

The Gospel, the Family, and Slavery

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we confess before you that we have standards that we think your word should meet, and we, Father, have demands that your word should say things the way we want it to say these things.

And we confess that sometimes we're afraid of what you say in your word. And we confess in all of this, Father, that we often aren't very conscious that these things go on in our lives, that we stand in judgment, that we refuse to marvel, that we are troubled and think you've made mistakes, that we think we can edit your word or improve upon it.

Father, we acknowledge that we do not often know that we do these things. Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would come with might and power and deep conviction, that you would make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel.

And as we are gripped by the gospel, will you grip us, Father, with your word and bring your word deep into the very center of who we are, that we will live free, generous, and whole lives for the good of this city, for the furtherance of your kingdom, and for your great glory.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, here's the problem with the text.

[1 : 1 9] The text doesn't always begin with a problem, but sometimes it does. And today, clearly, is one of those Sundays where the text is problematic. For many of you, if you are listening to what Anna read about parents and children, there's many, many people in our culture that say that teaching like that is directly responsible for child abuse.

To tell children they have to obey their parents without any type of qualification is to open the door to massive child abuse. And so, the expectation would be that I would start to try to show how, well, it doesn't mean this and doesn't mean this and doesn't mean this.

But the fact of the matter is, child abuse is a problem in our society. It's a problem in every society. And so, if, in fact, the Bible does do something which encourages child abuse, that's a problem that we have to think about, we have to grapple with.

But more telling, a more common thing that comes to me in coffee shops is that people will say to me, George, I can't be a Christian or I can't believe the Bible.

Why would you trust the Bible when the Bible was so clearly complicit in the institution of slavery? The Bible was used to oppress slaves. And that Christians had to learn from other places that they should not support slavery.

[2 : 3 2] That the Bible either encourages slavery or it's silent in the face of slavery. And to be silent in the face of slavery is to be complicit in slavery. And so, how on earth are you going to try to deal with that?

So, there's two big types of issues in the text before us. So, as I said, we're going to walk towards it, not away from it. So, if you have your Bibles, it's Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1 to 9.

One, interestingly enough, that people don't often realize when they make some of these complaints about the Bible is people often don't realize that the person they're complaining about, because Paul wrote this in about the year 60, he wrote it while he was in jail.

He wrote it while he was in jail for following Jesus and proclaiming that Jesus was Savior and Lord. And there's other surprising things that follow from that as we look through the rest of the text.

But let's just, well, just what I'm going to do, we'll read the first couple of verses. But I'm going to really begin with the slavery issue, and then I'll come back and, excuse me, talk about the children and parents issue.

[3 : 38] So, let's just begin with that. We won't spend a long time on these first four verses to get right into the slavery bit. But look, actually, there's something really important about slavery that's right there in the very first verse, but it doesn't jump out at us.

Look at what it begins. Children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Now, just pause there. This is right is something which is actually quite significant for slavery.

I'll draw it out in a moment. But if you come to the 8 o'clock service sometime, where we do the old 1662 Book of Common Prayer service, which is really from the 1500s, 1552, I think they added the word amen or something between 1552 and 1662, very little changes.

But one of the things that we say in the service is we talk about it being our meet, right, and bounden duty that we would worship Jesus and serve him. And what this idea of meet, right, and bounden is trying to get at is it's trying to get at the idea that if, in fact, God has created all things, and so he is our creator and we live in a created order, there's certain things that just fit.

They're just right. That's what the word meet means, M-E-E-T. It's an old-fashioned word, but it's trying to get this idea that it just fits. It's proper. It's proper.

[5 : 03] Not proper in terms of some hoity-toity upper-class sense, but it just is the way the world works. It's just like it's right that we eat food that's not spoiled.

It's not right that we eat food that's rancid. It's right to drink clean water. It's not right to drink polluted water. There's just something right, whole. It fits with how things are.

And that's what the word right means right there. That's the idea that that word right means, that there's something in the very nature of creation, the very nature of how the world is designed and maintained by God that makes it somehow right that children obey their parents.

It's going to be very important in terms of what we say about parenting in a moment, but it's also very important in terms of slavery. But let's just get through the rest of the text.

Look at verses the next. Oh, sorry. I jumped too quickly. Continue reading. Actually, I'll start with verse 1 again. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

[6 : 11] And now Paul is going to quote the Ten Commandments, one of the Ten Commandments. Honor your father and mother. And then he has a little bit of an editorial comment. This is the first commandment with a promise.

End of editorial comment. Back to the Ten Commandments. The commandment that's part of the Ten Commandments. That it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land. This is all part of children obeying your parents.

And then he goes, he has something to say to parents. Just by the way, he says, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Talk about this more in a moment.

Just the main thing to get out of this, this doesn't give moms a pass. The mom can provoke the kids because it just says the dads aren't allowed to provoke the kids, but the moms are.

That would be the wrong way to take the text. But children, it would be both the mom and dad equally, but there's a direct, specific thing said to fathers. We'll talk about that in a moment.

[7 : 09] Let's get to slavery. And here's how it begins. And some of you are reading the ESV. You'll notice that my translation up here, my version up here, just slightly different. And I've changed just one word to bring out the literal term in the Greek.

And here's how it goes. Bond servants. Some of your versions say slaves. Some of your versions say servants. Obey not your earthly masters.

That's a good translation, but it's actually more literal to say your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ.

Now, just sort of pause here. The reason I've brought out the original translation is that the word flesh usually is used in two different ways in the New Testament.

And here it's being used in one of the two ways to emphasize frailty and finiteness. In the ancient world, the time that this was written, for children that actually managed to be born, okay, that's not talking about all the children who die through miscarriages and all the children who die in childbirth, often with the mom dying at the same time, but for children that are actually able to be born, only one out of two will actually have their sixth birthday.

[8 : 32] And in the time that Paul was writing this, in the city of Ephesus, most women will die before the age of 30. And most men won't live much longer than that.

They might live till their 40s or something like that. But people don't live long lives as a general rule. And so one of the things in the ancient world is they were very, very, very conscious of how frail human beings are.

And there was a word for it, this flesh, sarx. And so what Paul is saying here, it's actually, if you look at it then, you'll notice right away there's a bit of an irony here. There's a bit of a cutting down of pretensions for slave masters.

And there's a bit of an irony even with the fear and trembling. But your fear and trembling around an earthly master, a master according to the flesh, a master who is finite, a master who is frail, a master who is weak.

And that's how it describes masters. Not that masters are like gods, but that masters are of the earth. They are temporary. They are frail.

[9 : 45] They are finite. And then the Bible text continues. Not by way, verse 6, not by way of eye service, as people pleasers.

In other words, so it said to slaves to obey your earthly masters, right? And then it goes on to describe how the slave is to do this. It's the Christian slave is not by way of, verse 6, of eye service, as people pleasers, but as bondservants or slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to a human being, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or is free.

And then Paul addresses the masters, the Christians who own slaves, and he says, masters, do the same to them, to the slaves.

Not that the slaves, the masters, have to obey the slaves, but that the masters are to also not be people pleasers, that they are to do the will of God from the heart, that they are to render service with a good will as to the Lord, and they are to act knowing that whatever good they do, they receive it back from the Lord.

Those are the different commands to slaves, and here Paul tells the masters, do the same to the slaves. And then as well, stop your threatening, because in the ancient world, masters literally had the power of life and death over their slaves, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

[11 : 27] So let's just think about this a little bit. The first thing to understand is this. When I was in university, it was, when I was in university, I'd become a Christian in grade 12, and I had lots of challenges to the Christian faith in grade 12, but I had a whole new type of challenges when I was in university, because it was in university that I met people who challenged me.

Some of them were anthroposophists, some of them were from the Baha'i, some of them were liberal Christians, and they challenged me and said that in the Bible, the Bible doesn't teach that Jesus is God, and the Bible doesn't teach the Trinity, and they told me that the word Trinity isn't in the Bible.

Now maybe if I go back in time and I replayed all the sermons that I'd heard going through church and youth group, maybe somebody in church told me that the word Trinity was in the Bible, but I couldn't remember ever hearing it.

The first time I was told that the word Trinity doesn't appear in the Bible, I was told it by a Baha'i, and I thought they were wrong because the Baha'is aren't right, and so I went looking, and to my shock, the word Trinity isn't in the Bible, and to my shock, I was expecting that I could come up with two or three or four very, very simple, easy verses to show that Jesus is God and that the Trinity is true, and I couldn't find them, and I realized afterwards, and by the way, I love saying this to my Baptist friends, the reason I didn't surrender right away is because of tradition, that I knew that Christians had a tradition, that the Trinity is the right way to describe God and that Jesus claimed to be God, and so because I believed that, I kept looking in the Bible, and as I looked and looked and looked, and I'd look at Bible verses that said that this taught these different truths, but when I looked at it, it didn't seem to be saying that, and I realized what my problem was after it took a bit of time.

What I was looking for was this. I was actually looking for something like the Creed in the Bible. I was looking for a passage in the Bible that said, you have to use the word Trinity to talk of God.

[13 : 31] Jesus is God, the Father. I was expecting a Creed in the Bible, and I didn't see the Creed in the Bible, and so at first it caught me by surprise, but then as I hunted and hunted and hunted, I started to understand how the Bible was communicating both of these truths, and in fact, I could literally, every sermon in the book of Ephesians, I could show how this text shows that Jesus is God.

I could do it every sermon in the book of Ephesians and throughout the New Testament because it's actually part of the deep teaching of it, and the same thing happens when people look at slavery and the whole issue of how the Bible relates to slavery.

What they're looking for is slavery is terribly, terribly, terribly wrong, and what you should be practicing is a type of socialist, democratic capitalism.

Now, as soon as I add that last bit, you realize there's a bit of a problem with that because that wouldn't have made any sense to anybody in the first century, nor the fifth, nor the eighth, nor the twelfth, and it doesn't make a lot of sense to a lot of people in the world right now.

But what you expect is you expect one thing, but actually, if you realize, okay, maybe the Bible is communicating this in a bit of a different way, just as I realize that it communicates the truth of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus in a different way than I was expecting, and once you understand how it communicates it, you can see that it's there all the way through the New Testament.

[14 : 54] It's part of the deep structure of the New Testament and the entire Old Testament to understand the truth of Trinity, the triune God, and the divinity of Jesus. And so maybe the problem is that we're expecting it to say it in one way, but it's actually saying it in another one.

And the other thing, and this I love to say to my non-Christian friends when they challenge me, because we all agree that slavery is wrong. But I like to challenge them.

I like to mess with them a bit. And I like to say, you do realize that the most recent examples of, these are especially my atheist friends, you do realize that half of all of the slavery that goes on in the world right now is from atheists.

Now that gets an interesting reaction. And they deny it. And I said, no, Soviet Union, Communist China, they all practice slavery. They're all atheist states.

And they did it very recently. China might still be doing it. And I said, what about Islam? And if you look at it historically, Hinduism, Buddhism, all practice slavery.

[16 : 04] It's a human problem. So the question is, not just whether this is somehow just a Christian problem, and somehow if you're a Muslim or a Buddhist or a Hindu or an atheist, you get a pass.

No, no, this is a far deeper human problem. And so the question is, does the Bible, is it the matter, the fact of the matter, and I don't deny that Christians throughout time have, if you go up and you look up the name, I can't remember his first name, his last name is Dabney.

His books are still in print. He was considered a very, very, very deeply Orthodox Christian in the mid part of the 1800s in the United States.

And the horrific thing is he wrote books defending slavery as biblical and it's abhorrent, and he was wrong. The question is, does Christianity need to bring in other ideas from outside for Christians to understand that slavery is wrong or is it actually something which is taught in the Bible that slavery is wrong?

I mean, there's a bit of a question as to whether atheists need to bring in ideas from somewhere else to understand that slavery is wrong. Does Islam have to bring in ideas from somewhere else that slavery is wrong? Does Hinduism have to bring in ideas from somewhere else to understand that slavery is wrong?

[17 : 14] Does Christianity have to or is in fact a Christian teaching that slavery is wrong? That's an interesting question even with a text like this. So, what does the Bible actually teach?

Here's my summary of what the Bible teaches. And I use the gospel but it could also be the whole counsel of God because I think you can see the same thing in the Old Testament but you can see it in this text which I'll try to show you.

The gospel ennobles the slave, humbles the master, and dissolves slavery. The gospel ennobles the slave, humbles the master, and dissolves slavery.

You see, slavery wasn't just sort of a bit of an addition. It wasn't like an accessory to the ancient world. And usually when slavery exists it becomes not just an accessory but it becomes an integral part of a set of beliefs and a worldview.

A bit more, maybe not as much the case nowadays but definitely in the ancient world there's a whole worldview, a set of core beliefs that allow slavery to be seen as either reasonable or good.

[18 : 25] People will say that in fact slaves deserve it. In the ancient world you would become a slave because your parents had abandoned you when you were born.

They would put you out and expose you to the elements so that you would die and a slave trader would go looking at the regular places where babies would be abandoned to die and they would take those babies they'd raise them and sell them as slaves and they would say well obviously the child deserves to be a slave the parents didn't even want him.

You became a slave by getting into debt and selling yourself into slavery to pay off the debt. Surely the slave deserves to be a slave because they got into debt. Slaves, people would become slaves because they lost in battle.

So they lost in battle surely they deserve to be my slave. I won, they lost, surely they deserve. I have other types of private property why isn't it right that I should be able to own a human being?

If I can own a dog if I can own a cat if I can own a horse if I can own a house why shouldn't I be able to own another human being? There's nothing in nature. In fact, they would say that nature itself shows that some people are superior and other people are inferior.

[19 : 34] That some people are meant to have more property rights or more power than other types of people and that nature itself shows that there's nothing in particular human beings which mean that you shouldn't be able to own them as a slave.

That there are in fact that we call them human and they look human but they are in fact lower. They don't have the full dignity of rights as a human being and nature itself shows that and the gods teach this.

Religion teaches this. Reason teaches this. And it's just obvious to anybody that in fact it's right for one person to have a control over the other person because the other person is not a full person and does not have full rights and the gods and nature shows that it favors the strong and it favors the powerful and that's just right.

Now by the way it's the same way they talk about abortion. It's the same way they talk about abortion.

Abortion is the ugly slavery secret of the secular mind. And I don't say I don't mean to wound you if you are here and you've had an abortion.

[20 : 50] Jesus loves you. Come and speak to me. But the fact of the matter is you could take what I just said and you could look at abortion arguments and secular people the Supreme Court of Canada and all of the political parties accept the logic of slavery.

There's a very interesting video online. Many of you have probably seen it. It's by a former atheist by the name of David Wood. He now runs something called Acts 17 Ministries. I encourage you to Google his conversion.

If you can't remember it come and speak to me afterwards. And there's a very, very interesting part in that video. That's about 25 minutes in. 20 minutes in as he's described his atheism and everything like that.

And he describes how he's lying in a hospital bed in a prison. And he describes that as he's lying there sort of beat up physically and mentally and all of a sudden he starts to look at things in a bit of a different way.

And he describes three core beliefs of atheism. And as he describes these three core beliefs of atheism, he starts to describe how he's lying there and one day he begins to doubt these three, each of these three core beliefs of atheism.

[22 : 09] And he comes to the time when to his horror he realizes that he no longer believes or accepts as reasonable each of these core beliefs of atheism.

And he has this very powerful way of describing it. He said that when you have to understand that these are core beliefs and it means the entire superstructure of my thought, the whole superstructure of my thought and all my arguments lies upon this super, upon this foundation.

And when all of a sudden the foundation is gone the whole thing collapses. Mindful of the core beliefs of slavery.

If you go back and you read, I'm not going to talk about it now but if you want to hear how I talked about husbands and wives you can listen to last week's sermon. If you go back and look at how Paul talks about husbands and wives, what does he do?

He connects marriage to the doctrine of creation. That there's something about the marriage of one man to one woman which is part of the very way that God created the entire world to be.

[23 : 11] And he connects the institution of marriage to what Jesus does on the cross. And he connects the institution of marriage to what the new heaven and the new earth is going to look like. That there's something about the marriage of one man to one woman that just fits this level of creation, redemption and the future.

And then if you look at how he talks about children and parents he uses this word right. That there's something just right. It just fits that it's natural that parents have the first and primary overarching responsibility for their own children.

It's more important than the state's claim to the children that the parents have a direct God-given right connection to their children and that the children to obey their parents there's something right about that.

It just fits with the created order and now you come to slavery and if you're in the ancient world you want to say that there's now just something right and fitting about slavery and it is not there.

a huge foundation of the slavery mindset and it's not there. It's nowhere in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible.

[24 : 22] In fact what does Paul do? He talks about masters not as if they're somehow standing in the place of God he calls them masters according to the flesh that they're weak that they're finite that they're temporary the complete opposite of an idea of something being natural masters are temporary they're fragile and it talks about the fact that the slave is obviously a Christian.

What does this mean? It means that Jesus loved the slave so much that Jesus died for the slave and when the slave puts his or her faith and trust in Jesus that slave becomes if you go back and you read the rest of Ephesians and you talk about how everybody who gives their life to Jesus takes this new status it's as if God the heavenly father adopts this person and gives them it's as if God adopts them as a son with the full right of inheritance and that part of Ephesians we now discover all those things in Ephesians all these glories it talks about for a redeemed person it applies to slaves and the entire text is talking about how a slave can serve Jesus and the entire talk is about how slaves and masters have a common lord and the text very clearly says of masters that God shows no partiality none between the master and the slave all of the intellectual foundations the foundations of slavery are removed all of them the slave is ennobled the master is humbled and the foundations that support slavery are dissolved but it has something more here's a question

I have to look at my time but here's the question if you had to choose between inner freedom and outer freedom which would you choose we'd all choose inner freedom wouldn't we now obviously we'd rather have both we'd rather have freedom to be able to assemble and speak what we want and we'd like to have that and inner freedom at the same time but if you think about it for a second like you know we're downtown and you look at look at the street people and you look at so many of them it's heartbreaking you know they have outer freedom through the gazoo the wazoo you know but the fact of the matter is there's a chemical imbalance in the heads of some of them which means that they have no inner freedom they're controlled by their chemistry and you look at others it's not that all street people fall in these three categories I'm not saying that but a large number of them do but there's another significant amount of them they've lost their inner freedom because of a drug addiction or they've lost their inner freedom because of an alcohol addiction or that there's some other type of chemical imbalance within the body which means that they have a problem with controlling impulses and you look at these people and they can walk wherever they want and I'm not saying these people as if I'm it's not deriding them at all

I'm just looking at it and we all know we look at we look at what happens with dementia and Alzheimer's that there can be things that go on within us and inside of us that take away our inner freedom and every single one of us would say if I had to choose between outer freedom and inner freedom I want inner freedom and you know the other thing is if you value inner freedom structures externally which remove freedom are problematic they're problematic you look at this text and what does this text do what this text does is it talks about the inner freedom of the slave it talks about the fact that the slave can't control the fact that they're bound can't control the fact that the master will give them certain orders they can't control the fact that they belong to somebody else they can't control that and you know what

Paul writing something wouldn't change that but they can choose their reaction they can choose to see that they can live a life that brings glory to God they can choose a life that pursues that which is good knowing that they're ultimately serving the Lord and you see what the Bible text is all the gospel is all about this the fact of the matter is is that we human beings are enslaved and are not as free as we think we are you know it's very interesting in our culture there's this double way of looking at evil on one hand often being able to get drunk is a sign of freedom but it's very very funny that in one part of a novel or one part of a movie we're being able to get drunk or sleep with lots of different people as a sign of freedom at the same time later on in the book or in the next book getting drunk is a sign of the fact that you're bound or being able to not being able to actually keep your marriage vows is a sign that you're bound that there's something problematic with you and the Bible doesn't describe freedom as the ability to do evil although obviously you are free to do evil but the fact of the matter is is for you and I if you cannot do what is good if you cannot do what is true if you cannot do what is just if you cannot do what is merciful if you cannot do what is generous if you cannot do what is right if you cannot do what is whole if you cannot forgive you are not free

[30 : 05] I am not free I need freedom it is for freedom that Christ has set us free his presence within us the gift of the Holy Spirit the fruit the singular fruit of the Holy Spirit what is the singular fruit of the Holy Spirit love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self-control as the gospel grips us it moves us to be free and we know we are free when we can speak the truth and know the truth not speak lies and know lies we know we are free we are generous there is a thing in the paper on Saturday they are nameless I always read this thing in the paper about these financial things and all that and retirement readiness just so you know

I am on the Freedom 75 plan but I like to plan long in advance and there is this couple in the paper their take home income is \$200,000 a year \$200,000 a year and they can't live within their means and guess how much and they travel all over the world guess how much money they give in gifts or charity to other people zero zero who is more free a person who can't live on \$200,000 a year travels all over the world but can't even live within \$200,000 or somebody making a lot less money who gives money away who is more free who is more free the generous person right generous person and you know what else in this text which is so amazing and it's not just in this text if you go back and look throughout the entire Bible so here how does Paul present the gospel time and time and time and time and time and time again he presents the gospel that God the Son of God sets aside his glory and divine prerogatives and his divine splendor and takes into himself all the limits of being born in human flesh and he ends up bound dying a slave's death on the cross and why is he bound dying a slave's death on a cross so you and I can be redeemed and be free and we don't get what redeemed means but every person in the ancient world knows what redeemed means redeemed is when somebody pays the price so a slave is no longer a slave that's what redeemed means how does the gospel dissolve slavery

God the Son of God is bound and dies a slave's death so that you and I who are not truly free because we are enslaved to sin can begin to lose the bonds of sin in our lives because Jesus has redeemed us out of slavery and called us to be his child that is the gospel that is the gospel I need to wind it up let's look back at children and parents and I'll just give us a couple of sort of exhortations children obey your parents verse 1 children obey your parents and the Lord for this is right honor your father and mother this is the first commandment with a promise that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land basically and then verse 4 fathers do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord the gospel ennobles children and humbles parents while giving parents an important mission remember in the ancient world it wasn't thought of as wrong to leave your newborn out to the elements to die how could anybody reading

Ephesians leave their child out to die the child is given this ennobling task of being able to live in a way that pleases God the child is part of the covenant community under the Lord's authority and care and as the gospel forms a child the child will be formed to obey and because the Lord is the Lord and we are not parents who abuse their children are in defiance of the Lord are in defiance of the Lord and parents it humbles us we are not allowed to just provoke our kids for the sake of provoking them well how do you provoke your kid here is the thing one of the things

I said to all of my kids when they were young once they got to a certain age but very very young age I said to them you are not allowed to hit your mom or dad in anger now you know what an 18 month knows what that means see I didn't want my I didn't want to stop my son Jacob my son Jacob and other ones of my kids I'd come home and he'd run at me and start punching me but it was how he welcomed me okay he was having fun we get to wrestle but Jacob knew when he was punching me in fun and when he was punching me in anger you know that at a very young age moms and dads you know when you provoke your kids right I mean maybe not when you say it but afterwards you go yeah that was just provoking them I shouldn't that's just poking the kid to get them going shouldn't have done it so it limits parents it reminds parents that they have to answer to the Lord but here's the mission by the way these these instructions it works in an agrarian society and it works in a rich society in a capitalist society it's a very very different a very very simple mission and the Bible understands

[36 : 47] God understands that kids are different some kids have like Tourette's syndrome some kids are on spectrums some kids have they're just wired to move constantly some kids like to sit still but the bottom line is the mission isn't that you give your kids as many piano lessons and hockey lessons and every other lesson in the world the mission is that you raise children who will obey and who will love Jesus that's your first commission that's your first mission what does it profit a parent whose kid knows how to play the piano knows how to play the viola can speak 53 languages gets an A plus and plays hockey and plays soccer and plays basketball and plays everything else and doesn't know Jesus than a kid who just has fun but knows Jesus the mission's clear and just to wind up the whole thing none of us have slaves but every single one of us is in positions where sometimes we have to obey and sometimes we're in positions of authority and there's a very direct call out to you for those of you who have authority whether it's over a kid or whether it's over an employee remember that one day you will give account to how you've acted to

Jesus and how you treat the weak is a deep reflection of the state of your soul how you treat the person in your workplace that nobody likes and if you join in with them in calling them names or putting down or making fun of them shame on you it is revealing what you would do with power and we have to sometimes in our organizations and in life take orders and then you can read this text and meditate upon it there might be very little you can do in the short run around a cruel and oppressive boss in the long run in Canada you can quit get another job but in the short run there might be very little you can do but you can control how you react and you can seek to act out of a good will remembering that you're serving

Jesus first and foremost and he sees everything that goes on and he ennobles your labor and your sacrifice please stand just you know once again if you're here today and you've never given your life to Jesus the gospel wants to ennoble you the gospel will make you free it might not give you instant victory in fact it won't give you instant victory over all of the things that bind you but the presence of the gospel the presence of Jesus in your life will move you towards freedom and if you are saying no to the gospel and no to Jesus it is those sources of slavery within you because they know the sources of slavery within you and around you know that if you come to Jesus he will dethrone them and so there is no better time now than to shut your ears to that which wants to keep you from Jesus and call out to him and say

Jesus be my redeemer I give myself to you there's no better time than now to call out for that and for the rest of us we know those things in our lives where we are not free and this is a good time to do some work with Jesus calling out to him to bring his healing authority to bear in those parts of our lives where we are not free that the gospel will be more real to our hearts and that as the gospel is more real to our hearts the outflow of obedience will come let's pray father ask that the holy spirit would come with might and power and deep conviction amongst us we thank you father for your word we thank you that Jesus became a slave and was bound that people like me and those of us here and our friends and our neighbors and people to the ends of the earth that as Jesus was bound and died a be delivered from slavery and be made free in

Jesus to be free in deed to be free to be generous to be free to forgive to be free to be kind to be free to love to be free to know the truth to be free to be merciful to be free to be just to be free to seek the benefit of others and the benefit of our city and the benefit Jesus has come to make us free and we ask father that you make us disciples of Jesus who are so gripped by the gospel that we can die to ourselves and be free and all God's people said Amen