

The Christian Worker

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Bible Verse: Titus 2:9-10
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Well, this morning we return to Titus 2 to continue our study of that epistle, and I invite you to turn there with me as we open. I'm just going to read the two verses that will be the subject of our sermon this morning, Titus 2:9 and 10, as Titus continues to apply the gospel of Jesus Christ to our daily lives, as Paul does in his letter to Titus, I should say. Verses 9 and 10,

9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

As I've been teaching through this chapter, Titus 2, I felt like it was important each time to emphasize that we are receiving instruction from God's word that shows us the out-flowing of the work of God in our souls in salvation. Jesus Christ saves sinners by grace alone. Scripture says that all men, all women, have sinned and fallen short of his glory, and that Christ gave his life on the cross to deliver men from sin and to deliver them from God's righteous judgment on their iniquity. That's good news. God raised Christ from the dead and now the message goes forth that all those sinners who would believe in Christ will be saved, they will be delivered from their sin. Anyone who repents and receives Christ will be forgiven, will be saved from judgment, and will be granted the blessing, the free blessing of eternal life. The Bible says that he who has the Son has the life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. And so in one sense, the question of whether you are a Christian or not is easily answered. Do you have the Son of God or not? Scripture says if you have Christ, you have eternal life and God will not take it away from you. If you do not have the Son of God, nothing else matters. You have no righteous deeds. There is nothing that you can do on your own in order to set your life right with God. You must be saved from above. You must be saved by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we can summarize all of this by saying that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, based on the Scriptures alone. Beloved, that is the true gospel of grace.

Now where Titus 2 comes in, in that wonderful message, is in this recognition that Scripture teaches us so very often: the grace that saves us is also the grace that transforms us. In other words, God saves us not simply to deliver us from an eternal hell and to live

our lives any way that we please, God saves us not so that we can continue living in the same sinful way that we had done in the past. And it's important to realize that sin is much more than just external actions and flagrant immorality. Sin is shown in an entire disposition toward life, a life that is lived without regard to God, without regard to Scripture. That is sinful. A life that is lived with sinful, rebellious attitudes is a life that is sinful, it is a life that is being lived apart from God.

And God saves us in order to deliver us not only from the penalty of our sin, but to deliver us from that dominating power of sin that is expressed in that kind of godless living. And so God saves you in order to transform you. If you are a Christian, God saved you in order to make you his own, to remake you, you might say, into the image of his own Son that you might become like Jesus Christ. The old man, Scripture says, in salvation has passed away. He has died. God has done away with that old man and now there is a new principle of life in you that is meant to be lived out to the glory of God, manifesting itself in wisdom, in one aspect of it, manifesting it in the fruit of the Spirit in another aspect of it. Galatians 5:22: love, joy, peace, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. You know, those are the virtues that Christ imparts and manifests out through those that he has saved. If you look at Titus 2:14, I have emphasized this again and again in this series, but I just cannot emphasize it enough. Titus 2:14, says that Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." You see the principle of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone expressed there. Christ, he himself redeemed us but he had a purpose in our remaining earthly lives that he intends to carry out for us, to purify us, to over time cleanse us from our prior iniquities, cleanse us from our prior habits of thought and prior habits of life and attitude which are sinful against God, and to conform us and to make us those who belong to him and who live for his glory.

That is not a message that is unique to Titus at all. Look over at the book of Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2:8 through 10. I'm just going to give you a small handful of passages to emphasize the importance of this. Ephesians 2, very well-known passage says in verses 8 through 10, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." But it doesn't stop there. I understand that many people when they quote those two verses stop there but you and I need to have the maturity to keep reading and see what Paul says is the outworking of that salvation by grace alone. Verse 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Walk being a metaphor for our daily living, that our daily life would be marked by the works that God has appointed for us.

Where are we to find those works that we might do them? Where are they made known to us? Colossians 2:6 and 7, in like manner, you see the same principle of a man being converted to Christ and then consequences flowing from that conversion. Colossians 2:6 and 7 where the Apostle Paul says, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude."

You've received Christ, therefore, walk in him. Live in a manner that is consistent with the way that Christ has saved you.

One final passage over in 1 John on the other side of the book of Hebrews, 1 John 3. If you would turn there with me. Hebrews, James, two letters from Peter and then 1 John chapter 3. And as we look at this, as we read this text, to understand that this is nothing less than the distinguishing mark, what we're talking about here is nothing less than that which distinguishes a son of the devil from a son of God, and John is very clear and direct in his loving admonition to us. He says in 1 John 3:7 through 10, "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

Look, beloved, at some levels what we're talking about is very basic here, but this is the key to discerning the state of your own soul. Is there a desire in your heart to live in a godly manner that is pleasing to Jesus Christ? If that is a matter of indifference to you, even though you claim the name of Christ, even though you can point back to a time where you say this is when I received Christ, beloved, if there is no desire for godly living in your life, if there is no desire to know Christ and to know his word, you need to come back, and as Scripture says, examine yourself to see whether you be in the faith because Jesus Christ, the purpose of salvation, one of the signature marks of true salvation is that Christ has laid his hand upon you in order to make you his own, and the way that he shows forth the fact that he has made you his own is that he changes you, he changes your desires, he changes your affections so that you want new things that are in keeping with the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and you want to distance yourself from the prior way that you lived. And so friends, beloved loved ones, I have to ask you again and again whether you find those desires percolating up in your heart or not. If you do, if you find those desires to be active and attractive to you, and your faith is in Christ alone for your salvation, then you have reason to leap and rejoice because your salvation is real, because this is an indication that your sins have been forgiven, that you have been brought into union with Christ, that there is no fear in death for you because you will be in heaven when you die. And that is not because you work for your salvation, it's because you have been on the receiving end of God's work, causing you to be born again and making you his own. God changes every person that he truly saves, every single one. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation, the old things have passed away. Behold, new things have come.

The challenge in every era of church history, the challenge even in the first century when the Scriptures were being written, is that people would profess to know Christ, people thought that they were in Christ when they really weren't, and if they would only have looked at their desires and compared them with Scripture, they would have found that the reality, the living reality of being in Christ was not active in their lives. No desire for

Christ. No love for his people. No regard for the law of God. Whether it's being honoring God in the first four commandments or loving men in the final six commandments. No new desires. Content to live in sin. Content to live in rebellion. Content to disregard and have no interest in his word. Beloved, that's not the mark of a true Christian, and so it's critical for us to understand that God saves us by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, but it's also equally important to understand that true salvation results in a transformed life, or perhaps even more precisely being stated, a life that is being transformed into conformity with the image of Christ. None of us have reached perfection. All of us still stumble in many ways but there is a desire against that, there is a desire against living and finding ourselves being like that. We reject it. We repent of it even though it tries to cling to us. The question is whether you see those desires percolating in your heart or not and whether righteousness is a matter of priority to you or not.

Well, as you come to the book of Titus, and you can turn back there with me now as we come back to Titus 2, that was a very long introduction, what we find in Titus 2 is that the apostle has given us a sense of how these basic principles apply in different aspects of life, in different stages of life. So he says in verse 2, "Older men are to be temperate," Titus 2:2, "Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children." Notice how the mark of salvation in a young woman is particularly evidenced by her love for the people around her and devoting herself to family and showing those kinds of maternal care for those that God has given to her. Along with in verse 5, "to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us."

If you're just visiting us here or you've only recently started attending or viewing us on the live stream, that's what we've looked at over the past few weeks as we've considered the instruction from God's word in these matters. Now today we find that this outworking of salvation comes into our workaday world in verses 9 and 10. Let me read them again, as we've circled all the way back to them. Verse 9, "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." I'm going to bring four principles out of this text for you and I just want to kind of jump right into it with this final bit of introduction.

First of all, the first point here is the general principle. The general principle that is at work here in verses 9 and 10, and the general principle in Titus 2 is this: God calls Christians to a life of submission. A life of submission, a life of deferring to others around them, of respecting the authority that is in their lives. And this principle is embedded from the very start in the 10 Commandments. In the fifth commandment when we taught on this we made the principle that the fifth commandment is more than just a

principle that applies within families and parents and their children. Fifth commandment, "Honor your father and mother," it says, and what we said as we looked at that is that that is a principle, that as you examine all of Scripture, expands out to every relationship that involves authority and submission, so that the principle of godly submission is embedded in the moral law of God from the very beginning. And as you read Scripture, and you read the New Testament and the letters of Paul, you find it in every conceivable area of life. Children are called to honor their parents. Wives are called to submit to their husbands. Young men are called to submit to their elders in the church. Citizens are called to submit to their government, and we'll see that in Titus 3:1 and 2. And here in Titus 2:9 and 10, you find that workers are called to submit to their masters. Beloved, this principle in verses 9 and 10, this principle of submission, isn't limited simply to the labor force, the broader principle, the general principle is the life of submission that God has called you to, to put away rebellion against authority because rebellion against authority, it is a symptom of a deeper rebellion against God himself who calls us to live this way. And so rebellion is never a godly attitude except in times where we are called to obey God not men, but to have a consistently rebellious attitude in any of those relationships that I referred to is a mark of ungodliness. It is a mark that repentance is needed in your soul. And if that is something that has been characterizing your life in recent days by the word of God, by the Spirit of God, I call you to repent of that in the presence of God because God has called us to live at peace with one another.

God has called us to love one another. God has called us to love one another in our families, to love one another in the church, and to show love even to our enemies, so that one could say, "But you don't know how badly that person sinned against me." Beloved, Jesus said, "Love your enemies." You say, "My spouse is a real problem." Well, God calls you to love your spouse, husbands to love your wives and a wife to submit to her husband. You say, "I can't do that. He's become my enemy. She's become my enemy." Well, look, maybe that's the case in your sinful heart, but God calls you to love your enemies because that's what Christ did for you. When you were an enemy of God Christ died for you, Scripture says in Romans 5:8. And so none of us have any any justification for living with settled hostility against anyone in our lives, and to the extent that we have that in our hearts, we need to repent, we need to ask God to sanctify us, we need God to bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to bring about the transformation for which Jesus Christ laid hold of us in our lives. Christ, Titus 2:14, says that he died and he redeemed us that we might be his own possession, zealous for good works.

Now look, in a room of this size, I can only imagine that, you know, 80-90% of us are feeling particularly convicted right now. Beloved, if that's the case, don't resist the promptings of the Spirit in your heart. Yield your heart to Christ. Yield your heart to God and say, "Yes, this is true. Yes, I have been sinning in this area. Please forgive me. Please change me. Please show me how to bring forth the fruit of repentance in my life in this area which is now heavy on my mind." Because beloved, for those of you that name the name of Christ, this is what he has laid hold of you to be. Christ saved you to change you, to change you from the prior high-handed rebel that you used to be in order to become a loving, deferential servant of his. And the spirit of true salvation is, "Lord, what would

you have me to do?" That's what Paul said when the Lord stopped him on the road to Damascus, "Lord, what would You have me to do?"

Well understand beloved, I'm going to go on a tangent here, in times past and sometimes even now, there's this broadly evangelical theme and telling you how to live your life, and always ask the question, "What would Jesus do?" You've heard that, right? What would Jesus do? Sounds very high and lofty, and all of that. I don't like that question. I don't like that question because it tempts people to think wrongly about how Jesus makes known what he would have you to do. When people are asking that question, they're usually bound in terms of what I'm doing today and what I want to do, and it's a very self-centered focus, and it's a very subjective focus. How do you know what Jesus would have you to do? The better question to ask is what did Jesus say? What does Scripture say I am to do? And that drives you out of your own self-centered subjective desires and brings you into the objective word of God where you find clear instruction. Look, there are 66 books of the Bible. I believe if my memory is serving me in the moment, 1,189 chapters of the Bible in the Old and New Testament. Jesus has told you immense amounts about how to think and how to live. Once you've mastered the 1,189 chapters of the Bible and are living them out, then maybe you can ask the question what would Jesus do here? But the question isn't what would Jesus do, the question is what Jesus has called you to do, what he is commanded in his word. That's the issue and you can know that by reading and meditating on the written word of God. And so be very careful about that subjective question which inevitably leads people to decide that Jesus simply wants them to do what they originally wanted to do in the first place before they asked the question. Our hearts are so deceitful. We are so easily deceived by our own desires that the last thing that we want to do is to look inside ourselves for the answer to the question, what should we do to please God. Look outside of yourself. Look to Scripture and find the revealed word of God which more often than not is going to cut against your natural man and humble you and bring you to repentance.

Now, the general principle we said, God calls Christians to a life of submission, to be subject to, as we see it here in verse 9 in the New American Standard, going back to Titus 2:9, put your eyes on the text if you would. Just to oversimplify, think about them as employees in the modern day sense. That is a gross oversimplification of the first century context but it will work for what we're doing here today. What we see here is this verb, this command to be subject to has this idea, it means to accept your position and to be compliant within it. For now, you're in a position in employment if you're not self-employed, you're in a position that God has given to you. You have the particular supervisor that you are responsible to, the particular boss that you answer to, and that is an appointment by God and God says recognize the authority of that one who is over you and submit yourself to them. Be subject to them. Conform yourself to their desires. Be compliant. Be cooperative. You get the idea. Be cooperative in that environment. As long as you are in that employment, the command is to be subject to your employer.

Now that brings us to our second point which is this, it is the specific application. The specific application and I hope and trust that that you'll find this all to be very practical in its orientation. The question is this, the command is to be subject to your masters in

everything. It's a broad, comprehensive scope that is given and we'll talk about the limits on that in just a moment. But the question is how does this submission work itself out? What is the specific application? Well, it's all very practical and I'm going to give you just two simple principles here in the application to help you think through what God wants from you in your present employment situation.

First of all, this is a little bit longer: please your boss, don't argue with him. Please your boss, don't argue with him. Your responsibility before God, this is for the.... Look, let me back up. All of these things that we're about to see we do for the sake of the God who saved us. This is his will for us. The kind of boss you have, whether you have a good boss or a bad boss, is very, very secondary in the principles that we are talking about. Understand that we are receiving from the word of God God's vertical instruction and saying, "My child, this is how I want you to live in this area of your life. This is part of the good works that I have appointed for you beforehand that you would walk in them." You are not to be a rebellious employee. You're not to be a rebellious slave. That is displeasing to God because when Jesus Christ came to the world, he humbled himself and he lived in obedience to his heavenly Father. And so Christ, having patterned humility and submission for us, we are to pattern our lives after that and after his example if we are in him.

And so we see it here in verse 9, "Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative," not contradicting your boss in the things that you are given to do. Now back up a moment here. One of the observations that I think most Christians could make, any kind of discerning Christian could make, I would venture to say that many, many Christian bosses, if not all of them, would have this to say if they were able to speak candidly about many Christian employees that they have had over the years, they would say this, that far too often, not always but far too often Christians, professing Christians, bring to their employment a selfish sense of entitlement. This is a real danger, a real temptation for genuine Christians and the thinking goes like this and it's not that people think this way deliberately, but they haven't examined their thought processes enough to be able to understand things rightly. As Christians, let me put it this way, as Christians we have received grace from God and God is continually gracious to us. We experience his grace. He gives us joy. We sin against him, we enter into a time of rebellion, indifference, stumbling along our way, and what are we taught to do in Scripture? We go to him and we confess it, right? We ask for grace. We ask for forgiveness. "Cleanse me from this sin. Restore the joy of my salvation." And what does God do faithfully every time? He does that. He cleanses us. He washes us. He restores our joy. He receives us back and restores the assurance of our salvation. That is the ongoing wonderful grace of God, the wonderful grace of Jesus. It reaches even to me, as the hymn writer said. And so we've received this grace, this undeserved favor from God we receive as a gift from him.

Now where Christians so often go astray is they live this way even if they don't consciously think this way, having received grace from God, having received undeserved favor from Christ, they turn and they start to demand that from men. They expect men to accept their weaknesses, their rebellion. They expect men to overlook the times when

they're late for work, when they don't do their job, when they can't be depended upon, and they just expect that to be overlooked because they have misunderstood and misapplied the grace of God vertically that they are receiving in their lives. And that is a very wrong way to think and a very wrong way to live. Beloved, in the workplace, you should think about it in precisely the opposite way. The way that you should think rightly about your workplace relationship vis-a-vis your boss or supervisor is this, "I have received favor from God that I did not deserve therefore I am going to give favor to my employer by giving them excellence in everything that I do, in showing them compliance and cooperation in what I do. Rather than expecting my boss to overlook my failures, I'm not going to give him any failures to overlook. I'm going to do my job with excellence. I'm going to do it with a cheerful attitude, and I'm going to seek the good of my employer by the work that they have given me to do and which I'm paid to do." You are to view your work as service directly to Christ himself and look beyond your human boss and say, "This is what Christ wants and therefore I will give Him my best."

Look over at Ephesians 6 with me. Scripture is not unclear about this. Scripture is definitively and decisively clear to us on the matter. Ephesians 6:5, "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." Do this as though Christ were your supervisor. Verse 6, "not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free." Do you see it how often it said just in that passage do it as to Christ. Verse 6, as a slave of Christ, doing the will of God. Verse 7, as to the Lord. Verse 8, you'll receive it back from the Lord. Five times in those four verses a God-entered, Christ-centered attitude to the way that you approach your work. And as slaves of Christ what are we? We're nothing but those who implicitly obey what the Lord has given us to do.

Well, providentially, what the Lord has given you to do is expressed in part in the workplace environment that you have with the employers and supervisors that you have. Listen, I sympathize with the fact that some of your supervisors are ungodly pagans and that they are difficult to please and that they are unreasonable and don't even do what they themselves call you to do. I get all of that. What you must understand is that your duty is – oh, this is so very important, beloved, so transforming to understand – your duty in the workplace is not defined by the character of your boss, your duty in the workplace is defined by the character and revealed word of Christ. You are to be like Christ, not your boss. You give the best to Christ regardless of whether your boss himself deserves it or not. It's a vertical focus that transforms and makes new the whole reason that you work if you've never deeply considered these things.

Look over at Colossians 3. Colossians 3, turn to your right in your Bible just a couple of pages and you'll find Colossians if you're new to the Bible. Colossians 3:22 to 25 you see this, "Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing

that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality."

Beloved, I'm repeating myself in what I'm saying now, but what you need to understand is that I am repeating myself because Scripture itself repeats itself. Scripture says this over and over again, and one of the things that collectively as the body of Christ we should understand is that if it is said repeatedly, two things, 1) it must be important to God; secondly, we must be slow to learn and vulnerable to fail in precisely this area. So Scripture tells us these things repeatedly because you and I are like slow donkeys that are slow to learn and stubborn and resistant to instruction and leading.

And so we come to the word of God, we look at Colossians 3 and what do we see? We see the same vertical focus that we saw in Titus 2, the same vertical focus that we saw in Ephesians 6. Look at it with me at the end of verse 22, Colossians 3, fearing the Lord. Verse 23, do your work heartily as for the Lord. Verse 24, from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve, verse 24. Four times in those brief verses, after five times in Ephesians. Over and over and over again. You know, part of the way that we internalize this is that we realize, we realize that in a very real sense, in a providential sense, God has appointed the very supervisor, the very employer that you have right now. God has appointed that person over you and there should be a sense of fear and respect that goes with that in your life, even if that person is not personally worthy of it, to understand that they have a role, a position in your life that has been appointed by God and that you have a corresponding responsibility to respond to them in a biblical way. That means that you should not mock your boss, you should not argue with your boss, you should not speak badly about your boss to your fellow coworkers and undermine confidence and respect for his leadership in that way. It means that you should set aside back-talking. Boss tells you to do something and you say, "I'm not doing that." No, that has no place in the life of a Christian. Set aside back-talking, set aside sarcasm. If you receive a bad employee review, especially a legitimate one because of your workplace relationships or your failure to do your duty, beloved, you should not resent that. You should not get angry in response to that. You should be ashamed that as a Christian your boss found it necessary to say such things about you and repent. And if the review was unfair, accept it as Christ accepted ill treatment in his own life.

Look at 1 Peter 2:18, "Servants," give you just a moment here, just after the book of James and Hebrews. 1 Peter 2:18, another passage, another apostle, another book of the Bible saying the same thing. "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly." Yes, you may suffer unjustly in the workplace. Scripture recognizes that and tells you what to do in response. Bear up under it. Trust Christ. Don't rebel against it. Don't become difficult to live with.

Verse 20, "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." "God, in the integrity of my heart, I'm being treated unfairly here in this workplace but You have called me to submit. God, I will do so with a joyful, cheerful heart as Your Spirit helps me, and I will trust You to take care of the seeming injustice of this in the meantime. You will make this right in the end. How this outcome works is not my concern, my concern is what Jesus has told me to do in His word, and what He has told me to do is to endure the maltreatment patiently while trusting in You."

Maybe you say, you hear all that and say, "I don't know where I can find the power to do that, where I can find the strength to do that." Keep reading in 1 Peter 2:21, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also," oh, Christ knows what it's like to suffer unjustly, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps."

What did Christ do when he suffered unjustly? Well, first of all, verse 22, it wasn't his fault, he "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth." Verse 23, what did he do? "While being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." He didn't talk back. He adopted an inner attitude of faith in his Father. "Father, You are in sovereign control of all of this, and I'm going to trust You to work out Your purposes and I will keep my tongue still while I do." You and I should all be very glad that that was Christ's attitude because that attitude led him thoroughly to the cross by which our sins were paid for in full. Verse 24, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." You see, we keep coming back full circle to these same themes over and over again. It's because this is what the word of God teaches. You were redeemed from sin so that you might die to sin, including the sin of rebellion, and live to righteousness which is manifested in a completely different way.

Now in all of that, understand that there's a place for you to appeal at times to something that your boss has said or asked you to do. "Boss, have you considered this? Boss, do you realize I've got this stack to get through and now you're asking me to do this stack too?" Fine to make that kind of appeal, to ask questions, to ask for clarification, to ask for more time, but if your boss refuses and will not hear you, then you comply. Even if you think it's incorrect, even if you think it's the wrong thing for the company, the decision about what's good to the company is given to the boss not to the servant. So you don't substitute your judgment for the one in authority. You can appeal to that authority, but you don't challenge it, you don't buck against it because that is so contrary to at least five different passages that we've looked at here just this morning.

Now secondly, in terms of the specific application, we've said you please your boss, you don't argue with him; secondly, you don't steal but you serve. You don't steal but you serve. Go back to Titus 2 now. One reason to respect the word of God is just how immensely practical it is. This is dealing with us at the very basic level in which we live life. Now in verse 10, don't steal but serve, we find the Apostle Paul says this, "not

pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." You submit by giving your best, not by taking what isn't yours. You don't keep for yourself something that you come into contact with in your employment. If something is entrusted to your care, you don't appropriate that for your own purposes, for your own use. Not too long ago, I made the point that when the Lord saved me, I had to repent and make restitution for things that I had stolen when I was an employee at a drugstore in my younger days. I needed to make restitution. I had stolen snacks and things like that while I was running the cash register, eating those things for myself, precisely what Scripture is saying. Don't pilfer from your employer. Don't stick things in your pocket that you don't have permission to take. Don't keep for yourself something that is entrusted to your care. And in the first century this was a very critical principle because slaves in that time, they often managed the business affairs of their masters. They had great responsibility and they had great liberty and oversight over what was given to them.

Paul comes to them and says, "Don't abuse that position of trust by using it to your own advantage without permission." Jesus Christ forbids his disciples from petty theft, to say nothing about embezzlement, right? The number of stories that you read about people in positions of trust in churches embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars to their own benefit, these people are not Christians and these people deserve to be in jail, but even more, even more they have sinned greatly against God who says specifically in Titus 2:10, "Don't pilfer from your employer." You see, the issue is integrity not whether the boss misses what you take. It's not whether you can get away with it. It's not whether the security camera catches you doing it or not. The fact is that the eye of God is on the way that you conduct yourself in the workplace and he said to be this way, that you as a Christian in the workplace, should be marked by the utmost of integrity.

And so the call is to be trustworthy in what is entrusted to you. Over time if you stay in the same employment over a period of time, your boss should have the developing sense, "That person does what they tell me that they're going to do. I can tell them to do something and I know that it's done. I don't have to follow up on them." And he develops that awareness by observing you because you are driven by an internal motivation that you want to do your best for Christ in that, and you realize that your best for Christ is shown by the way that you handle your day-to-day responsibilities. All of work then, beloved, all of work then becomes an act of worship. Your secular job becomes a sacred altar upon which you offer your worship to Christ with your attitudes, with your will, with your willingness to endure mistreatment, unfair, you know all of those things and maybe along the way you'll be blessed as you do.

That brings us to our third point: the compelling motivation. The compelling motivation. You see the compelling motivation at the end of verse 10 where it says, "so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect." The "they" there is referring to the bondslaves that Titus is instructing in his teaching, and what Paul is saying is that a Christian worker should understand this: your work should make Christ look good in the workplace. The fact that you do it with excellence whether it's recognized or not, your excellence in the workplace makes Christ look excellent by implication. Even unbelievers

have a remnant sense of right and wrong. They can value a godly worker even if they don't say so. They can value someone who does their job well even if they don't acknowledge it.

And I would say this by way of encouragement, especially for you young people just starting to enter into the workplace, look, look, a genuine work ethic in our culture has utterly collapsed and we know that when we go to stores, when we go to restaurants and people just don't care and products aren't what they ought to be, all that. We understand that the work ethic has collapsed in our culture. It's not even respected as something good and desirable anymore. But let me encourage you as a young person to understand that that collapse is your opportunity in response to these things from the word of God, this is your opportunity, a faithful worker who can be depended upon in the hands of a decent employer has a wide open path to advance. The worker who can show up on time and do what he's told and do it with a cheerful attitude, those basic characteristics are an opportunity for advance here in this world in which we live.

But consider the contrast, beloved, if an unbelieving boss disciplines you because you're a poor worker, understand that you're not being persecuted for being a Christian, you're being punished because you're a bad worker. It's that simple. Don't put a spiritual veneer on your own failure to do what you are called to do. Just honor Christ, accept the discipline and repent and do better going forward. The whole teaching of Scripture is that we are to put Christ on display with an excellent work ethic and attitude in the work that God has given to us.

Well, let's go to point four very quickly: the challenging situations. The challenging situations, and I'm just going to address three of them, one particularly urgent in our day and age. What if my boss is unfair? That happens, that tempts you to bitterness. Remember these Scriptures, especially the passage in 1 Peter 2, submit and trust God to honor you. Refuse the bitterness, submit and trust God to honor you as you do. Your goal, beloved, is to develop patient endurance in your life, patient endurance in the presence of Christ, not to just get what you want in the moment. Far greater principles at work as you go to your job, keep that in mind.

Secondly, what if my boss is a Christian? What if you have a good boss and he's actually a believer? Well, here's what you should do, you should work even harder for him and extend added respect. Scripture is very clear on this. Turn back a couple of pages to 1 Timothy 6. 1 Timothy 6:1 and 2 where we read this, if you have a Christian boss, give thanks to God for that. I realize that doesn't make him a perfect boss, he may still be demanding and even difficult to work with, but recognize the spiritual position of things and respond in this way. Verses 1 and 2, "All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren," in other words, don't take them for granted, don't take advantage of your common relationship in Christ, rather "serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach

and preach these principles." So if you have a Christian boss, work even better for him as a result of it.

Thirdly, finally, and with regard to our day, our culture has changed so much since I first preached on this passage in Truth Community Church almost 10 years ago so that this question has to be asked and answered: what if my employer requires support for sinful lifestyles? What if I'm required as a condition of my employment to affirm homosexuality, or to affirm transgender behavior in the workplace, and that becomes a condition of my employment, what then? Well, be mindful of this, beloved, your obligation to God is greater than your obligation to man. God delegates authority to human spheres, but he retains the prerogative of ultimate fidelity to himself, not to man so that we must make this point and make it clear: employers do not have the right to demand that you sin against God. They do not have the right to put words in your mouth to affirm things that you know that God condemns. In the words of Peter in the book of Acts, we must obey God rather than man. And if that means that you suffer as a result of it, beloved, embrace the privilege of suffering for Christ and suffering for fidelity to him. You bear personal indignity, you bear personal discipline in the workplace, perhaps you forfeit opportunities for advancement, perhaps you lose your job over it, beloved. These are real issues but whatever you do, you do not violate the word of God. You do not violate your faithfulness to God for the sake of a sinful rule and a sinful command of man. Your ultimate loyalty is to Christ in the workplace. My encouragement would be to look for every way to comply that you possibly can, but to realize that there are lines that cannot be crossed. Work is a stage upon which you can display Christ. Beloved, embrace it for his glory.

Let's pray together.

Gracious Father, there are so many different ways that these things will certainly apply in the lives of those that have heard. I pray that You would grant them grace, grant them wisdom, grant them discernment, especially grant them protection in those workplaces that are advancing sinful agendas through their control over employees. Father, grant grace to Your people to obey joyfully where that is possible, to have wisdom going forward where that is not possible. Father, help us to have the wisdom to know what the distinction between those two realms might be but fundamentally help us to grasp and embrace the fact that submission is a place that You call us to in so many realms of life. Help us to cheerfully do that as we submit to Christ, not to man, and to give Christ the glory as we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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