**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ in Work Life**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 3:22-25 and 4:1**

**Sermon Purpose: To call men and women no matter their social status to new man obedience.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are two directives given to Christian slaves and Christian masters.**

**Introduction:** The final relationship in the ancient home was that of slaves and masters. This relationship can be compared to the employee and employer relationship, but there are some differences. Slaves could be owned, employees are not. Slaves normally lived in the master’s home employees typically do not.

**I. The message for new man slaves and masters. Vv.22 and 4:1**

**II. The motives for the new man slave and master. Vv.24-25**

**I. The message for new man slaves and masters. Vv.22 and 4:1**

A. The **definition** of the message. V.22 and 4:1a

Various translations servants, slaves LSB, bondservants ESV (**Colossians 3:22; Ephesians 6:5**). Bondservant (doulos), is the common New Testament word for servant or slaves. Although in Greek culture it is most often referred to the involuntary, permanent service of a slave. Paul elevates the word by using it in it Hebrew sense to describe a servant who willingly commits himself to serve a master he loves and respects.

**Exodus 21:5-6** "But if the servant plainly says,`I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' **6** "then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

**Galatians 1:10** For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

**Titus 1:1** Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness,

**Isaiah 53:11** He shall see the labor of His soul1, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

Christ is an example in (**Philippians 2:1-11**). Which describes submission to the Father, by accepting a lower position and His suffering in this age, in order to be exalted and glorified with Him in the next age.

**Romans 8:17** and if children, then heirs-- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

**1 Corinthians 7:21-23** Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*. **22** For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave. **23** You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

Bondservants or slaves in both Greek and Roman culture had no rights legally and were treated as commodities or common inanimate possessions. There was much abuse and seldom good, respectful treatment of slaves. The Bible does not speak against slavery itself, but against its abuses. (**Exodus 21:16, 26, 27**)

**Leviticus 25:10** `And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

**Deuteronomy 23:15-16** "You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. **16** "He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it seems best to him; you shall not oppress him.

B. The **what** of the message. V.22b

The what of the message is the subject of obedience, or authority and submission. The term obey or obedience refers to continuous, uninterruptable, submission to one’s earthly master or employer, with the only exception being in regard to a command or instruction that involves clear disobedience of God’s Word as illustrated in (**Acts 4:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:1-2;**

**Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:18-20**)

**Acts 4:19-20** But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. **20** "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

**1 Peter 2:18-20** Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. **19** For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. **20** For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God.

C. The **who** of the message. V.22b

As in the relationships between husband and wife and parents and children, the principle of authority and submission remains the same. It is central to Paul’s instruction “in all things.”

The submission of obedience is a comprehensive thought of both enjoyable and distasteful duties.

It is also clearly a reference to human slaves and human masters, with fallen human tendencies.

D. The **how** of the message. V.22c-23

1. Not with **eye service** as men pleasers.

The better translation “not with external service.” It refers to working only when the master or employer is watching, rather than recognizing the Lord Jesus Christ is always watching and hard work and properly motivated service concerns Him.

(**1 Peter 2:18-21**)

**1 Timothy 6:1-2** Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. **2** And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

**Titus 2:9-10** *Exhort* bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, **10** not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Working only to promote one’s own welfare, rather than to honor the master, employer, and the Lord, especially who’s slave we really are.

2. Do your service and duty with sincerity of heart.

This is to hold God’s will and worth in the highest regard, is to be the believer’s motive. The Christian, who is making Christ a priority, is putting the person’s whole inner man into their work effort. Serving the master as they would the Lord Himself, while the master cares for the slave as the Lord does Himself.

**II. The motives for the new man slave and master. Vv.24-25**

A. The **worshipful** motive of the new man. V.24a

God’s credits and rewards will be appropriate to the attitude and action of our work and service. No good thing done for His glory will go unrewarded.

The Lord ensures the believer that they will receive a just, eternal, reward for his service of obedience.

**Leviticus 20:12-13** `If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood *shall be* upon them. **13** `If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them.

1. Even if his earthly boss or master does not compensate or treat them justly. (v.25)

2. Even if his earthly slave or employee does not respect and serve him justly. God will reward him justly.

3. God deals with obedience and disobedience impartially.

**Acts 10:34** Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

**Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

4. Christians are not to presume on their faith in order to justify disobedience to a master or employer.

**Philemon 18** But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.

5. Because they both serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The **warning** motive for the new man. V.25

The warning is that the Lord will discipline and repay without partiality the obedient slave and master, as well as the disobedient slave and master. Because both have a master and both are slaves.