

****READ THE TEXT****

INTRO-

Introductory Illustration

- JC Ryle once rightly remarked: “There is a common, worldly kind of Christianity in this day, which many have, and think they have enough — a cheap Christianity which offends nobody, and requires no sacrifice — which costs nothing, and is worth nothing.”
- All in all, the NT says that all slaves are to be:
 1. **Trusting** their God
 2. **Submitting** with Joy
 3. **Faithful** in Service
 4. **Integrity** of Behavior
 5. **Adorning** the Gospel
- This message fleshes out what one author recently called: “The Attractively Distinct” Lifestyle.
 - Let’s pray with a 20th c. Preacher who prayed:: Oh for more holy lives! Oh for more consistency among those who profess to be Christ's! Oh for more of the glory of the Lord resting upon hearts and lives! Oh for more of the beauty of salvation, and that we would adorn his doctrine.

Background to Titus 2:9-10

- The NT comments much about the duties of ‘slaves and masters’
 - Ephesians 6.5-8
 - Col 3.22-25 - *obey those who are your masters*
 - 1 Pet 2.18-20
 - 1 Tim 6.1-2 - *regard masters worthy of all honor*
- And, the NT also notes how believing slaves are *ALL ONE in Christ*
 - **1 Cor 12:13 — we were all made to drink of one Spirit**
 - **Gal 3:28 - neither Jew or Greek**

THESIS — This text will show you your role to play in **adorning the gospel of God!* -- here’s God’s plan for all workers!*

Titus 2.9

- **Slaves**
 - Here the specific word is Δούλους. The *doulos* is one with *no rights whatsoever*.
 - So much could be said, but while slavery was legally recognized institution in the Old Testament, there were safeguards to protect slaves and means to emancipate them. In New Testament times, slavery was a longstanding and widespread institution in the Roman Empire. Often entire populations that had been defeated in battle became the slaves of the

victors. By the first century, it has been estimated that up to one-third of the population of Rome were slaves.

- Here in Titus 2 & elsewhere in the NT, Paul offers no judgment about slavery and its morality, whether it SHOULD exist or NOT; he just recognizes that IT DOES exist and deals with the attitude of Christian slaves.
 - the NT does not focus on reforming and restructuring human systems of society, which are NEVER the root cause of human problems. >> the issue is always the heart.
 - Spirit filled believers must have just and harmonious relationship with each other, no matter what system they may live under.
 - mans basic needs are not political, social, or economic >> but spiritual. (Mac, 97)

- **Be submissive to masters**

- The slave is called to be ὑποτάσσεσθαι. To submit is an attitude of the heart that willingly subjects oneself under the authority of a superior.
- The master is δεσπότηαις. *Despot* - one with supreme authority.

- **In everything**

- A constant, continual, comprehensive submission. *The slave must comply with the wishes of his master and this "in every respect" >> from morning until evening and in every category of work the slave must be submissive to his master.*
 - in every respect >> not absolutely: for if the master demanded the slave to lie or commit theft, or adultery, or cover an offense, or murder, etc. the slave must obey GOD and NOT sin.
- **Though** we don't live in a culture with a legal institution of slaves like the NT world had, perhaps an application of these principles speaks to those in the workplace *as under authority*. Those at work *under the authority* of the employer.

For most Christians: now and in church history, the most important and fertile place where they evangelize is the work. That is their mission field. Unbelievers have the opportunity to observe believers day by day >> to see whether you are ...

- patient or impatient
- kind or uncaring
- selfish or selfless
- angry or gentle
- honest or dishonest
- clean or vulgar
- integrity or hypocritical
- worldly or heavenly
- like them or unlike them

> we primarily work hard is to HONOR CHRIST.

What is God's plan for you? How do you do this? After the main command to 'be submissive', now we have 4 supporting phrases: [1 positive, 2 negative, then 1 positive]

1. to bring happiness to the master (well-pleasing)
2. to speak well of the master (not argumentative)
3. to work honestly for the master (not pilfering)
4. to honor Christ before the master (showing all good faithfulness)

I. BRING HAPPINESS TO YOUR MASTER! (9a)

- A. The idea is to be well-pleasing. NLT: "do their best to please them" or another: "aiming to please them."
- B. This kind of life is well approved, eminently satisfactory, or extra-ordinarily pleasing. (1 Pet 2.18-20)
 1. Dr. Dudley Woodberry, professor of Islamic Studies... aware that throughout the world Muslims have been turning to Christ, was curious about the reasons why -- especially in countries where the cost of converting is so high. To find the answer, he created a detailed questionnaire. Over a 16-year period, some 750 Muslims from 30 countries filled it out -- and the results are eye-opening. The number one reason Muslim converts listed for their decision to follow Christ was the lifestyle of the Christians among them.
 2. Never underestimate the power of working hard, to please God and to please those God has placed over you!

II. SPEAK WELL OF YOUR MASTER! (9b)

- A. Not argumentative; not talking back; not contradicting.
 1. This worker is not contradicting, disputing, refusing or disobeying. This includes no talking back, no badmouthing, no slandering, no gossiping, no arguing.
- B. O how we need this in our day. There's no shortage of negative things to say about one another or those over us at work. God's call: don't be argumentative; be obedient!

III. WORK HONESTLY FOR YOUR MASTER (10a)

- A. Not pilfering. Not stealing; not defrauding; not embezzling; not robbing the master.
 1. to Pilfer means: to keep back or misappropriate something for one's self that which should or does belong to someone else
 2. *Like Ananias and Sapphira* -- they sold a piece of property and then 'kept back some of it' [*same greek verb!*]. Used the masters' goods and property as their own! (Acts 5)
 3. *Like Achan* who acted unfaithfully in things under the ban ('for destruction') and Achan took some of the things (*same greek verb!*) -- some spoils, some silver/gold -- & the anger of the Lord burned. (Josh 7).
- B. Full of integrity, no stealing, no defrauding >> but full truthfulness & honesty. Fully!

IV. HONOR CHRIST FAITHFULLY BEFORE YOUR MASTER! (10b)

- A. Showing all good faith. The idea is working with such "faithfulness"
 1. **Matthew Henry** writes that "Faithfulness in a servant lies in the ready, punctual, and thorough execution of his master's orders; keeping his secrets and counsels, dispatching his affairs, and managing with frugality, and to as much just advantage for his master as he is able; looking well to his trusts, and preventing, as far as he can, all spoil, or loss, or damage."

B. The story is told: A shoemaker once came to Luther as he had just become a Christian. He said to Luther: How can I serve God as a Christian. Luther said: "What is your work?" He said: I'm a shoemaker. Then Luther said: "Then make good shoes and sell them at a fair price!"

1. Let us *show all good faith* -- faithfulness; loyalty; trustworthiness at work!

C. v.10b- NIV: "make the teaching attractive"; "show the beauty of it." -- adorn the gospel!!

1. O to think that you can *show the gospel to be attractive and beautify* it by your life. You can't make the gospel better. But you can show it's power in a transformed life -- as you live before the watching world!

How does a "slave" or a worker in a harsh environment do this??

1. Recognize **reality of sin**, injustice, hardship and unfair treatment.
2. Cast your **hope in God** who is gracious & merciful to sinners.
3. Seek to **follow** God whatever the cost, whatever the demand.
4. Love the Church where all saints are **unified** in Christ by the Spirit.
5. Long for **heaven** where all blood bought slaves worship the Lamb together.

Christ was the greatest of slaves -- fully obedient to the Father; And we have the privilege of being 'bond slaves of God & of Christ (Titus 1.1). ***Let us rejoice & serve Him!***

CONCL-

Concluding Illustration

- Basil was a Christian leader in what is now "Turkey" (Galatian region) in the 4th century. He fearlessly defended the Truth of the deity of Christ against the Arians.
 - He was a very holy & godly man. He found himself swept up in the persecution of Julius the Apostate. Julius the Emperor examined this "Holy Man" -- and the emperor did everything he could to dissuade him from believing & to hinder him from persevering in the faith. But Basil continued firm in the faith, adorning the gospel, and warned the Emperor of being tormented in hell after death. He was brutally martyred in 362AD. ***This holy man -- adorned the gospel -- by his life, speech & conduct!***