

1. Exodus 21:1-22:15
2. Exodus 22:16-23:33

I. Introduction

A. For the last two weeks we have been in the fifth story in Exodus - the story of how God made a covenant with Israel

1. We started in Exodus 19 and saw that the Mosaic Covenant most closely matches a marriage covenant and the purpose of the covenant is to give Israel the rights and responsibilities of a wife to YHWH
2. We saw that God called them to be His treasured possession and a kingdom of priests - the roles of a wife - Israel was YHWH's beloved and Israel took YHWH's name and represents Him to the nations
3. And these two wifely roles correspond to the creation account - Adam was God's image and God's likeness - these roles were lost by Adam, but restored to Israel through a covenant of marriage

B. After the purpose of the covenant, last week we saw God give the Ten Words to Israel as the center of the covenant

1. And we saw that the purpose of the Ten Words was to describe God's image that Israel was to represent
2. God spoke the Ten Words just as He had spoken in creation to create Israel in His image - so the Ten Words taught us about who God is, who Christ is and therefore how we can reflect Christ to the world
3. The Ten Words were intimately associated with the purpose of the covenant - Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, representing God to the world, so God gives Israel His image that they might reflect it in the earth

C. This week we'll look at the third section of the covenant, which is conveniently titled for us: The Judgments (Rules)

1. This is the longest section of the covenant covering all of chapters 21-23 and it is also likely the hardest part of the covenant to work through - this portion of the covenant consists of what might be viewed as randomly ordered laws that pertain to a drastically different point in history and sometimes are hard to understand
2. But this morning I want to show that these laws, these judgments are, like the Ten Words, intimately associated with the purpose of the covenant - these aren't random laws that God gave Israel, they serve a concrete purpose
3. I think that even the title of this section can help us see this truth - this section is headed by "*Now these are the mishpat (judgments, rules, ordinances) that you shall set before them.*"
4. This Hebrew word, *mishpat*, is very important to the Old Testament, but sometimes its definition can be a little tricky - it obviously has to do with justice, but simply defining it as justice seems to miss the point somehow
5. So, Bruce Waltke defines *mishpat*: *The basic meaning of this word is "to establish the heavenly norm or pattern on earth." Normally this concept is applied to society, i.e., the bringing of society into the right order or arrangement. In this sense it is translated "justice." But in three passages its meaning is applied to a building. In Exodus 26:30; 1 Kings 6:38; and Ezekiel 42:11 this word is used in reference to the design of the tabernacle, the temple of Solomon, and the future temple prophesied by Ezekiel, respectively. Significantly, in all these passages it refers to the design or arrangement of God's dwelling place.*
6. And, not that I borrow from the Pope very often, but Cardinal Ratzinger defined *mishpat*: *The nuances of its meaning can be extremely variable in various cases, but all move within the sphere of justice, righteousness, law, judgment, so that P. Uys can define mishpat simply as "the God-given norm to ensure a well-ordered society."*
7. The *Mishpat* or the Judgments deal with order in God's land, establishing a well-ordered society, even a well-ordered household in God's land, which brings us back to the purpose of the covenant
8. God calls Israel to be His treasured possession, His beloved bride, Israel will live in God's place as a bride with her groom - but Israel needs to know how to live with God, what does it mean to be part of God's household?
9. The Judgments in Exodus 21-23 describe God's household to Israel, they show Israel how she will live as part of God's household in His place and therefore they reflect the character of God in a similar way to the Ten Words,
10. And because they are similar in purpose to the Ten Words, they are closely related to the Ten Words, in fact, the Judgments act, in many ways, as case law - the Ten Commandments sets out the general law, how Israel will reflect God to the world, and the Judgments apply that law to society, how will Israel live with God in His land

D. We already read our passage this morning, so I won't read it again I will simply refer to verses as I discuss them

1. Proposition: If Israel, as God's treasured possession, is to live with God, then they must know and abide by God's 'house rules'. These rules teach Israel how to abide with God pointing us forward to the ultimate abode of God in Christ and calling Christ's people to meditate on how they abide in Christ.
2. Outline:
 - a. God's land is marked by...
 - b. Because Christ is marked by...
 - c. So Christ's people should be marked by...

II. God's household is marked by:

1. As I go through these three chapters this morning, I will, by necessity, have to do a lot of summation of these laws, if I tried to go through each law presented here this morning, we could easily be here until tomorrow,
2. And I think there is something good to summarizing the laws, instead of dealing with each law as separated from the other laws, we can try to look and see how they work together to describe God's well-ordered household
3. So, this morning we are going to see that God's household is marked by five different things

A. Showing mercy to the slave

1. A large section of the laws we are considering this morning have to do with regulating the practice of slavery
 - a. These laws could be the prototype of the law that is hard to understand because it seems to have to do with a complete different time in history, they sound archaic to us and maybe even slightly immoral
 - b. We might wonder why a God who displays radical holiness and righteousness in everything doesn't make a covenant that abolishes slavery? Why does He allow it to continue? Why does He regulate it?
 - c. And then we might wonder why nowhere in the Bible is slavery ever completely abolished?
2. This morning I want to answer these questions by making what might sound like a radical statement - slavery isn't all bad, in fact these laws and the whole Bible call us to think about slavery as a good and merciful practice
 - a. I hope that you are cringing a little bit at my statement, because we have seen how bad slavery can be, our nation has a tumultuous history with slavery that was defended by those who claimed to represent the Bible
 - b. But we could say the same thing about the Israelites - they had had a hard and tumultuous history with slavery in Egypt, they had seen how bad slavery could be, as Exodus 1:13-14 says - *So they 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. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves.*
3. And this is where the Law of God shows its glory to Israel, it doesn't call Israel to reflect the slavery of the world but to redefine slavery in a new way, a way that reflects God
 - a. So Israel was to reject the type of slavery that they experienced in Egypt
 - i. Exodus 21:16 - *"Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.* - slavery wasn't to be practiced by stealing and selling fellow human beings like in Egypt
 - ii. Or Exodus 21:20 - *"When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged.* Or Exodus 21:26 - *"When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the slave go free because of his eye.* - slaves weren't merely property, they were people who were not to be mistreated
 - iii. And the exposition of these laws in Deuteronomy remind the people that they are rejecting worldly slavery because they know it, Deuteronomy 15:15 - *"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.*
 - iv. Israel had been redeemed from merciless slavery and they were not to practice such a thing while living as God's people - they had been saved from that, they were not to return to it
 - b. But, slavery wasn't abolished in Israel, instead it is redefined as a merciful institution
 - i. Slavery in Israel was to be a way of caring for those who couldn't care for themselves, those who were destitute, unable to pay their debtors - it was an act of mercy and was to be practiced in mercy
 - ii. So slavery was not a perpetual ownership of people, but a limited institution where the slave could regain his freedom, Exodus 21:2 - *When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing.*
 - iii. But, the law envisions slavery being such a merciful institution, where slaves are well-treated, that a slave might want to continue in slavery instead of regaining his freedom, Exodus 21:5-6 - *But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.*
 - iv. And slaves in Israel are not property devoid of rights, but people with specific rights in Israel, Exodus 21:7-11 - *"When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has broken faith with her. If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money.*
 - c. Slavery was for the purpose of mercy and was to be practiced mercifully - worldly slavery was rejected, and slavery was redefined as a merciful institution - God's household is marked by showing mercy to the slave

B. Preserving life made in God's image

1. Another frequent topic of the judgments is preserving and even honoring the life of their fellow man, life that had been created by God in His image
 - a. So, like in the Ten Words, murder is clearly condemned, Exodus 21:12 - *"Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.*
 - b. Intentionally causing death is outlawed, but Israel was not only to prevent intentional murder, they were to be careful to preserve life, Exodus 21:28-30 - *"When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten, but the owner of the ox shall not be liable. But if the ox has been accustomed to gore in the past, and its owner has been warned but has not kept it in, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death. If a ransom is imposed on him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is imposed on him.*
 - c. Israel was to preserve life, and they were to preserve all life, even the life of the least in Israel, Exodus 21:22-24 - *"When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*
 - d. The life of even unborn children was to be preserved, as was the life of slaves, Exodus 21:20 - *"When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged.*
2. All human life had been made in God's image and therefore Israel was to be careful to preserve life if they wanted to live in God's household - to do otherwise would be to despise the image of God and to despise God Himself
 - a. God's household was to be marked by preserving life made in God's image

C. Looking out for other's interests

1. Another topic of the judgments is looking out for the possessions of their fellow Israelites, caring for their interests
 - a. For example, Israel was to take care not to destroy other's possessions, Exodus 21:33-34 - *"When a man opens a pit, or when a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit shall make restoration. He shall give money to its owner, and the dead beast shall be his.*
 - b. So, assuredly they should not steal from or cheat one another, Exodus 22:7-9 *"If a man gives to his neighbor money or goods to keep safe, and it is stolen from the man's house, then, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. If the thief is not found, the owner of the house shall come near to God to show whether or not he has put his hand to his neighbor's property. For every breach of trust, whether it is for an ox, for a donkey, for a sheep, for a cloak, or for any kind of lost thing, of which one says, 'This is it,' the case of both parties shall come before God. The one whom God condemns shall pay double to his neighbor.*
 - c. But, beyond that, they were not only not to harm each other's possessions, they were to care for each other's possessions, Exodus 23:4-5 - *"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying down under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving him with it; you shall rescue it with him.*
 - d. And possessions, or interests in Israel could be widely defined, Israel was to care about other's interests even like their sexual purity, Exodus 22:16-17 - *"If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins. - Israelites were always to be looking to others' best in all areas of life*
2. God's household is marked by looking out for other's interests, not merely their own - Israel cared for each other like God had cared for them

D. Having compassion for the weak and oppressed

1. One of the most common refrains of the law was to look out for those who could not look out for themselves
 - a. Exodus 22:21-24 - *"You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.*
 - b. Exodus 22:25-27 - *"If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him. If ever you take your neighbor's cloak in pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down, for that is his only covering, and it is his cloak for his body; in what else shall he sleep? And if he cries to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate.*
 - c. Exodus 23:6-8 - *"You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.*
 - d. Exodus 23:9 - *"You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.*
2. Israel was to have compassion on the foreigner, the sojourner, the poor, the weak, the helpless, the widow and the orphan because they had experienced the lack of compassion in Egypt and they had received compassion from God
 - a. God's household should therefore be marked by having compassion for the weak and oppressed of society

E. Complete devotion to God

1. A large portion of these laws have to do with Israel being completely devoted to God
 - a. In fact, this is the most common statement of the covenant - devotion was upheld in the purpose of the covenant, devotion was upheld in the first of the Ten Words, that no other god could be worshipped beside God, and now devotion is upheld in the Judgments
 - b. So, Exodus 22:31 says - *You shall be consecrated to me.*
 - c. And Israel represents this devotion or consecration concretely, Exodus 22:29 - *"You shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest and from the outflow of your presses.* Or Exodus 23:10-11 - *"For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield, but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat. You shall do likewise with your vineyard, and with your olive orchard.* Or Exodus 23:14 - *"Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me.* Or Exodus 23:19 - *"The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.*
 - d. And if Israel is devoted to God, she cannot be devoted to anything else, Exodus 22:20 - *"Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction.* So, those who pursue a different power will be destroyed, Exodus 22:18 - *"You shall not permit a sorceress to live.* And the Israelites will not imitate the religion of those around them, Exodus 23:19 - *"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.*
 - e. And the reason for their total devotion to God is given in a promise, Exodus 23:20-22 - *"Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him. "But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.* - Israel was to be devoted to God because God would be going with them, God would be dwelling with them and He would know whether they were devoted to Him or not
2. Israel was to be completely devoted to God as a bride to her husband, she should not seek after anything else except God alone, her entire existence should be calculated to pursue God and therefore will look very different from the peoples around her - their goals are not her goals, their desires are not her desires, their gods are not her God - God's household will be marked by a complete devotion to Him

III. Because Christ is marked by:

1. You know that I believe everything in the Old Testament has a specific purpose and that is to point us to Christ
2. And the laws found here in the Judgments are no different, and actually the Bible is very clear on this point, that Christ fulfills the Judgments, the Justice, the *Mishpat* of the Old Testament
3. Listen to the prophecy made about the coming servant in Isaiah 42:1-4 - *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.*
4. The coming Messiah would bring justice to the nations, He would faithfully bring forth justice, He would not be discouraged until He established justice in the earth - each of the words translated justice is the same word from Exodus 21:1 - *Misphat* - the coming Messiah would bring forth *mishpat* in all the earth
5. So, we ought to see the reflection of these laws in Christ, Christ should reveal their ultimate meaning and be their ultimate fulfillment, God's household should be marked by these things because Christ is marked by these things

A. God's household ... Christ is marked by showing mercy to the slave

1. As we turn to look at Christ in these laws, especially in the laws about slavery, I think we can start to see why they are true - why slavery is actually a good thing - slavery is a good thing because it belongs to Jesus Christ
2. If Christ is the ultimate purpose of the Judgments, then humans owning other humans in slavery doesn't have to be the final end point, the ultimate goal of these laws - these laws aren't calling us to own each other
 - a. In fact, these laws start a progression through the Bible in which worldly slavery is rejected in favor of something better, a better slaveholder who shows better mercy to His slaves
 - b. So, as we enter the New Testament, slavery is not forbidden, but Paul speaks to Philemon about his slave, Onesimus and urges him to see the better condition of receiving Onesimus as his brother in Christ and not his slave, Philemon 15-16 - *For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother---especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.*
 - c. And echoing the Old Testament prohibition, the New Testament continues to call enslaving a terrible sin, I Timothy 1:9-10 - *understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,*
 - d. So Paul calls Christians not to become slaves, because being slaves to men is not our ultimate identity, I Corinthians 7:23 - *You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*
3. This is because human, worldly slavery is representative and reflective of a worse slavery that all are enslaved in
 - a. As Jesus says in John 8:34 - *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.*
 - b. Or Peter says in II Peter 2:19 - *They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.*
 - c. Worldly slavery is merely a sampling of a deeper slavery that harshly treats all men
4. But the slavery of the world has been overcome by one who has set the prisoners free
 - a. So Jesus continues in John 8:34-36 - *Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*
 - b. Or again, Romans 6:16-19 - *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.*
 - c. Jesus came to break the power of earthly slavery, just as the laws in Exodus called the Israelites to turn away from the slavery that they had experienced in Egypt, so Christ destroys all worldly slavery by destroying the ultimate slaveholder, sin
 - d. And so earthly slavery should not mark God's people - in case you were worried that somehow I theoretically support slavery, I clearly don't - worldly slavery is a symptom of sin and should not be practiced by Christians

5. But the laws in Exodus do not abolish slavery, and neither does Christ, but He establishes a new slavery, a slavery that is marked by mercy, a slavery that is given to debtors who have no chance of helping themselves
 - a. Returning to I Corinthians 7:21-23 - *Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.* - We shouldn't become slaves of men because our identity is a slave of Christ!
 - b. And Christ's slavery is the opposite of worldly slavery, it is merciful, leading to life instead of death, Romans 6:20-22 - *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.*
 - c. So Paul joyfully and continually refers to himself as the slave of Christ, for example in Romans 1:1 - *Paul, a [slave] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,*
6. The judgments rejected worldly slavery and redefined slavery as a merciful institution because Christ would ultimately reject and destroy worldly slavery and would be the ultimate merciful slaveholder

B. God's household ... because Christ is marked by saving life, restoring it in God's image

1. The Judgments called the Israelites to preserve the life of their fellow Israelites because they were made in God's image, but though they were to be devoted to life they could not undo death, though they were to honor God's image they could not restore it in sinful man, the Judgments called Israel to look for something better
2. And, in Christ, One has come who can undo death and can restore God's image by laying down His own life, John 10:10-11 - *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*
3. The Judgments called Israel to love life because Christ would come to give life, to restore God's image and to remake the world - death would not only be prevented but undone in Christ

C. God's household ... because Christ is marked by looking out for the interests of others

1. We need look no farther than the well-known words of Philippians 2:5-8 - *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
2. The Judgments called Israel to look to others interests because Christ would look to others interests in the greatest way - He set aside His own rights in order to benefit others

D. God's household ... Christ is marked by caring for the weak and oppressed

1. Christ proclaims this in Luke 4:16-21 - *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*
2. But Christ did not only claim to care for the weak and oppressed, throughout the Gospels we see Christ minister to the least of these - the Gentiles, the tax collectors, the sinners, the lepers, the prostitute, those who had been rejected by society were cared for by Christ, He showed undying compassion to them
3. And ultimately, Christ showed compassion to all of us who are weak and oppressed by sin by proclaiming liberty through His death and resurrection and granting that liberty to us who believe in His name
4. The Judgments called God's people to care for the weak and oppressed to point to Christ who does so perfectly

E. God's household ... because Christ is marked by complete devotion to His Father

1. Listen to John 5:19 - *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.*
2. Did you hear that - Christ did nothing except what the Father did - Christ devoted His entire life, every second, every breath was given to His Father to do His Father's work
3. That is the definition of ultimate devotion - the Judgments called God's people to be devoted to Him because Christ would perfectly be devoted to His Father and would do everything for His Father

IV. Christ's people should be marked by:

1. Since Christ is the fulfillment of the Judgments, in Christ the Judgments teach Christ's people - if these Judgments are characteristic of Christ then they should characterize those who are in Christ
2. I would guess that many of you love the verse Micah 6:8 and rightly so - *He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*
3. This verse calls God's people to do *mishpat*, to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God - this verse calls us to live in the spirit of the judgments fulfilled in Christ - So, as we finish our study this morning, I want to turn and consider how we can live in light of the Judgments revealed in Exodus and fulfilled in Christ

A. If Christ is the merciful slaveholder, then Christ's people should be marked by serving joyfully as slaves of Christ

1. There are probably several applications that could be made here, but I just want to focus on the biggest one, if Christ has inaugurated the true merciful slavery and we are His slaves then we should be Christ's slaves joyfully
2. Ephesians 6:5-8 - *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.*
3. Here in these verses Paul is talking to Christians who finds themselves as slaves to others - how should they represent Christ? (and in these verses and in the next verse talking to masters we find many of the secondary applications that you can ponder on later - there's a way where every Christian, whether in an authority position or a subordinate position, can reflect the truth that Christ is a merciful slaveholder by treating their subordinates mercifully for their good or by obeying their leaders joyfully with wholehearted service)
4. But what I want to look at is Paul's reasoning - Paul told slaves they should obey their masters because really all Christians should be obeying God with a full heart as slaves of Christ, each Christian should serve the Lord wholeheartedly and each should look to Christ for His reward
5. If we are slaves then we serve Christ joyfully with a whole heart - and this gives meaning to even the most menial tasks of life - whatever Christ in His sovereignty has put before you, you can do it in service to Christ, you do it because you love Christ and you do it in a way that honors Christ - no task in life is beneath this calling
6. Now, some might twist this teaching and say we can do anything as long as we 'do it for Christ' (or rather claim we do it for Christ) but we shouldn't fall into that trap - some things are clearly sinful and other things may not be sinful but we are doing them merely for our own pleasure and not truly to seek after Christ
7. But those things that God gives us to do and you can do them because you want to serve Christ, because you want to love Christ and you can do them in a way that honors Christ, no matter how little the world thinks of them, those things are a great honor because you get to do them for Christ
8. So, live life rejoicing that Christ is your merciful master, live life as though you want to be Christ's slave, live out the foreshadowing of Exodus 21:5-6 - *But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.*
9. If slaves might love human masters enough to bind themselves forever, then we should love our perfect master even more, we should be His willing and joyful slaves, not turning away from anything He calls us to

B. If Christ saves life, restoring it in God's image, Christ's people should be marked by loving those made in God's image

1. In fact, in Christ we aren't merely called to preserve those made in God's image, we are called to love those made in God's image because Christ has loved and saved us, Matthew 5:21-24 - *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*
2. As is usual, the command in Christ is intensified, it is not merely do not murder, it is not merely preserve life to the best of your ability, but it is love life, love those around you - if we are truly loving those who we come in contact with, will we not assuredly preserve life
3. And this concept of preserving and honoring life happens in the physical realm, assuredly, one who does not respect physical life is separate from Christ so we should seek to be those known for loving life and preserving life, but it extends into the spiritual realm as well, because Christ saved us and raised us in body and in soul
4. We seek to love others, which assuredly means we will seek to preserve their physical lives (can we love someone and not care if they die?), but we also seek to save their souls, pointing them to their only hope in Jesus Christ

- C. If Christ set aside His own interests for us, then Christ's people should be marked by looking to the interests of others**
1. As we consider the immense and glorious truth that Christ set aside His own rights in order to pursue our benefit, as those in Christ, reflecting Him and living with Him, we ought to be marked by the same attitude
 2. This is exactly what Paul says in Philippians 2:3-5 - *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...*
 3. If Christ looked not only to His own interest, but also to the interests of other, should we do less?
 4. If Christ set aside His glory for a time, can we not set aside what we want in favor of what someone else wants?
 5. These are the things that marked Christ and as Christians, then, these things should mark us - we should be known to the world as those who set aside our desires and pursue others' desires for their good
- D. If Christ cared for the least of society, then Christ's people should be marked by caring for the weak and oppressed**
1. I've been reading through the gospels this year for my personal study time and one thing that I have had the chance to reflect on is how much compassion Jesus showed even or maybe especially to the least in society - every time you turn around, Jesus is healing the outcast, casting out demons, calling tax collectors - He loved the least in society so much that the upper classes hated Him - they sneered that He was the friend of tax collectors and sinners
 2. And we should be marked by this as well, so James says in James 1:27 - *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*
 3. Christians should be known as those even defined as those who care for the orphan and the widow, the poor and the oppressed, Jesus Himself said in Matthew 25:34-40 - *Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'*
 4. At least as we have opportunity, we should try to do good to those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, even prisoners - those who are weak and oppressed in this world
 5. I wonder how much of Christianity is really known for caring for the weak and oppressed, how much of Christianity is known for loving the foreigner and the sojourner? I fear we fail to do this well, but this is what our Lord did and we ought to desire to do the same - to look to the outcast of society and love them well because Christ loved us though we were the outcasts of His Father's kingdom
- E. If Christ devoted Himself to His Father, then Christ's people should be marked by complete devotion to God, our Father**
1. As I mentioned already this morning, devotion seems to have come up in each sermon I've done on the Covenant in Exodus, and this is because devotion is at the center of this covenant, in covenant God devotes Himself to His people and He calls His people to devote themselves back to Him
 2. And we have seen over and over again that this devotion is perfectly portrayed by Christ, He was the One who perfectly loved and perfectly obeyed His Father, He was the One who did only what He heard from His Father, every action of Christ's was carefully calculated to represent His Father well
 3. And, as those in Christ, our desires should be the same - our lives should be consumed by our devotion to God, and I mean that word consumed intensely - our devotion to God should consume our lives like fire consumes wood so that there is nothing left in us to pursue other things - all of our desire and all of our actions are for God
 4. It brings us back to where we started two weeks ago in II Corinthians 11:2 - *For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
 5. Our devotion to Christ should be sincere and pure - I fear that this is easy to fall away from because Paul seemed to think it would be easy to fall away from such devotion
 6. It is easy to say we are doing things to serve Christ when really we are feeding our own pleasures, it is easy to slap the name of Christ on things that are really worldly passions and worldly activities, it is easy to pursue our own desires while consoling ourselves that we are quoting verses while doing it
 7. But this isn't devotion - it might look like devotion on the outside and to an outside observer it may be hard to differentiate, but true devotion is looking outside of ourselves and our own pleasures to seek the will of Christ, and when we do so, the glorious thing is that we find our ultimate pleasure in Him
 8. So, as Christ's people, let us examine our lives, examine our motives, examine our priorities and strive to devote ourselves completely to Him - and to Him be the Glory forever and ever!