

“Slaves and Masters – Part 1”  
1 Timothy 6:1-2  
(Preached at Trinity, September 19, 2021)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapters 5-6** Paul instructed Timothy regarding the unique needs of the various members of the church. Paul addressed how to care for older men and women as well as those who were younger. He also gave a lengthy discourse on the care of the widows in the church. Paul also addressed how the church was to care for their elders. As we enter **Chapter 6** Paul now turns to interaction between slaves and their masters.
2. Slavery is difficult for us to identify with from our 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective. First of all, we have the context of the history of slavery in our nation. We need to draw a distinction between ancient forms of slavery and the form of slavery practiced in the 17-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This form was sinful for several reasons.
  - A. It involved kidnapping for profit on the continent of Africa. African gangs captured villages and sold them into slavery.  
**Exodus 21:16 NAU** - "He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death."
  - B. Paul condemned slavery by kidnapping in **Chapter 1**  
**1 Timothy 1:8-11 NAU** - "But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, <sup>9</sup> realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers <sup>10</sup> and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, <sup>11</sup> according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted."  
It comes from a word that refers to a slave dealer.
  - C. Another issue with the slave trade was there was no means of a slave gaining his freedom.  
**See Leviticus 25:44-55**
  - D. There is also the issue of racism where an entire race of people are considered inherently of lesser value.
3. We also have the issue of an anti-authoritarian mindset prevalent in our day. There is little respect for all forms of authority.
4. The New Testament has much to say regarding servants. There are several words that are used to describe servants. Sometimes they are used in a very particular sense but sometimes they are used interchangeably. One of the words is παῖς - This is the Greek word for “child” or “boy.” It carries a sense of familial care. We can feel the love the centurion had for his servant.  
**Matthew 8:5-8 NAU** - "And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, <sup>6</sup> and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented." <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." <sup>8</sup> But the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed."

- A. The word for “servant” here is παῖς  
It is even used to describe the servanthood of Jesus  
**Acts 3:13 NAU** - "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him."
- B. But it can also refer to a child or a boy. It is the word used to describe the male children Herod ordered to be killed.
5. Another word translated servant is οἰκέτης which refers to a house or domestic servant  
**Luke 16:13 NAU** - "No servant can serve two masters;"  
Another is διάκονος –  
**John 12:26 NAU** - "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also;"  
This is the word also translated “deacon”
6. The word used here is δοῦλος – It is a common word used over 120 times in the NT.  
The NASB sometimes translates it “bond-servant” but most often it is translated “slave.”
7. Slavery was very common in the 1st century. It was an accepted part of their culture.
- A. There were an estimated 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire - they probably formed the whole of the work force - free men did not labor.
- B. They had become slaves as prisoners of war, as condemned men, or through debt. Many were born into slavery. Even some slaves had their own slaves.
- C. Slaves could eventually purchase their freedom or the master could grant their freedom. Some masters would provide for the freedom of a slave in their will.
- D. The introduction of Christianity into this culture brought many questions and tensions. Should Christian masters release all of their Christian slaves? Should Christian slaves expect preferential treatment from their Christian masters. Paul’s words give clarification for the church.  
**1 Timothy 6:1 NAU** - "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."
- a. It was a balanced doctrine – the slave was not to revolt but serve.
- b. On the other hand, the master was not to be overbearing or cruel.
8. While the NT has much to say about slavery, it neither condemns nor justifies slavery. It simply recognizes its reality - It focuses mostly on the proper behavior of slaves and masters. The N.T. always focuses upon our transformed lives.  
**1 Peter 2:18 NAU** - "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."  
**Ephesians 6:5 NAU** - "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;"  
**Colossians 3:22-24 NAU** - "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. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."  
**1 Timothy 6:1 NAU** - "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."
9. What does this passage dealing with slaves have to teach American Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

- I. Christianity doesn't necessarily change our situation or status of life.
- A. The external areas of our life will remain the same.  
**1 Corinthians 7:20-22 NAU** - "Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called. <sup>21</sup> Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. <sup>22</sup> For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave."
1. Christian salvation won't change the color of your skin. It won't change whether you are male or female. It doesn't change your marital status or your employment.
  2. Rather than focusing on the external condition of life the Gospel transforms how we live within our various conditions.
  3. The point is that a person is equally able to serve Christ in slavery or freedom. He serves Christ whether in a democracy or dictatorship. We must honor God in every condition of life.
  4. Rather than abolishing slavery, Christianity changed it - The slave is placed upon a new plane - he no longer focuses upon his condition.
- B. The NT maintains a focus on maintaining an eternal mindset.  
**Colossians 3:2-3 NAU** - "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
1. This doesn't dismiss the importance of our present life.
    - a. It doesn't excuse carelessness or sloth. Paul warned the Thessalonians of some who were neglecting duty and going about as busybodies.
    - b. We have family responsibilities and vocational duties. We have homes to maintain and relationships to care for. And we are not unconcerned about those who rule over us.
    - c. We are always concerned about promoting justice and equity. We maintain a priority of pressing on in holiness while serving our King. But are never commanded to make the current political/economic/social conditions our chief priority.
  2. We must always be the salt and light in this world, but we are primarily not of this world.
  3. The primary focus of the church is to evangelize and bring people to a knowledge of Christ.
    - a. Only the Christian is able to come under His lordship. We are to make disciples and teach them to obey the commands of our Lord. **Matthew 28:1 NAU** - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you"
    - b. Our chief priority is not to reform the world - the world cannot be reformed. We are looking forward to the New Heavens and New Earth.

- C. We must always maintain a proper balance, a proper perspective.
1. We must maintain a Kingdom priority  
**Matthew 6:33 KJV** - "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."  
**John 18:36 NAU** - "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."
  2. This life is always of secondary importance. We are citizens of another realm.
    - a. If the Christian with cancer makes his recovery his highest priority he ceases to maintain a kingdom priority. How can I glorify Christ with my cancer?
    - b. If the slave made his freedom his highest priority, he would cease to maintain a Kingdom priority. How can I glorify Christ in my servitude?  
**Ephesians 6:5 NAU** - "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;"
    - c. Our life is described as a pilgrimage - we are pilgrims and strangers  
**1 Peter 2:11 NAU** - "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul."

#### Conclusion:

1. It is hard for us to maintain an eternal perspective. We are born with our heart set upon this world. We judge everything by how it effects our current situation.
2. This is not the Christian way.
  - A. Where do we place our priority? Where is our treasure?  
**Matthew 6:19-21 NAU** - "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
  - B. The teaching our Master is for us to maintain a Kingdom priority.  
**Matthew 6:31-33 NAU** - "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' <sup>32</sup> "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. <sup>33</sup> "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."
3. The earthly minded man will place high priority upon his earthly situation. The earthly minded slave will not be able to get his mind off of his servitude. The Kingdom minded slave will keep his mind on how his servitude will best glorify Christ - "so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against."
4. This demands the transforming work of the Gospel.