

Colossians Ch3v18-Ch4v1 - Living With Jesus As Lord

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[0 : 00] We'll read Colossians chapter 3 and we're going to start at verse 17 and finish at chapter 4, verse 1.

Colossians chapter 3, starting in verse 17. Let's hear God's word, his voice to us today.

Colossians 3, 17. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Parents, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged.

[1 : 22] Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything. And do it not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord and not for human masters. Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward, it is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs. And there is no favouritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair.

Because you know that you also have a master in heaven. Well, what a reading.

It might cause us some offence, but there is good truth there. Let's pray and ask for God's help to us. Father, we thank you for all of your word.

[2 : 42] For all that has been written down and recorded for us, for our lives today. Thank you that it is true and trustworthy.

That your word is sufficient to make us wise for salvation. And also to train us and to build us up in our Christian life.

And so we pray that we would humbly sit under your word today. And allow your truth to shape us and to mould us.

And to lead us as a people who follow you and honour you. Thank you for your help. In Jesus' name. Amen.

So who's your boss? Who is it that tells you what you should do and how you should live? Well, the answer is easy.

[3 : 51] No one tells me what to do. It's my life. And I'm going to live as I want. We govern our life with a self-rule.

Thank you. We govern our life with a self-rule. Nobody's going to tell me what to do. Well, that might be the case in our thinking.

But if you're a Christian, there's a very different view to take. You see, by trusting in Jesus, not only have we received a new life, something we've seen in chapter 3, it also means that we have a new ruler.

Go back with me to chapter 2, verse 6. Chapter 2, verse 6. This is a key summary of the whole book.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord. You received Christ Jesus as Lord.

[5 : 04] Lord is a title. And it means the one with supreme rule and absolute authority. And to get a glimpse of the rule and authority of Jesus, just take a look back further at chapter 1, verse 16.

For in him, in Jesus, all things were created. Well, what does that mean?

Well, things in heaven and on earth, the things we can see and the things we can't see, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him.

He is before all things and in him, all things hold together. So you can see he is Lord over everyone and everything.

And so when we receive Jesus Christ, we are not just trusting him as our rescuer, we are bowing down to him as our ruler.

[6 : 18] We now live our lives under the authority of the creator God. So, chapter 3, verse 17.

Whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, the words we speak or the actions we take, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

In other words, live your whole life under the Lordship of Jesus. Not only have we received a new life, we are now committed to a new ruler.

So we're going to look at three areas of life that shows us what it means to live under the Lordship of Jesus. We're going to look at marriage, family and work.

And I trust that for each one of us here, whatever situations we find ourselves in, that we will see ourselves as in either marriage or family or work or generally in our relationships with one another.

[7 : 38] So I'm going to grab a drink first and we'll continue. So first, a marriage that is fitting with the Lord.

A marriage that is fitting in the Lord. Verse 18. Wives, submit yourself to your husbands.

Well, that's harsh, isn't it? Wives, submit. Johnny, don't you know you can't say those things anymore?

Those days are long past. Didn't you know that women have equal rights? Wives, submit? I mean, it's terribly outdated and offensive, isn't it?

It seems nobody is bothered to update the Bible. But my question is, does it need to be updated? You see, despite what many people think, and I'm sure if you were to have conversations with your friends, the scriptures actually have a very high view of women.

[8 : 52] Women are equally loved, treasured, and cared for by God. Equally made in the image of God. So for us to understand what it means for wives to submit to their husbands, I think we first need to take a step back and look at what God commands the husband to do.

So what does it say in verse 19? Husbands, any husbands here? Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Husbands, love your wife. And that means more than flowers or the odd cup of tea, and maybe for some of us it would be a good place to start.

To love your wife means to lay down your life for your wife. It's a life of sacrifice and service. In the letter to the Ephesians, in a similar passage, it says the same thing with an addition.

It says, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for the church. So how did Christ love the church?

[10 : 16] Well, he gave up his life. He died for the church. So, husbands, we need to learn to die to our wants and desires so that the needs and cares of our wives come first.

The focus here is not lead your wife or to decide for your wife. They're well capable of making decisions for themselves. Or demand from your wife.

The focus is love. your wife. And not only love your wife, but do not be harsh with your wife.

Remember the clothes we're to wear, not the physical clothes we have on today, but have a look back at chapter 3, verse 12. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Now, I don't think there's any wife here who would complain or would complain about a husband who is compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient.

[11 : 44] Any wives want to complain about that? In other words, put to death, husbands, are harsh words and are put-downs.

be careful with how you speak. So, let's go back to the command to wives, verse 18. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands.

You see, submission doesn't mean oppression. It's not something forcefully demanded by the husband. It is voluntarily given by the wife.

In fact, far from demeaning, it's coming under the loving and protective care of your husband. It's a deliberate and intentional decision to place yourself in the hands of one who's going to nurture you spiritually and encourage you practically so that you flourish and become all that God intends for you.

now, I have to add that if you are in a relationship, a marriage relationship, where your husband is not treating you the way you ought to be treated, or maybe there is some form or some kind of abuse or difficulty, well then, we have to be very careful about that and I encourage you to speak, come and speak to me, speak to Kirsty, come and say if there's a struggle in your marriage today, there is help and there is support.

[13 : 35] support. Now, the reason we are to live like this as wives and husbands is because look at verse 18, the end of verse 18, it is fitting in the Lord.

We can say exactly the same for husbands, husbands love your wives, don't be harsh with them, as is fitting in the Lord. In other words, marriage is a picture of living under the Lordship of Jesus.

They are living in a way that fits with God's design. They are lining up their lives under the Lordship of Jesus and following God's plan for a wife and a husband.

You see, as the husband puts himself under his wife to serve her, and as the wife places herself under her husband to support him, so together husband and wife are placing themselves under the authority and Lordship of Jesus.

You see, living under his rule and authority is not harmful or demeaning. It's good. it's the context in which we become the people God calls us to be.

[15 : 07] So first, husbands and wives, live your marriage under the Lordship of Jesus. Second, we want to think about family.

a family that is pleasing to the Lord. Verse 20, children.

Any children here? Wakey, wakey. Children, obey your parents in everything.

Well, my goodness, Johnny, you really don't know much, do you? You can't tell children to obey. That's not the way things are done. You ask your children, what would you want?

And you let them decide because they know what's best. Obey your parents, that's awfully damaging. Well, maybe not.

[16 : 13] You see, children are a good gift from God, given and entrusted to their parents' care, where they are nurtured and cared for. So, obedience to your parents is something that will lead to your well-being.

And of course, for us to understand why a child should ever obey, we need to look at what is expected of a parent. So, parents who are sitting there all smugly, let's listen up.

Verse 21. Fathers, or it can be translated as parents, do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged.

Stop it. Don't do that. I told you. Get out of the way. Tidy that up.

Behave. my goodness, those words ringing in my head. If that's all your children hear, then you will embitter them.

[17 : 32] They will become, verse 21, discouraged. such harsh demands on your child will only provoke them and it will cause them to lose heart.

They will either turn against you and fight you or you will overcome them and you will crush them. Either way, whether it's a fight or a crushing, it's going to end in tears and brokenness.

You see, obedience, parents, is not something we force by our strength or that we motivate by fear.

No, we want our children to willingly delight in obedience because they see it as right and best. And not only do we embitter, we're not to embitter rather, instead we are to train our children.

It's not stated here in verse 21, but again in the similar passage that we have in Ephesians, it says almost the same starting out, parents do not exasperate your children, do not embitter them, instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

[19 : 02] So parents, our primary responsibility is to train our children to know and love God. And I want to share with you three ways we can do this.

This is adapted from a talk that I listened to recently from Bruce Ware. Here's three things. First, first, I don't think I've got it there, have I?

Hang on. No, I don't. Listen up. Here's the first one. Head. Head. Teach the truth of God's Word.

Parents, let's get alongside our sons and our daughters and show them how to read God's Word and teach them to pray. Don't just shove a Bible in front of and say, oh, have you done your Bible reading tonight?

No, get alongside them. Read it with them. Help them to understand how you read and how you teach and how you pray.

[20 : 13] Teach them the truth of God's Word. Second one, heart. Embrace the truth of God's Word.

In other words, we want them to embrace Christ for themselves. We need to show them that our children need a Saviour and we're not their Saviour.

We need to encourage our children to place their faith in Jesus. Let them hear you as you sit with them and as you read the Bible with them.

Let them hear from your words your prayer for their very salvation. Let them hear them cry out to God that God would save them.

Teach them to embrace the truth of God's Word. So head, heart, hands, live the truth of God's Word.

[21 : 17] Let them see in your life as they watch you what it is like to live the Christian life. Your attitudes towards other people.

How you serve in the life of the church. Head, teach them the truth. Heart, show them how they can embrace the truth. Hands, live the truth.

Parents, children are a gift. They're not yours. God has given you a gift and he's entrusted them into your care for a time and for a season.

And the best thing that you can ever do for your children is to train them to know, trust, and serve God. That they would love the Lord.

Now I get it parents, there's lots of pressures that we want our children to be the best sports people possible. and we will drive them and ship them to here, there and everywhere so that they can play.

[22 : 26] We want our children to be the best musicians, the best dancers, the best in their class, and we will do everything possible to make sure that they get the best education, the best opportunities.

Oh, it's all so important. but do we in doing all of that neglect our primary responsibility?

Are we sitting with our children, no matter what age they are, showing them what it is to know, trust, and serve God?

It's an eternal matter, parents, an eternal matter. So, back to children. Verse 20.

Children, obey your parents in everything. Obedience to your parents is not harmful or restrictive. It's good for you.

[23 : 33] By obeying your parents, you're accepting that all that they are teaching will be for your very good. Of course, it doesn't mean you become their personal servants.

Get me a cup of tea, pass me the TV controls. No. It means that as we obey, we become the people God intends us to be. And the reason we do this, children, the reason we obey is, verse 20, because it is pleasing to the Lord.

God's your creator and designer. God made families. They're his idea, his plan and his purpose.

And so when we follow the creator's design, it pleases the Lord. And as we obey our parents, we are displaying to the world that God's way is the best way.

You see, living under the rule and authority of Jesus is not harmful or demeaning. It's good for you.

[24 : 44] And it's in this context that we become the people God calls us to be. But let me pause again, just as we mentioned about wives, children.

Maybe you find that your parents aren't behaving in the way that they should. And maybe you're struggling.

And maybe there's something that's going on that isn't very nice. Well, if you're a child here today and you need to speak to someone, speak to them.

Maybe to one of your youth leaders or to another adult that you know. So, second, family life is to be lived under the lordship of Jesus.

The third one that we need to look at, we've looked at marriage, family, is our vocation, our work, our job, that is working for the Lord.

[25 : 55] Lord. Let's look at verse 22. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything.

Obey your earthly masters in everything. Well, if we thought wives submitting and children obeying was offensive, slaves, obey, that's a tough one, isn't it?

Trinity College in Dublin are in the process of changing their library's name. You may have seen this on the news. Up to now it's been called the Berkeley Library, named after the philosopher George Berkeley from the 1700s.

And why change it now? Well, because historians have discovered that George Berkeley owned slaves. So how could you possibly have a library in such a great institution as Trinity with someone who owned slaves?

So they're changing the name. Now, with the same reasoning, some people will say, you need to change the Bible. We need to replace it with something modern.

[27 : 11] Fair point, I say. However, when the Bible uses the term slave, it has a very different context to how perhaps we might understand it.

Let me explain. First, we must differentiate slavery in the first century that we're looking at in Colossians with the transatlantic slavery of the 15th and 18th century and human trafficking today.

It's very, very different. The transatlantic slave, particularly from Britain and America, going to Africa and taking black African slaves, was primarily race orientated and involved the buying and selling of people for profit who were afforded no rights.

It was horrendous. It was disgusting. It was, I can't say the word. Second, slavery in the first century under the Roman Empire, well, it accounted for about one third of the population.

Slaves could be a farmer, could be a miner, could be a teacher, a doctor, you could be somebody who owned property and looked after an estate on behalf of somebody.

[28 : 28] So you could be a slave and have a very difficult job, or you could be a slave and have a very high-profile job. So I think when we take all of that into consideration, if we exchange the words, if you look at verse 22, exchange the words of slave slave and master with employee and employer, then we get a close contemporary equivalent.

It's not exact, but I think it helps us make some applications this morning. So when we think, verse 22, slaves think employees obey your earthly employer in everything.

So what does that look like? I guess for most of us here today, we are employees rather than an employer. So let's start with employees.

Employees, obey your boss. You know how it goes. Do you see there, verse 22? Obey your earthly masters in everything, and do it not only when their eye is on you, so to curry their favour, but with sincerity of heart.

You know what it's like. The boss is off for the day. Early lunch, guys. You're suffering a late night, so you get your buddy to sign in for you.

[30 : 03] There's an event you want to go to, so you pull a sickie. Of course, if there's a chance for promotion, promotion, or a move to another department, well, we never look busier, and we make sure that he or she is watching us in all that we do.

No, living under the lordship of Jesus, we are to work as if Jesus was our employer. Do you see what it says at the end of verse 22?

We're to do our work with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord and not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

It is the Lord Christ you are serving. You see, that changes everything, doesn't it? When we walk into work, it is the Lord Christ we're serving.

We may have an earthly boss who hires us and fires us, but Christians, we have a heavenly boss, the Lord Jesus who rescues us and rules over us.

[31 : 22] So the question is not, is my boss pleased with me today, but is Jesus honoured through my life today? And of course, this implies to employers today.

So employers, if there's any of you here, verse one of chapter four, employers provide for your employees what is right and fair.

Don't just pay the minimum wage of what you can get away with. Pay them what is fair. And employers, don't keep your employees at a minimum so that you don't have to offer a contract.

Do what is just. And the reason, end of verse one, because you know that you have a master in heaven.

Our master is the Lord Jesus and he used his power and authority not to squelch you, but to bless you. So in the same way, employers, be gracious and kind to your workers.

[32 : 39] You see, whether we are working as an employee or an employer, we are working for the Lord. Verse 23, whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord.

In fact, when we work for the Lord, we can be guaranteed of two things. Do you see it there in verse 24? First, we receive an eternal inheritance.

Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. Every paycheck you receive, every promotion that you get, every salary increase, one day all of that is going to be turned to dust.

You won't take it. it will be left. But for the Christian who works and serves for the Lord, there is an eternal reward, an eternal reward in God's kingdom.

And second, you will receive justice, verse 25. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs.

[33 : 56] And there is no favouritism. God is the ultimate master. He sees all that you do in private and in public. He knows your employer and all that he does and the motives that they have for doing what they do.

And one day he is going to put all wrongs to right. so Christians, we don't need to settle scores by cheating our boss, by dosing off early, or taking things that we want that belong to the office but were taken home.

We leave all of those injustices with the Lord. In the knowledge we will receive an eternal reward and justice will be done.

You see, how we work every day reflects to everybody around us who our true master is. By obeying our employer, by providing for our employee, we reflect the kind of saviour we have.

Our work demonstrates what it looks like to live for Jesus. So third, let's do our work under the Lord Jesus in a way that honours him and pleases him.

[35 : 22] So let's sum up together. Marriage, family, and work lived under the Lordship of Jesus is not oppressive, harmful, or demeaning.

It's good for you. In fact, as we live under the rule of Jesus, as we go into our marriages, as we live our life as family, as we go to work tomorrow morning, as we live our life under his Lordship, we are displaying a picture of the Gospel.

You're a living, walking witness to the Gospel. Well, how do you say that? Well, you see, in Jesus we see the true husband who loved us by giving his life for us.

We see in Jesus the ultimate parent who trains us by his word and by his spirit. In Jesus we have the greatest employer who treats us with grace and kindness.

And in response, as God's people, we can submit to him because it's good. We can obey him because it's best. We can serve him because it's the way we honour him.

[36 : 39] Not to earn his favour, but because we can say in our hearts, he is my Lord. You see, it's in the context of our marriages, our family and work, that we demonstrate to a watching world the beauty and goodness of living under God's rule.

God's way is best and right for you. Let's take a moment to reflect and to pray.

Lord God, we thank you that you are like the perfect husband you are like a perfect parent you are like a perfect employer everything you do and have done and will do is for our good and for our best and you have proved that through giving of your life for us in service you treat us with kindness and grace you are patient with us, training us to become the people you call us to be and so in humbleness we submit to you we obey you and we serve you because you are our Lord

Father, give us all the help that we need to live our lives well as husbands and wives as children and parents as employees and employers and we pray that it will be to your glory and that as people watch us that our lives would be a demonstration of what it is to live under your good kind and blessed rule help us we ask in Jesus name Amen Amen We're going to sing Jesus is Lord I'm not Lord and you're not Lord Jesus is Lord