

Slaves

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[0 : 00] Colossians chapter 22, bleeding over into chapter 4 verse 1. As you find your place there, you may and may not know this, but when the scriptures were being written as each person wrote, they did not write chapter 1 verse 1 and then write something, and verse 2 and then write something.

The chapter and verse markings were placed into the scriptures around the 1200s in order to make it easier for us to find things, and somebody just arbitrarily put these divisions in.

And so sometimes they hinder Bible reading because, like this case, we know that the beginning of this whole section, this household table, started with wives and husbands, children and fathers, and so slaves and masters ought to go together.

So that's the reason that we're bleeding over onto that. So beginning in verse 22, I'm going to read the passage. We'll pray, and then we'll get going.

I do need to make one more final statement. And I love the ESV. The ESV is such a great translation in so many ways. But every now and then I find it, as with every single translation, something that I wish they had done differently.

[1 : 19] And in this case, the word bondservants doesn't give us the sense of what's here. You need to read bondservants as slaves. That's the word, is slaves.

So with that in mind, verse 22. Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

Father, we thank you for your word. We confess that sometimes as we read it, we look at it and we look at the world around us, we look at the knowledge that we have, and we find ourselves saying, what does this have to do with us?

[2 : 34] And we pray that you would open our minds and our hearts today to understand your word, to love your word, and to believe what you have said about your word, that it is profitable for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that we may be thoroughly equipped, fully equipped, adequately equipped for every good work.

Help us understand your word today, in Christ's name. Amen. So, the message today is about slavery. Okay.

That's one of the joys of preaching verse by verse, is to deal with things that maybe ordinarily we would not want to deal with. And maybe you're sitting there thinking to yourself, well, that was abolished.

It's done away with. And let me just give you a little sort of wake-up call. Well, there is modern-day slavery. Modern-day slavery is a real thing.

And according to the statistics today, there are 49.6 million people who are in slavery right now around the world, according to both the United Nations and the International Labor Organization.

[3 : 55] 12 million of those people happen to be children. The primary reason that people are put into modern slavery today, or the most common type of slavery, is sex trafficking.

And of the sex trafficking, one of the things to know is that the child sex trafficking is something that's actually been reported in all 50 of the United States.

Houston actually is pretty high up in the list of places that this takes place. It's a \$150 billion industry, the second most profitable illegal industry in the United States.

there is a kind of slavery and trafficking that exceeds in wickedness that which was done in the United States back in the day.

I'm not saying that what was done back during the Civil War in the 1800s was good. It was not good at all. It was wicked. But at the one year before the start of the Civil War, there were 4 million slaves.

[5 : 04] And what we see today is just horrific. And it brings us to this passage because one of the things that people who deny that God exists, one of the things that people who do not believe in Christianity will accuse Christianity of, is that Christianity, or at least the Bible, is an immoral book because it promotes slavery.

That is the charge, that the Bible promotes slavery. And so we need to deal with this head on and answer the question for ourselves to be able to have a good foundation of thinking about these things so that when that charge comes up, we can put that charge to rest.

So I want us to divide the sermon between three questions. The first question is, does the Bible promote slavery? The second question is, what does this passage in front of us say to slaves and to masters?

And then what lessons can we learn today? In other words, what's going to be the application for us today? So let's begin with the first question. Does the Bible promote slavery? And the short answer is no.

That's the short answer. But let's dive into that a little deeper. And there's five statements I want to make to kind of help us bring this answer with some clarity. Under the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament, what's called man-stealing, man-stealing, kidnapping for the purpose of slavery, it was actually condemned in the Old Testament.

[6 : 49] In Exodus chapter 21, verse 16, it says, whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him shall be put to death. That's a pretty clear statement.

Now, if you want to understand more, you've got to read further and understand that even though man-stealing slavery was condemned, indenturing, indenturing, everybody knows what indenturing is.

It's not what you put in your mouth from your dentist, right? It's someone who is poor or under lots of debt and they sell themselves to a master in order to work for them because they pay off their debt, right?

The goal of indenturing was to help someone financially and eventually they would be set free from that slavery because it was supposed to be a temporary ordeal.

As a matter of fact, in the Old Covenant, it was a temporary thing and only for six years. In Exodus chapter 21, verse 2, when you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years and in the seventh, he shall go out free for nothing because that was the year of Jubilee.

[8 : 04] The year of Jubilee. So you could only work for six years anyway. So there was this man-stealing slavery that was condemned. There was indenturing that was regulated and said this is what you should do and how you should treat them.

But then there were slaves that came about because of prisoners of war and that too was regulated because anyone who had been taken captive by Israel as a prisoner of war could take circumcision and become a Jew and therefore be underneath the system of indenturing and be set free.

Now that's the Old Covenant. In the situation historically from New Testament times forward, one of the things we have is that we go from this system under Israel that indenturing is fine but it's temporary and you have to treat them in a certain way.

Man-stealing is completely outlawed. You have this shift in the balance of power so that Rome becomes the dominating force in the world and in the New Testament times Rome was promoting, instituted, and oversaw slavery as a whole for the entire empire.

And in Rome, the slavery was a different kind of slavery. It was a slavery that was primarily that of owning property and had a permanent character to it.

[9 : 30] It had little to do and little in common with what the Lord was teaching the people under the Old Covenant. But Rome, as they would conquer different people, different groups, they would take these prisoners of war captive and turn them into slaves and this represented a lawful slavery.

And what I mean by lawful slavery is that the government sanctioned it. Does that make sense? The government sanctioned this type of thing. This Roman system was an evil.

It was a bad system and over time as Rome fell and the United States came into being, you'll understand and know, hopefully from history, that at the beginning of the founding of the United States, even before, there were various types of slaves of various types of classes, but it's around the early 1700s that as the cotton gin began to be used more, than the idea of slavery shifted to a race, ethnic, or skin color kind of slavery.

It's about the only time in history that that kind of a thing took place. And in part, in order to convince themselves that this was okay, many people convinced themselves that those with black skin were inferior in some way.

And again, it was a lawful kind of slavery because government fairly, pretty well sanctioned it. What we have today in the modern slavery and human trafficking is man-stealing.

[11:05] There's no lawfulness to it whatsoever. There's no government that sanctions what's going on today. Instead, it is illegal and it is wicked. So, it's good to understand how the different systems work because when you go back to the New Testament and you look at how the New Testament taught Christians, two things come out and the third statement that I would make is that the New Testament forbade Christians from being enslavers.

From being enslavers. In 1 Timothy 1, verse 8 through 11. Now, I didn't really want to read all of this because I just wanted to get to the point but I think you need to see the context of this passage and I hope you'll see why in a second.

Verse 8 says, Now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers.

Now, let me stop. I haven't finished the verse. What Paul is saying is that there's a lawful use of God's law and that lawful use is for those who are lawless, who are unholy, who do not obey and who do not acknowledge God.

That the law of God is a good thing to use for them. I know there's a debate about putting the Ten Commandments in different places and I understand some Christians would be like, well, you don't want to put the Ten Commandments there because these are not really Christians and why would they obey?

[12:43] But the fact of the matter is, is that when a law is placed and put in front of a person, it has a tendency to curb behavior and it makes society a better place.

You don't believe me? Go remove all the speed limit signs. So the law is for those who are unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, verse 10, the sexual immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Now I read that last line because you need to understand that this use of the law like this is not contrary to the glory of the gospel. As a matter of fact, people seeing the law and recognizing their lawlessness is the first step towards them understanding their need for Christ.

But it says right there in the middle, enslavers, people who would steal someone else and then sell them off into slavery. It is strictly forbidden here in the New Testament.

The second thing is that the New Testament writers sought to help Christians learn how to live under the evil Roman system of slavery.

[14:09] Our passage that we're reading today does that as well as the parallel passage in Ephesians. I won't read those two passages but let me read a few more such as in 1 Timothy chapter 6.

Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants or slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers. Rather, they must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved teach and urge these things.

Paul says the same something similar in Titus chapter 2 where he says slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

And Peter agrees with this in 1 Peter chapter 2 where he says servants or slaves be subject to your masters with all respect not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

[15:32] For this is a gracious thing, when mindful of God one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. There would be people, slaves, who would enter into a marketplace and hear a Christian preaching the gospel.

They would and seeing their own sin all of a sudden realize they must go back home to a master. Maybe a good one, maybe a bad one, but this newfound faith had a question.

What do I do about this? How do I live under this situation? And so the church finding itself without the political power finds itself in a system of slavery that is evil with Christians trying to figure out how do I live the Christian life under such conditions?

And so the New Testament teaches them here's how you live under such a system with my final statement being this, that the New Testament had the end of slavery baked in.

The New Testament has the end of slavery baked in. Now what do I mean by that? What I mean by that is that Paul makes a very clear statement in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 that helps us to understand that the freedom that we have in Christ is something that's so expansive and glorious that the idea of our bodies being set free is just a natural next step.

[17:12] Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Now let me set this up. One of the things that he's been talking about in this chapter, he says, listen, when you became a Christian, don't look at your life circumstances and think that now that I'm a Christian, I should walk away from my former life.

One of the problems in the Corinthian church is that there were women who, because of their salvation and because of being spiritual, thought that their relationship to their husbands was causing them great harm and they didn't need to be married anymore so they were divorcing off their husbands so they could live a more pleasing life to the Lord.

And so he starts chapter 7 and says, if you're married, don't seek to be unmarried. When you get saved, if you're single, don't seek to get married.

Live in whatever circumstance you find yourself in. If you're circumcised, don't try to remove the marks of circumcision. If you're uncircumcised, don't try to be circumcised.

In other words, the gospel doesn't need for you to change your external situation to flourish inside of you. So he says in verse 20, each one should remain in the condition in which he was called.

[18:29] Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it, but if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.

Now there's Paul. There's Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit showing us that the idea that slaves need to seek their freedom is there.

The end of slavery is baked into Christianity. He goes on and says in verse 22, For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freed man of the Lord.

Likewise, he who was free when he is called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price. Do not become bondservants of men.

Don't sell yourselves to men, even in indenturing. The end of slavery is baked into Christianity because here's what Christianity is. You've trusted Christ. Now you have become his slave.

[19:31] Therefore, no one else should own you. Nothing else should ever own you but Christ and Christ alone. So, with this end of slavery baked into the gospel that we preach, the worst slavery that these people could have realized was not a hindrance to the gospel working in them and helping and then being able to live out the gospel.

They didn't need to be free to live the gospel but the gospel should have inspired them towards that. And one of the other things that I would say just in closing before I get to the next question is this, that anytime we see something evil in this world and we go about trying to put an end to it, the pagan world will do anything and everything that they can to put an end to it with tyranny.

But as Christians, we're always supposed to be people who are lawful, who are under authority.

You say, what are you talking about? Let me give you a couple of examples. If you compare the American Revolution to the French Revolution, you'll begin to see what I'm talking about.

The French Revolution was a godless tyranny of individuals running amok trying to do what they wanted to do. The American Revolution were a group of people who formed a union and then from that union, from that state of authority, sought to no longer have the authority above them do that which was godless.

You can think about the idea of abortion. When Roe v. Wade was first decided, there were Christians, Christians, I'm going to put those quotes up there, Christians, who decided that the best

way to put an end to abortion was to bomb abortion clinics.

[21 : 19] That is the means of paganism and tyranny. That is not the way Christians ought to behave. Christians are people of authority. Christians live under authority.

Christians are to be those who are law and order because God is the one who has established all law and order. And so as Christians, to put an end to slavery through godless means of tyranny and attacks would not be at all what we as Christians ought to do.

And so, we get down to the bottom line. Does the Bible promote slavery? And the answer is no, it doesn't. It regulates it to some degree but puts the end of slavery baked in to the gospel itself.

I hope that that will help you as you think about and are challenged by people who would say, well, listen, I mean, there were Christians who supported slavery in the South. Yes, they were and I think that they were mistaken.

We need to think rightly about these things. The second question then is this. What does Colossians have to say to masters and to slaves?

[22 : 36] And there's two words here. There's the word to the slave and the word to the master. The word to the slave can be summarized in a two-word phrase. Obey heartily.

Obey heartily. That's verses 22 through 25. You'll notice in verse 22 that the command is there. Obey your masters. This obedience is the same word that's for children.

It's to be immediate, complete, and sweetly submissive. It's an obedience that's to be in everything and that everything is again limited to the sphere of authority that that master has.

He doesn't have the authority to tell a slave to stop worshiping God. That's outside of his authority. It is also to be with sincerity, fearing God, not as eye service or people pleasers.

In other words, as he's telling these Christian slaves, you're going to go back into their master's household, he's telling them, listen, when you get there Monday morning, don't do your work in such a way as to try to catch your master's eye so that you can be looked at as somebody who's really good.

[23 : 42] No, do what's right even when nobody is looking. Have a work ethic about you that says, I'm not working for this man, but I'm working for Christ. And the work that I do, I need to do heartily as unto the Lord.

If Paul were to talk to one of these slaves, he might say something like this, go back to your master, don't be a person who's rebellious against authority, trust yourself to the Lord, that perhaps by legal means the Lord might give your body the freedom that your soul already has, and until such a time, obey your master in everything.

Don't try to get his attention with your good work, but get your heavenly father's attention by your good work. Be like Joseph, who was unjustly sold into slavery, falsely accused of a crime, and entrust yourself to the Lord, and he will bless you.

And he tells them, do this work heartily, right? Verse 23, heartily. I can't tell you the number of times I find it fascinating that people will quote this verse out of context, put it up on something, and then encourage us all to work heartily as unto the Lord.

The context of this is slavery. This is what Paul told slaves to do. When you go back to your master, don't slough off. This word heartily is from the soul. Don't be a slacker.

[25 : 05] Don't be a slacker at all. You know you're free in Christ, and you know that perhaps one day you will be free, and so hold on and trust in the Lord.

Are you picking cotton? Are you plowing fields? Are you serving tables? Then remember you do this to the Lord Jesus Christ. Do it heartily. Put everything you have into it, and remember you will from the Lord receive the inheritance as a reward.

He's encouraging them that there is a reward for his people who live under difficult and suffering circumstances. Because you'll remember the slave who stands before Christ and the master who stands before Christ, they're equal before the Lord, just as females and males are equal before the Lord.

Husbands and wives equal before the Lord. Fathers and children equal before the Lord. He says here in Colossians, you'll remember a few verses back, that before the Lord there's neither male nor female, there's neither barbarian or Scythian, there's neither slave nor free.

Because your reward is the same as every other believer in Christ. That's the word to the slaves.

The word to the masters then can be summarized, and this is in chapter 4, verse 1, it can be summarized with treat your slaves well, treat your slaves well, and this word treat means cause it to

happen.

[26 : 40] Cause this to happen to them. And what are you to cause to happen to your slaves? That they receive justice and fairness. They're to be treated, justice, to treat them with justice is to treat them in accordance to high standards of righteousness.

That means they should be given their due. If they do a good job, then reward them for that good job. If they do a bad job, then reward them for that bad job accordingly.

You don't understand what I'm saying. There's a punishment that could be there. As they have deserved, as their job has deserved, so give to them, and then treat them with this justice and fairness, because they're made in the image of God, and deserve to be treated with dignity.

The idea of fairness is to not be cruel to them. It's to be properly balanced towards them. And Paul tells the masters, here's why you need to do this.

I mean, can you imagine a master who's walked to the marketplace, hears Paul preaching, is convicted by the Holy Spirit, and all of a sudden he turns around and looks and he realizes he's got a wife, children, and slaves at his house.

[27 : 55] What do I do? What do I do? Paul tells them, you need to treat them with kindness, you need to treat them well, because you are also a slave.

You're a slave to Christ. A master, a master with slaves who trusted Christ must realize he does not even own himself.

And because of that, he should treat his slaves with justice and fairness, with dignity and respect, and then the movement towards setting them free.

You see, we have an interesting situation here with this book of Colossians. You'll remember that I told you that the pastor of the church has come to Paul, and he's got lots of questions. He's talking about the false teachers, and Paul's writing this letter, going to give the letter to Epaphras.

Epaphras is going to go back, going to read it to the church, kind of help them, but Paul's got another guy with him. Paul's got another guy that's been with him in prison, helping and serving him, and this guy's name is Onesimus.

[29 : 05] Everybody say Onesimus. Onesimus. That's such a great, great name. You should name, you know, like your next dog Onesimus or something.

Onesimus is a runaway slave from the church church in Colossae. There's another leader in the church in Colossae besides Epaphras.

The other leader in the church is a gentleman named Philemon. You ever heard of the book of the Bible called Philemon? It's right after Colossians, right before Hebrews.

It's one chapter long. And as Paul's finishing up his letter to the Colossian church and giving that to Epaphras, he sits down and he writes a letter to Philemon and gives it to Onesimus.

And he sends Onesimus, the runaway slave, back to his master. Listen to part of the letter. Just verses 8 through 17.

[30 : 11] Paul says, Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you.

I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment.

Formerly, he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. I'm sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

Listen to Paul's love for this man. I would have been glad to keep him with me in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, but I prefer to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion, but of your own accord.

In other words, I don't want to force you into this. And in another place in here, he even tells Onesimus, even though you owe me your own life, like as an apostle, he's preached the gospel to Philemon.

[31 : 18] He's done something for Philemon and he's telling Philemon, listen, you owe me your own life even, but listen, I don't want to be compulsory about this. I want you to do this of your own accord.

What is it he wants him to do of his own accord? Verse 15, for this is perhaps why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever.

That word forever is interesting. No longer as a beloved brother. Okay, pause right there. So like he, yes, he's a slave. I'm going to send him back to you as a slave, but he's going to be more than a

slave to you.

He's going to be a brother. Why is that? Because Onesimus got saved. Onesimus is now a Christian. Now he is a runaway slave and while he's away, he trusts in Christ.

He says, I'm going to send him back to you as a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you both in flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me.

[32 : 21] I'm going to send him back to you and you receive him, but receive him as you would receive me. Paul's telling Philemon, you need to set him free.

You need to receive him like you would receive me. He's a brother in Christ now and he was departed from you for a while, but I'm going to send him back and now you need to do the lawful thing through lawful means and you need to set him free.

Paul is telling these masters how they ought to live and a part of that is set them free. Now it brings us to the last question for the day and that's what kind of lessons can we learn today?

Last I checked, nobody in here owns any slaves and nobody in here is a slave. So we need to think about this in a couple of ways.

The first thing that I want to say and don't be couples don't be nudging each other either. You know, I'll be doing that. The first thing I would say is we need to rescue the trapped and one of the reasons to preach on such a passage and to talk about this is because of the horrific wicked thing of modern day slavery that we ought to be aware of that since the gospel in it has the seeds of freedom itself, we need to be involved in at least praying for these who are in the human trafficking world to be set free.

[33 : 47] And we ought to work towards finding ministries and people that we can partner with in order to help see them set free. We need to do it wisely and that's why I'm not going to give you lots of details about how to do this because I'm not sure I understand how to wisely do this.

But at the same time, we certainly need to be aware of and praying for the end of such a thing. It is a horrific and wicked sort of thing. There is a ministry in Ingram called Mercy's Gates.

I'm sure you can find out a ton more information from them about these kinds of things. And let me encourage you to do so. Let me encourage you to be inspired to do so, to seek to help rescue those who are enslaved.

But a second way that we can look at this, if you understand slavery as one person benefiting from the labor of someone else, the closest thing we have in modern life that even gets closer to this, that's not slavery, is going to be the employee and employer relationship.

And a lot of pastors use that as the way that they preach this anyway, without diving into all the stuff that I've dove into. But I wanted to because I think we need to have that background.

[35 : 00] But let me just talk about if analogy breaks down to some degree, but as slaves are told to obey in everything and do it heartily, that's the way every employee of every business and boss ought to be as well.

As you do what you're told to do for that business, you should obey in everything inside that little sphere. But you should also work heartily as unto the Lord, knowing that your labor is for the Lord. And so Christians, Christians ought to be the best employees of any and every business that they're a part of. Christians ought not to be the slothful, disagreeable employees that are out there. They ought not to be the ones that are constantly calling in sick, complaining, and arguing. Christians ought to work heartily as unto the Lord because it's not just the man that you're working for, the company that you're working for, but all of your work is heartily as unto the Lord, serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

So Christians ought to do all that they can to help the business or the boss that they work for to be as successful as they possibly can be.

[36 : 15] If you take up the example of Joseph in the Old Testament, he prospered Potiphar. He prospered Pharaoh. Why?

Because that's the work ethic we ought to have to do all we can to prosper those that we work for because we don't really work for them. We work for Christ.

When I was in college, I worked at this little pizza place called Peddler's Pizza, kind of like a little Caesars kind of thing. Buy one, get one free. And some nights it was slow, some nights it was just slam busy.

And I remember several of the people that I would work with and perhaps probably myself, but we'll just put that aside. I remember that when we're 20 minutes before closing and the phone would start to ring, I mean, we'd already had some things cleaned up and you don't really want to dirty it again and clean it again.

You're ready to get out at nine when we close, not at 901, but at nine. It's easy to want to take the shortcuts. It's easy to pick up the phone and say, well, that'll be about 30 minutes because most people don't want to wait 30 minutes for a pizza.

[37 : 32] And I just remember the number of times that my fellow employees and every once in a while, maybe I might have done that where it was just like, man, this is just too busy.

I just want you to understand something that if you are a Christian employee and it is not your business, you ought to be thankful and happy and thriving in a busy work environment because that makes your employer successful.

And that is what we as Christians ought to be about. But employers, they have the same sort of things upon them. If they own a business and they have employees, these are not your menial little peons that you get to just bark orders to and yell at at any moment that you want to.

They're to be treated with justice and with fairness, recognizing that you don't even belong to yourself. The idea of a boss who shows no mercy, a boss who is always yelling and a boss who's ridiculing, a boss who's tearing down, that doesn't fit with this gospel view as well.

Christian bosses ought to be people who are the best people to work for in the industry because they recognize that their work promotes the name of Christ.

[39 : 02] And you don't have to be a Christian business with Christian plastered all over everything to do this well and to do this right. You just need to be someone who is diligent to do what you do for the glory of Christ.

And that leads to one final statement that I would like to make. And to me, this is the most important thing. So if you've fallen asleep in this, wake up. And that is how the gospel makes a difference.

I want you to think about this. This passage that we just read, you'll remember it's in a context. And it's in the context of this letter of Colossians. And these Colossian Christians are being told it's great that you've got Jesus, but Jesus is not enough.

Listen to our false teaching so that you can do something a little better than just Jesus. But Paul's argument has been, no, Christ is supreme over all things. He's the creator of all things.

He has supremacy over all things. He is the one who has triumphed over the principalities and powers. He is the one who has nailed to the cross the decree against us.

[40 : 16] He is the one whose word dwells within us richly. In other words, the salvation that we have comes from him.

The salvation we have is glorious. He himself is glorious. And because of all of that, a slave can live the way he ought to live because of the power of the gospel in him.

Think about this. What would take someone who's a slave, who's living under a harsh master, but he has no political recourse to get out from underneath that thing because the government supports the master.

How is he going to live in such a way as to not be greedy? How is he going to live in such a way as to be forgiving? How is he going to live in such a way as to be merciful and gracious?

How is he going to live in such a way as to take this work his master's given him and do this work for the glory of Christ instead? What kind of power needs to work in him so that under the harshest of circumstances he can do so and it is Jesus Christ, the supreme one, and he's enough.

[41 : 26] He doesn't need for his external circumstances to change in order for him to work heartily as unto the Lord. And what about the boss?

I mean, can you imagine? Can you imagine a master? Maybe used to barking orders, getting his way.

His wife doesn't question him. His children fear him. His slaves do exactly what he says. And then the gospel gets a hold of him.

And now all of a sudden he hears that he's got to love his wife the way Christ loved the church. And he hears that he can't provoke his children and cause them to be hopeless and discouraged and disheartened.

And he's got to treat his slaves in such a way as to recognize their dignity and worth with justice and fairness. It's almost as though Jesus is telling him, listen, take a towel, put it around your waist and

kneel down and wash the feet of your wife.

[42 : 38] Wash the feet of your children. Wash the feet of your slaves. How is a man who's used to having all the power? How can he humiliate himself right before those who he thinks are his inferiors and do so from the heart in such a way as to promote goodness and grace?

What kind of power can change a heart like that? The power of the gospel. And so that leads us to us to consider this idea.

We're called to live the Christian life. We're called to live with forgiveness of people who've done us wrong. We're called to live pursuing after Christ in his word.

Living in unity with the body of believers that he's called us to be a part of. We're called to submit to the governing authorities. We're called to submit wives to their husbands.

We're called to love our wives. We're called to raise our children in the instruction and the admonition of the board. My question is, in all the circumstances of life that you're supposed to be living, do you ever tend to say to yourself, well, if X could happen, then I could be a better Christian in this environment.

[44 : 12] You know, if my wife were just a little bit more submissive, it'd be a lot easier for me to be a Christian husband at home. If my husband was just a good Christian leader, then it would be a lot easier for me to submit to him the way I'm told to in scripture.

If my children were just a little bit more compliant, then it'd be a lot easier for me to live the Christian life and raise them in the instruction of the admonition of the Lord.

If the place I had to work for wasn't so woke and weird and crazy, then I could actually live the Christian life in a little deeper, better way. If I just didn't feel so alone, then I could live out the Christian life in a little deeper, stronger way.

But what this tells us is that none of us needs our external situation to change in order to live the way he's called us to live.

Because the message of Colossians is this, Jesus is enough. Jesus is enough. If a master and a slave can come before the throne and worship together in the same body of believers, treating one another the way they ought to, I'm pretty sure the gospel can help you in your life.

[45 : 40] I'm pretty sure. Let's pray. Let's pray.