

Series: Ephesians

Title: The Servant's Obedience to His Master

Text: Ephesians 6: 5-8

Date: December 28, 2014

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

Ephesians 6: 5: Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6: Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7: With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: 8: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

Every believer is a servant. All believers were once servants of sin, but are now servants of righteousness. There are voluntary servants who have dedicated themselves to the service of another. Joshua was the servant of Moses; Elisha of Elijah. Most of us are hired-servants, which is an employee serving for a wage. Some servants, under the law of Moses, were working off debt or making restitution for theft. ((Ex 21:7; Le 25:39-47; 2Ki 4:1; Ex 22:3; Lev 25:47-55; De 15:12-18; 2 Chr 28:10,11; Ne 5:1-13; Jer 34:8-22;Le 25:47-54) A willing-bond-servant was one who was free to go but who loved his master and wanted to continue to serve him. (Ex 21:2,6 25:40) There were servants to kings who served as court officers and counselors. A slave was one captured or bought involuntarily who was forced to serve. Joseph is the first in scripture who was sold into bondage. (Gen 37:27-28) This kind of slavery is oppression, which God abhors. (De 24:14 Ps 103:6 Isa 10:1-3 Am 4:1 Mal 3:5 Jas 5:4)

So in our text, our heavenly Master gives the believing servant instructions in how he is to serve his master. The principle applies to all servants. Servants are Christ's free men and are to serve masters below as unto Christ above.

As we have done with each of these exhortations—the way we learn all truth—is to first look to Christ Jesus. In Philippians 2, we find that Christ Jesus “took upon him the form of a servant.”

Philippians 2: 5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

WHY THE FORM OF A SERVANT?

Why did Christ, who is God the Son, equal with God, take the form of a servant? It is because every elect child that God the Father gave to his Son in eternity fell into slavery and debt in sin in Adam our first representative. We became slaves to sin, “ye were the servants of sin,...when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” (Rom 6: 17, 20)

We were bound by curse of the law, slaves to our sin-nature and our master was the devil. Christ said, “When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:” (Lu 11:21) The devil kept his palace, keeping us bound in servitude to him. Christ came to destroy Satan's bondage and deliver his people:

1 John 3: 8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

It was a must that Christ serve for us, because we could not free ourselves. We owed God righteousness in our deeds which only our Kinsmen Redeemer could pay. We could not pay the wages of sin which is eternal death and yet live. So we could not free ourselves from the devils bondage. Only Christ could bring us out of subjection into sweet subjection to Christ. We could not free ourselves from our sin-nature. Only through the blood of Christ could we be created anew and have our conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God.

Therefore, God the Son, took the form of a servant, as the GodMan, to serve God, representing those the Father gave to him before the world was made. He came to live the life of perfect obedience which his people could not live, even unto the death of the cross. Christ served to die the death his people could not die, to conquer the grave and deliver his people from the kingdom of darkness into his holy kingdom of light.

Hebrews 2: 14: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

One reason all men do not bow to Christ is because they do not see him as the King of kings he is. They only see a lowly, poor, despised, leader of fisherman. Men judge wrongly due to sin. If a man was sitting at a table and servants were serving him, which would we deem the greatest, the man being served or the one serving him? We think the great one is the man being served. Christ says to you and I who believe,

Luke 22: 26: But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27: For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Matthew 20: 26: Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27: And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Luke 9 48: For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

Brethren, behold how Christ saved us by taking the form of a servant. May God make us great—by making us least—by making us willing to serve one another rather than being served. God the Son took flesh and became the GodMan to be a servant, to serve God and to give his life a ransom to free his people from being servants of sin to make us servants of righteousness.

HOW DID CHRIST SERVE?

Now, let’s apply our text to the Lord Jesus to see how he served. As we see Christ serve, remember this is how Christ is our Righteousness. We will never be made the righteousness of God because we tried to be the best servants we could be. Christ is our Righteousness because he fulfilled the law for his people. These are exhortations of grace rather than law; those Christ redeemed and quickened are under the covenant of grace, not the covenant of works. We must remember, our righteousness and acceptance with God is Christ alone. So let’ see Christ as both our Righteousness and our example.

CHRIST SERVED OBEDIENTLY

First, while he walked this earth, Christ served God by being obedient to them that are earthly masters, “Servants, be obedient to them that are masters according to the flesh,..” (Eph 6: 5) Remember, Christ is God over all! But when he took the form of a servant, he submitted in obedience to earthly masters. God the Father and his law was his master. Civil rulers whom God put in place were his masters. While Christ served he was obedient to all his masters.

CHRIST SERVED WITH REVERENCE AND DILIGENCE

Secondly, while Christ served under earthly masters, he served with reverence and diligence, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling,..” (Eph 6: 5) Christ was obedient to earthly masters with humility and respect, reverencing them, and giving them honor. He was careful not to offend them in anything. He teaches you and I who believe to do the same as we serve.

CHRIST SERVED WITH A TRUE HEART

Also, while Christ served under earthly masters, he served with a true heart, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, [as unto God his Father]...” (Eph 6: 5) Christ served his earthly masters in sincerity and truth, in uprightness of heart, without wavering, without guile, without hypocrisy.

It was because he served God his Father. God his Father put those rulers in place. Christ told Pilot, “Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above.” (Jn 19: 11) We are told in Romans 13: 1-2, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.” So Christ served his Father as he served civil masters and he did so from the heart—with a heart single for his Father’s glory!

Remember, what the LORD said to Samuel when he was sent to anoint David king, “the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.” That’s why we had to be given a new heart by the Spirit of God. Since God looks on the heart, our conscience had to be purged to serve the living God. With Christ in you, the new heart, the new nature, is holy, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1 Jn 3: 9) It is in our new nature that we are one with Christ so that God can receive us. Serve Christ our Master by serving earthly masters with a pure heart, with the new, inner man.

CHRIST SERVED NOT HYPOCRITICALLY

Fourthly, while Christ served under earthly masters, he served not in pretense, “Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, [as unto God his Father] Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers;” (Eph 6: 5-6)

Men pleasers pretend to obey when masters are looking to gain the master’s favor. But when the master is not looking they laze around while someone else does all the work. Of course, our sinless perfect Representative did not serve as men-pleasers.

CHRIST SERVED WHOLE-HEARTEDLY AND CHEERFULLY

Fifthly, Christ served whole-heartedly and cheerfully to God, “Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; [but Christ served as the servant of the all knowing God], doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.” (Eph 6: 6-7) To better help us understand, Paul said the same thing to the Colossians, saying, “whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” (Col 3: 23)

The Lord Jesus served the Father willingly with his whole heart because he delighted to do so. He said through the Psalmist, “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me, 8: I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.” (Ps 40: 7) That which Christ delighted in and declared whole-heartedly was the righteousness, faithfulness, lovingkindness and truth of God toward his people in Christ himself. After saying, I delight to do thy will, he said, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.” (Ps 40: 9-10)

God manifest his righteousness—being just and the Justifier of his people—where?—in Christ; God manifest his faithfulness toward his people—where?—in Christ; God manifest his salvation of his people—where?—in Christ; God manifest his lovingkindness toward his people?—where?—in Christ; God manifest his truth toward is people—where?—in Christ.

From the very first message he preached, Christ refrained not his lips; he did not hide or conceal the gospel. In his first sermon he declared that God's lovingkindness, righteousness and salvation is toward his elect people in Christ. He said,

Luke 4: 25...I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman *that was* a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. 28: And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30: But he passing through the midst of them went his way,...

What would make him such an obedient, cheerful servant to God his Master? He served whole-heartedly, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (Jn 4: 24) When God writes the everlasting covenant of grace on the heart of his child, from then on, we serve Christ joyfully and willingly. Why? "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." (Jer 15: 16) "Thy testimonies also *are* my delight and my counsellors." (Ps 119: 24)

Therefore, wherever we serve, Christ says do it wholeheartedly and cheerfully, not unto men but as the servants of Christ, our heavenly Master. Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (Php 4: 11-12)

During those days when the Hebrew believer was servant to Romans, and when other oppressive forms of slavery existed, believers thought that because Christ set them free spiritually, they should be set free temporally. But the Lord sent Paul to tell them to serve wherever Christ had called them. He said,

1 Corinthians 7: 20: Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. 21: Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use *it* rather. 22: For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. 23: Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. 24: Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

No matter our place in this earth, no matter our lowly job or service, we abide in the Lord Jesus—therefore we have reason to rejoice, "Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice." (Php 4: 4) Our outward condition may cause us sorrow, but inwardly in Christ we rejoice, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things." (2 Cor 6: 10)

King Naaman's wife's had a little Israelite maid. That little maid was a slave carried out of her own land into a foreign land by a foreign army, forced to serve the king's wife. As Joseph said to his brothers when they sold him into slavery, "it was not you that sent me hither, but God." (Gen 45: 8) So that little maid served cheerfully right where God put her. When God opened the door for her to bear witness of her Savior, she joyfully did so.

2 King 5:2: And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3: And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. 4: And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. 5: And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel....

She served so joyfully, so willingly, so whole-heartedly, that her testimony of God's goodness was heeded. God carried her word to king Naaman, even all the way to the king of Israel. And the end of her testimony was that

Christ healed king Naaman of his leprosy. Serve God wherever Christ has put us and do so cheerfully and wholeheartedly.

CHRIST SERVED BELIEVING GOD

Lastly, Christ served God without letting his lowly position hinder his service. It was because he knew God is no respecter of persons and outward position. Christ believed God, knowing that God is just to bless them that serve him, no matter how lowly and disregarded we are by this world, “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.” (Eph 6: 8)

The point is this. God is not like men. Men are not just. They disregard the lowly. But God is just. He gives that which is just without regard to our lowly position. He gives that which is just if we do well or wrong, “whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.” (Eph 6: 8); “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Col 3: 25)

When our Savior was the lowest and least of all men on the earth—hanging upon a bloody, shameful, cursed cross, disregarded by men—God regarded the good he did for God and his people. In that lowest of places, Christ highly exalted God. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.” (Php 2: 9)

Christ has made it so that his redeemed servant—serving in the lowliest occupation on this earth—can highly exalt him and Christ takes notice. He is teaching us that even in the lowest place of service we can declare the power of God’s grace by simply being the best servant our master has.

CHRIST SERVED EVEN WHEN MASTERS WERE UNJUST

Were all Christ’s masters, good masters? No, most civil rulers were unjust? Yet, Christ submitted in obedience to civil masters in that which God says is lawful.

Matthew 17: 24:...they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26: Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

He showed us by this that our masters are sometimes unjust. Still, Christ served them the same as the others.

Matthew 17: 27: Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

By overruling the fish to bring the money in its mouth, Christ shows he is God, ruling over all. Yet, while in the form of servant, he submitted himself to masters who were but men, even those who were unjust. Then after this, in his providence, on purpose, notice what Christ brought to pass at that very moment,

Matthew 18: 1: At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

THE LESSON TO US

Peter got the lesson. He teaches it to us in 1 Peter 2: 18-24.

1 Peter 2:18: Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19: For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20: For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21: For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Believer, suffer patiently—not talking back, not threatening—for this is acceptable with God. Commit your cause to Christ your Master in heaven, as Christ committed his cause unto God. Christ spoke through the Psalmist. This is to be our prayer, as well. He said, “Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. For thou *art* the God of my strength...” (Ps 43: 1-2) God judged righteously for Christ his servant and Christ shall judge righteously for those who submit to him. Christ declared through the Psalmist, “thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.” (Ps 9: 4-5)

Christ never once wasted the time nor goods of God who employed him in his service. For the joy of glorifying God and saving his people, Christ rendered not just a fair day’s work, but he went above and beyond, for God his Master. He did so by being obedient unto those who were masters according to the flesh but he did so serving God.

When you serve your employer with reverence and honor, do so as unto Christ. Doing so, you set forth Christ to him and your co-workers each day. When you perform your daily occupations in truthfulness and honesty as unto Christ then you serve the Lord Jesus Christ as much as if you were an apostle. The phony religionists who wear their religion on their sleeve and car bumper is not the one bearing witness of Christ. It is the employee who does his job cheerfully, from the heart, as unto the Lord. This is the servant who will make the employer inquire what makes you such a dependable servant. The servant in whose heart Christ is alpha and omega so that his service to his employer is service to Christ is the one in who the light of Christ is truly shining.

Amen!