and to live life abundantly in and through Him by the power of His Holy Spirit. And that same royal blood that has forgiven our sins has the power to see us all of the way through these often difficult lives that we might live in His presence for all of eternity. Call me a slave; I don't care! My Master – my King – has bought me; He owns me; and that is a **glorious thing in my eyes!**

The Lord Jesus Christ, my Master and yours, brothers and sisters, has given us – His slaves – a meal to remember Him by. I note here this morning that this is indeed a meal for the brothers and sisters of Christ, for those who have been purchased by His blood – and the evidence of that is that you

have repented of your sins, you have placed your whole faith and hope in His redemptive work on your behalf, and that you are even now delighting in God as a slave delightfully serves a righteous Master, **bearing fruit** that is in keeping with repentance and faith.

Let's examine ourselves in these next few moments of silence. If these evidences can be found in your life – evidence of repentance and a living faith in the Son of God – then you are most welcome to join us in this meal this morning as fellow members of the household of God.

...on the night when He was betrayed [Jesus] took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Let's pray...

[STOP]

Additional References:

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