

***“Ye Serve The Lord Christ”***  
***Colossias 3:22 - 4:1***

**Introduction:**

1. Let's Open Back Up Our Bibles This Morning:
  - To Colossians 3 - Where:
    - We Have Been Learning:
      - What It Looks Like - When You Have:
        - Jesus As The Preeminent One In Your Life!
  - Not Only Will He Change Your Heart – He Will Change:
    - The Very Fabric:
      - Of Your Relationships!
2. Earlier In This Chapter:
  - We Saw How Christ Changes:
    - Your Relationships Within:
      - His Church!
        - 3:11 - “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all!”
3. We Also Learned Last Sunday:
  - How Christ Changes:
    - Your Relationships Within:
      - Your Family!
        - Wives Will Submit!
        - Husbands Will Love!
        - Children Will Obey!
        - And Fathers Will Be Gracious!
4. Well - This Morning - We Will See:
  - How Christ Changes:
    - Your Relationships Within:
      - Society Itself!
  - Because The Next People:
    - Paul Addresses In Colossians:
      - Are Christian Servants / Slaves And Christian Masters! Important - Because Of Another Letter That Was Sent - To A Christian Master, Philemon, About A Christian Slave, Onesimus!
  - 3:22 - 4:1 - “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: / 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; / 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. / 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. / 1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven!”
5. Now - In Ancient Rome - The Servants Mentioned Here
  - Were, In Fact, Slaves - Who Were Owned By:
    - Their Masters - And As Such - They Were Expected:
      - To Follow Their Master's Will:
        - In Everything They Did!
    - And Slavery Was A Very Common Thing:
      - In Roman Society!
        - It Has Been Estimated That Anywhere From 30 - 40% Of The Population Were Slaves!
    - But - Slavery In Those Days:
      - Was Not Primarily Based On Racial Characteristics:
        - Like It Became In Western Europe & In Our Own Country's History!
    - Slaves Were Made Up Of Pretty-Much Anyone:
      - Who Was Unfortunate Enough:
        - To Be Defeated In Battle:
          - Or To Go Into Debt:
            - Or Just To Be Born Into A Slave Family!
  - 6. But - Because Slavery Was So Common:
    - Many Of Those Slaves:
      - Became A Vital Part Of Roman Society & Of A Roman Household!

- While Some Slaves:
  - Lived In Rough Conditions And Were Given Harsh Tasks - Like Working The Mines!
- Many Others:
  - Were Given Important Tasks Within The Family:
    - Like Serving As A Manager Over The Affairs Of The Master:
    - Or Even Serving As A Tutor For The Children Of The Master!
- And So - Living Conditions:
  - For These Domestic Slaves:
    - Were Sometimes Superior To Even Some Of The Free Citizens:
      - Who Lived In The Urban Areas Of Rome Itself!

7. But Slavery Was Still Not:

- A Desirable Position In Society!
  - Slaves Still Wanted Their Freedom!
    - And - Sometimes - They Were Even Able To Buy Their Own Freedom:
      - If Their Masters Treated Them Fairly!
- But - It Was Into This Kind Of Society:
  - That Christianity First Came!
    - And Even Though The Gospel Did Not:
      - At First - Destroy This Social Norm Outright:
        - It Did Lighten Its Load!
  - Because - As One Ancient Preacher Put It:
    - “Christianity Gave Freedom ***In*** Slavery!”
      - Before It Gave Freedom ***From*** Slavery!
        - Chrysostom.

8. And When The Gospel Came Into This Society:

- Many, Many Slaves Were Saved!
  - It Is Even Possible - That In Some Churches - The Majority Of Members ***Were*** Slaves!
    - And Christ Was To Affect:
      - Those Relationships As Well!
- And So - As We Continue To Look At These Verses:
  - We First Come To:

1. ***The Role & Responsibility Of A Christian Slave!***

- And That Responsibility Was:
  - Simply - To Obey!
    - 3:22 - “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh!”
      - The Obedience That Was Expected Here:
        - Is The Same Kind Of Obedience That Was Expected Of Christian Children:
          - Back In 3:20!
  - It Means That Servants / Slaves:
    - Were To Listen To Their Masters Words:
      - And Live According To Their Masters Will!
        - But - Isn’t This Pretty Much What All Slaves Were Expected To Do?
          - Yes - But As We Will See - Christian Slaves Were Now Able To Obey In A ***Different*** Way!
    - In A Way That Would:
      - Display Christ In Their Lives!
- In Our Society:
  - We - Thankfully - Do Not Have Slaves Any Longer!
    - Because - Over Time - The Freedom & Equality That Is Offered Through The Gospel - Has Transformed Our Culture!
      - So, Then, What Do These Verses Have To Do With Us Today?
- Well - The Traditional Application Of These Verses:
  - Is To View Them As The Responsibilities:
    - Of Employees & Employers!
      - And - I Think - That Is A Valid Application!
        - Because - As “Freemen” & “Freewomen” - We Are Free To Display Christ In Our Lives - Especially Where & In How We Work!

- We Too - Are To “Obey” - And Follow:
  - The Leadership And Authority Of Those:
    - We Work For!
      - Of Course - Not To The Same Degree:
        - As The Slaves Of That Day!
  - But - Still - Paul Calls On:
    - Christian Servants To Serve Their Masters:
- In A Comprehensive Way!
  - That Is - We Are To “Obey” - “In All Things!”
    - Now - A Lot Of Ink Has Been Spilt:
      - Over Explaining What “In All Things” Does *Not* Mean!
        - And - I Think It Is Clear - That There Are Some Exceptions To What Slaves Were Required To Obey!
  - But - This *Does* Mean & *Does* Imply A *Willing Spirit*:
    - To Obey - In Any Way We Can:
      - To Please Our Master / Employer!
        - This Would Include - As Paul Would Write In Philippians 2:14 - Doing “All Things Without Murmurings Or Disputings!”
  - So - This Was To Be A Comprehensive Obedience!
    - And That Would Be Different!
      - We Are Also To Serve:
- In A Candid Way!
  - 3:22b - “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God!”
    - Sincere Service Was To Be The Mark:
      - Of A Christian Slave!
  - Because - Even Back Then:
    - “Eye-Service” Was The Most Common Kind:
      - Of Service!
        - **IE:** Because - When The Boss Is Away - The Employees Will Play!
    - This Is A Very Common Reaction:
      - Because It Is Always Easier To Obey:
        - When You Are Being Watched:
          - Just To Please The Master / Employer!
    - But This Is What Makes:
      - Christian Servants So Different!
        - We Are To Serve:
  - “In Singleness Of Heart!”
    - In A Candid & Sincere Way!
      - Showing That Your Greatest Motivation:
        - Is Not The Eye:
          - Of Your Master!
        - But The Eye:
          - Of God!
    - Sincere Service Will Reveal That You:
      - Fear & Favor God!
    - And That’s Different!
      - We Are Also To Serve:
- In A Committed Way!
  - 3:23 - “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men!”
    - This Verse Is An Echo Of What We Read Back In:
      - 3:17 - “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus!”
    - And It Can Also Be Translated:
      - Do It “From Your Soul!”
        - Or - From The Very Depths Of Your Soul!
  - In The Book Of Deuteronomy:
    - This Is How We Are:
      - To Seek The Lord & To Love The Lord!
        - “With All Thy Soul!”

- Here - This Is How We Are:
  - To Serve The Lord & Our Earthly Masters!
- This Takes Obedience:
  - To Another Level!
    - It Goes Beyond What Is **Required**:
    - To What Is **Best**!
- And That Is A Different Kind Of Service!
  - But This **Is** The Kind Of Service:
    - That Will Come From A Heart & Soul Transformed By Christ!
    - But We Can Also Serve:
- In A Confident Way!
  - 3:24 - "Knowing!"
    - The Christian Servant Can Serve:
      - In Confidence - Because You Now Belong To The Lord! You Can Be:
  - Confident In:
    - The Lord's Prize!
      - 3:24 - "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ!"
    - What An Assurance:
      - For Christian Servants!
        - You May Never Receive In This Life All The Value Of Your Service! But You Will Be More Than Compensated & Rewarded By The Lord!
    - You have An "Inheritance" That Is "Incorruptible And Undefiled – Reserved In Heaven For You!" (1 Peter 1:4)
      - This Describes All The Promises Of The Gospel! An Eternal Home! An Eternal Happiness! An Eternal Holiness! Even More! "The Half Cannot Be Fancied This Side The Golden Shore!"
    - And - You Can Be Certain / Confident Of This:
      - Because - You Are Not Just Serving:
        - An Earthly Master - Who May Be Good & Just Or Not!
        - But - "Ye Serve The Lord Christ!"
      - And This Is True In **All** You Do! Also - You Can Be:
  - Confident In:
    - The Lord's Protection!
      - 3:25 - "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons!"
        - Now - This Could Serve As A Warning For Christian Slaves - But I Think It Is Best Seen As A Further Encouragement!
    - Because - If You Serve:
      - An Unjust Master:
        - "There Is No Respect Of Persons" With God - And He Will Repay Them What They Are Due!
    - So - God Himself:
      - Is Watching Out For & Caring For:
        - His Servants!
          - You Don't Need To Fear! You Don't Need To Fret! Just Keep On Serving - Your Master & The Lord!
- This Kind Of Service:
  - Is A Different Kind Of Service!
    - And It Will Get Noticed!
      - But - I Believe This Is Part Of What It Means To - "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven!" (Matthew 5:16)
  - Are You Letting Your Light So Shine:
    - Where You Work? And:
      - In How You Work & Serve?
      - Is It Different?

\* But Then - Paul Turns Briefly To The Other Side - To Describe:

2. ***The Role & Responsibility Of A Christian Master!***

- 4:1 - "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven!"
  - This Verse Can Also Apply:
    - To Anyone Who Is In A Position:
      - Of Leadership & Authority - But It Includes:
  - The Responsibility To Care:
    - For Those Who Serve Them!
      - 4:1 - "Give Unto Your Servants That Which Is Just!"
        - That Which Is "Right" & Proper!
          - Because Of Their Value To You, Do Right By Them!
    - But This Also Includes:
  - The Responsibility To Compensate:
    - Those Who Serve You!
      - To Give What Is "Equal!"
        - What Is Fair And Equitable!
          - Now - In Ancient Rome - This Too Would Have Been Different!
    - To Pay / Compensate:
      - A Slave Would Be Practically:
        - Freeing Them - Because You Are Providing To Them The Means:
          - Of Freedom!
    - This Would Have Been Very "Counter-Cultural" Back In That Day!
      - It Would Have Been Very Different!
        - And Society Would Have Taken Notice!
          - But - They Also Had:
  - The Responsibility To Consider:
    - The Last Part Of 4:1 - "Knowing That Ye Also Have A Master In Heaven!"
      - A Divine Master!
        - You See - Christian Masters On Earth Still "Serve The Lord Christ" As Well! So:
    - Christian Masters:
      - Were Accountable:
        - To The Lord!
          - Because Any Authority They Had Was From The Lord! Also:
    - Christian Masters:
      - Were Responsible:
        - To Reflect The Lord:
          - In How They Treated Their Own Servants / Slaves!
  - Even Though More Words:
    - Are Written To Christian Servants:
      - Perhaps Because They Made Up The Majority Of The Church - Yet Christian Masters:
        - Had An Even Greater Responsibility:
          - To Care For Their Servants - And Especially Their Christian Servants, As Their Brothers & Sisters In Christ!
    - But - Even Though This Relationship:
      - Between Masters & Slaves:
        - Does Not Exist In The Same Way In Our Society Today:
          - These Verses Can Help Us Understand:

3. ***The Role & Responsibility Of A Christian Servant!***

- Which Includes Us ***All***:
  - If You Are A Believers & A Followers Of Christ:
    - 3:24 Is True For You As Well:
      - "Ye Serve The Lord Christ!"
  - You See - The Truth Is:
    - Spiritually - We ***Are All*** Slaves!
      - And We Always Have Been!
  - Before Christ:
    - You Were A Slave To Sin & To Satan!

- Who Was A Harsh Task-Master!
- But Now - If You Are In Christ - You Are:
  - A Slave To Christ!
    - Because He Redeemed You With His Own Blood!
- But Jesus Is A **Good** Master!
  - Not Just Giving Us:
    - What Is “Just And Equal” - But Much, Much More!
- And Now - You Can Obey & Serve The Lord:
  - Truly - “In All Things!” (3:22)
    - Without Any Qualifications!
    - Without Any Reservations!
- And Christ - Your New Master:
  - Deserves Your Service!
  - He Deserves:
- A Service That Is Different!
  - A Service That Is A Complete & A Comprehensive:
    - Obedience!
      - Not Out Of Fear, But Out Of Love!
  - John 14:15 - “If ye love me, keep my commandments!”
    - Is Your Service:
      - To The Lord:
        - Different In This Way?
        - He Also Deserves:
- A Service That Is Diligent!
  - Are You Serving The Lord:
    - 3:23 - “In Singleness Of Heart, Fearing God?”
      - Remember - Even When There Are No Human Eyes To See What You Do:
        - The Eyes Of The Lord Are There!
  - He Will See Your Service To Him!
    - Even When Noone Else Does!
      - Hebrews 6:10 - “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister!”
  - Is Your Service:
    - To The Lord:
      - Diligent In This Way?
      - He Also Deserves:
- A Service That Is Deep!
  - 3:23 - “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men!”
    - “Heartily” - From The Very Depths Of Your Soul!
      - What Are You Passionate About?
        - It Is True - That You Will Always Find The Time / Energy / Money For What You Are Most Passionate About!
  - Does This Describe Your Service:
    - For The Lord?
      - Is It Deep & Passionate:
        - For Him!
      - Doesn’t The Lord Deserve Your Time & Your Effort!
        - Doesn’t He Deserve Your Soul!
        - He Also Deserves:
- A Service That Is Devoted!
  - 3:24 - “Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ!”
    - The Lord Is Going To Reward:
      - Your Service For Him!
        - No Matter What It Is!
        - And He Will Do So Because Of His Grace!
- Are You Looking Forward:

- To Being Rewarded:
  - For Your Service To The Lord?
  - Or - Do The Words Of Charles Luther Ring True For You?
- “Must I go, and empty-handed / Thus my dear Redeemer meet? / Not one day of service give Him / Lay no trophy at His feet?”
- Doesn’t The Lord:
  - Deserve Your Service?
  - A Service That Is Devoted To Him:
  - Out Of Gratitude For His Grace?

**Conclusion:**

1. This Is The Role & Responsibility:
  - For Us All – As The Servants Of Christ!
    - Remember Today:
      - That - 3:24 - “Ye Serve The Lord Christ!”
  - And As Your Good & Gracious Master:
    - He Deserves Your Service!
      - So - 3:23 - “Whatsoever Ye Do, Do It Heartily, As To The Lord, And Not Unto Men!”

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