

Colossians 3:18-4:1

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Date: 29 October 2017

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[0 : 00] Amen, amen. Thank you, worship team. It's hard for words like that! to not strike your soul I'm Matt, I'm one of the elders here along with Jordan and Dave and it is a true pleasure and a joy each time I'm blessed to be able to come up and share the word and so if you could turn in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3 if you don't have a Bible, that's okay we do have some on the back table and you can take that with you when you go.

Our passage today in our passage Paul gives a series of six commands for how Christians are to live in the household and in work and these commands have followed chapters 1 and 2 which describe who Christ is in his preeminence, his supremacy and how he's come to live in the heart of man then in the first 17 verses of chapter 3 we get details about the new life how the new life through the indwelling Christ changes our inner self and so we must heed the fact that we cannot take these verses out of their immediate context excuse my speaking here what we've learned these last three weeks in Colossians 3, 1-17 is absolutely essential I can't stress that enough what we've learned is essential to our carrying out the commands that we'll read about this morning and so only the putting on and putting off of the inner man can propel us into the type of Christian living that we're called to today and that's what I want us to get in our verses our Colossians 3, 18-4, 1 but our focus today is on all of chapter 3 of Colossians please pray with me

Lord God let our hearts be soft and sensitive to your word this morning my heart Lord and the heart of everyone here God may you receive the reward Lord of your love the reward of Christ's suffering Lord through our lives that we may honor you Lord in all things please allow us each to take something home today Lord from your word Amen So let's start reading in Colossians 3 verse 18 Wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord So what does submit mean?

The term for submit here suggests a voluntary display of cooperation right and so we can see this in Bible times the military usage of this word was when a commander would request that his troops line up right behind him line up in order right and so they would hear the command and they would follow voluntarily right because he's not forcing them to line up although it's a strong request right they're needing to line up and that's their job they're to submit to what the commander says and so that's the same term we see here and so as the commander walks into battle his troops are behind him right and they're walking together he's the head he's leading and they're following in their role of submission so submission is the voluntary not forced acceptance of the one in authority and so what submission does it mean and for many submission carries with it the connotation that women are less important right inferior and oppressed by men often

Bible believing Christians are pegged to supporting gender inequality in the home but Galatians 3 26 you don't have to turn there through 28 says this for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek slave nor free there is no male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus and so God's word friends does not teach that the role of a wife is in any way inferior to that of a husband but that all who are in Christ are one they're equal and anyone that claims that the Bible supports inequality is ill informed and it's our job to using the right words and the right technique help educate Genesis 128 says God created both man and women in his image and so both are born bearing the image of God he has established that spouses positions are different but equal in value so there are some exceptions to when a wife should submit like unbiblical or unethical times and a moral request for submission by the husband

[5 : 42] Vodhi Bachman said this in a sermon on the subject you can husbands cannot command what God forbids or forbid what God commands right I think that's helpful God and his word are our ultimate authority wives it's your ultimate authority on how far your submission should go because marriage is always meant to honor the Lord right so if you're in an unhealthy situation please seek

family friends church leaders someone you trust please do so we've got a definition of what submission is right and we have a distinction about what submission isn't but why should wives submit let's read the rest of Colossians 3 we read it before but let's read it again wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord and so the call to submission is not a suggestion right it's a command it's not an option like if I feel like it it's something wives must do this wives must submit and so it involves a duty right it's a wife's duty it's a mission for a wife to engage on this submission and so by a wife submitting to her earthly head right in turn she brings glory to her spiritual head in Christ by her obedience to him right she's shooting for submission to the

Lord and she's giving submission to her husband and so wife's submission is her service to the Lord lived out in her submission to her husband so why now how should she submit Ephesians 5 23 and 24 tells us for the husband is ahead of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church his body and is himself its savior now as the church submits to Christ so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands and so the church is to submit to Christ in with an unwavering devotion and trust right I don't think we often question how much we should submit ourselves to Christ we don't doubt that we're supposed to submit with a reverence a true reliance right we don't question our submission because it's a joy it ought to be a joy for believers to submit to Christ think about that right it's the church's spiritual act of worship but it's hard

I'm not a wife but I've heard it is hard maybe you're saying you don't know my husband right he's no Christ I know and I'm not saying that he's your Christ that he is Christ right but a wife's level or quantity or quality of submission can't be based off of her assessment of how good her husband is at leading her or how Christ-like he is or his ability to lead and Paul knew that your husbands would never earn the submission that Christ did from the church right never earn that but that's not the point wives are called in this circumstance to submit to their husbands in the same manner that they submit to Christ and that's a high calling I'm not jealous of that command but besides the fact that there's with the truth that there's no doubt submissions hard you may be feeling that it's almost impossible at times like you just can't you can't bring yourself to do it and the true answer to your submission doesn't lie in a wife's ability to change your external circumstances right if I can just get them to be a better leader right if I can get them to be less lazy in the house right if I can get them to take some initiative goodness right you're not trying to change the external factors around your submission you're not trying to coach them to better life choices don't read a book about 10 tips on better ways to submit or don't focus on just trying harder when the time comes right and some of those things are good maybe some of those things could be helpful right but we want we don't want prescriptive answers to our problems we don't want just to say oh here's your symptom go treat your symptom that's treating the symptom we want to treat the problem and so the key to faithfully meeting God's command for submission comes through the effects of the gospel and God's spirit changing the inner person and new life actually empowers and enables you wives to put off the old and put on the new and how does the inner man transform my outer actions maybe you could ask this well here's a few examples of how that process might take place in your life and this is not all encompassing right this is just a few examples but I want us to get the process of what I think Paul's getting at here in these verses and so the first one could be maybe you have trouble submitting because in your arguments about money jobs your house the kids right you have to get the last word wives do you feel that way sometimes and so the reason is that so you know so you both know that your opinion is the right one right it's not submission but the gospel truth behind that right is that the new spirit in Christ means you've been given patience and a mind that can rest deeply rest in the peace of

Christ so it's okay if he doesn't choose what I think is best right my trust is in the Lord that's outward transformation from the inside maybe you get upset thinking about submitting to his decisions and maybe even at times discuss with other people some of these scenarios where your choice really would have been the better one that's just how it is Colossians 3 the gospel truth is that in these sins says this in these sins you once walked when you were living in them but now say but now thank you say it again but now thank you but now you can put them off anger slander malice and put on a heart of humility regardless of whether or not in the end he says you were right honey maybe you don't want to submit right now because frankly you've been let down by your husband's submission and your husband in the past has left you empty handed or embarrassed frankly even though his decision seemed promising but when wives when you put on the mentality of the new man you see your identity is now in Christ right and your life is hidden it's hidden with Christ in God

because of your new foundation so you don't have to despair when your world is crumbling right when things are falling apart when it seems like how could this get any better right because your foundation's in Christ always it's always secure in Christ and so as we've looked at these examples of wives submission some hindrances to that we see the key to changing our outward living comes from the inner man new life in Christ is essential to submission and the gospel transforms your inability into ability husbands it's our turn a wife's submission and a husband's love carry equal weight in equal weight in creating a healthy household in marriage read with me now verse 19 husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them so what does love mean right so we've seen so many people across all of time it seems like come up with a different definition of what love is right or a different example of what love is so for some people love is you can love your animals maybe you love your job maybe you love food maybe you love people maybe you love inanimate objects but which one's right and so the truth is without the correct definition biblical definition of what love is in this case we could have husbands all around the world saying no I'm loving my wife look

I'm loving my wife but we know that's not God's design right love is not a subjective thing love in verse 19 we see does not refer to an affectionate emotional hormone driven type of love and certainly isn't the Hollywood movie infatuation that we see most often portrayed that's not love at all this is a love characterized by sympathy self denial humility and living in a sacrificial manner like Christ did when he loved the church right so he he endured the cross of Calvary for us friends we can't forget that for us and if Christ didn't have an excuse to love the church right husbands we don't the Christ that foreknew what would really happen foreknew in each man or woman's heart his or her devotion to him

[16:02] Christ knew that right and he still he endured the suffering on the cross that's what kind of love he had we're called to love beyond reason just like that right and especially beyond what we think we see in them or how much we think they deserve our love that's Christ's love and we're to regard our wives highly and to consider their needs and their lives above our own which is a truly humbling thing but that's Christ's example that's what husbands are called to a love characterized by compassion and sympathy husbands love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her love and Christ's undying love is to be a husband's aim but apparently some husbands out there may have trouble loving their wives right no we all do

I don't do it I don't live up to the standard of the love that I've been called to and it's hard right it's hard that's why I can't do it it's hard too hard it makes me think a lot I have to work hard I gotta stop at stop and shop before I go home to get flowers I've said that before we have tons of excuses right and if that's not your excuse there's another one I don't have time I'm tired she's so naggy but let's remember that an appropriate expression of love right where does it come from from the inner man right from the changed inner man instead of blaming my lack of love on her or how much time we have or that's just life or the kids are so this or that or how about the things to take care of right let's look at how the gospel of Christ and our new life actually changes us to be able to rely on God's spirit and love like we're called to here's some scenarios again there are many more examples but this is just the process these are meant to show us the process so number one I can't love my wife because something she said or done that's hurt me right and it went down ago but it's still affecting me it's still eating at me inside and I can't give it up so I'm going to be kind of some backhanded comments I'm going to be a little harsher a little bit mean make sure to level the playing fields here right because it hurt and I can set my mind on Christ because of the gospel and the new man who forgave even those who crucified him at Calvary.

Right? And so I can put off anger and I can put on forgiveness, right? Because the new life is rooted in forgiveness. It's firm, right? Like a tree that's waving in the wind, right?

But it's firm. It's not moving. New life in Christ is rooted in a forgiveness because of how Christ has forgiven me on the cross. And so husbands give a humble response to sin, not a harsh one.

[19:36] Set our minds on Christ. Remember, this is all from Colossians 3, 1 to 17, this inner man. So maybe it's selfishness. This is a big one for me. Right?

She can take care of the kids. I'm tired. Work was hard. Besides, if you're a nurse, I change diapers all day at my job. But maybe we need to put off selfishness and self-serving behavior, right?

And put on a compassionate heart that says, you know what? My wife worked hard today too.

Whether she was at home, whether she was at work, whether she was wherever she was, it doesn't matter, right?

Because the gospel breaks us from the chains, right? The bonds, the bonds of selfishness. It breaks those. Right?

We're no longer having to live under the reign of sin and death that Paul talks about in Romans. He's breaking the bounds of selfishness and the spirit urges us towards selfless living.

[20 : 46] And the third example for husbands is, maybe you fail to let your wife get some free time every once in a while, right? And so she's got to keep working. There's stuff that needs to be done in the house. I just can't.

We can't afford this. There's things that need to get done. And it's easy to see how our wives can accommodate our schedules, right? How can I fit her work into what I need to get done?

And so simply, the gospel reality is that the new man yields a love that finds joy in seeking the good of a wife, right?

The new man yields a love that desires the better for the other with nothing in return. And it's a wellspring of thankfulness.

So husbands, when we see ourselves failing to love like we're designed and commanded to, right, in these verses, let's look to God's spirit and the inner man testing to see if we've set our eyes above, if we have put off the old man and put on the new.

[21 : 57] And then from that, let's watch flow, let's watch the flow from our heart of Christ-like attitude. Who we are in Christ, the new man, ready for new living.

So come back to the text with me in verse 20. And this is very segmented, right? But this text is six short commands. And this is how the text is.

So let's jump back in real quick. Verse 20. Children, obey your parents in everything. Ooh, it's a tough one. The word obey here in this context carries with it the meaning of a child hearing the instructions of a parent and becoming fully compliant with them.

Yeah, all the time. The same word is used in the gospels of Matthew and Mark. And once when Jesus calmed the seas and they obeyed him, they obeyed his command and they calmed.

And once when Jesus commanded an unclean spirit to come out of a person and the spirit obeyed, leaving that person immediately. And so obedience here is not the voluntary submission, right, that wives are called to in relation to their husband.

[23 : 18] It is a demanded compliance, right? Children are called to mandatory compliance with parents' requests. This isn't a barter system.

Sometimes it feels like it is, I'm sure. But as any parent knows, the mandatory compliance doesn't always happen, right? And so, in fact, sometimes it looks like our kids are trying hard to intentionally break the rules that we govern them with.

And so, the word obey, again, is another biblical mandate, as it was for husbands and wives. It's in the present imperative form, you English buffs, right?

And what that means is that it illustrates that obedience ought to be a child's regular practice, right?

It ought to be their lifestyle. I don't know about you, but my two-year-old shows that she understands obedience to be a choice and a game and an opportunity to run around and escape.

Daddy. Right? But not a biblical mandate. That's not how she understands it. She doesn't understand that, as her verse says, she should comply in everything, obey in everything, her parents.

[24 : 35] But why? Right? And so, maybe your child asks you that question, too, if they're old enough to, why, mommy? Why, daddy? Why do I have to do this? Why do I have to listen to this rule? Right?

Our text, look back at our text, the second half of verse 20, obey your parents in everything. For this pleases the Lord. Turn to your neighbor and say, the Lord. Oh, that was better participation.

It pleases the Lord, right? And this is important. In my two humbling years of parenting, I've learned the importance of raising a child using God's word as my guide, yet I find so often, right, that I can just shrug off my oldest daughter's disobedience as, oh, she's a kid, right?

She's just a child. Of course she's not going to obey, right? But I can't govern with God's word and then excuse sin. And so I can be really quick to excuse behavior because it's what I expect and it happens every day and she's not perfect and so on and so forth, right?

She's a toddler. And it's easy to lose focus that obedience pleases the Lord and not just me and my wife or not just a parent. But how do we react to our own sin, right?

[25 : 49] Do we shrug off our sin and think like, well, I'm going to sin anyway? I hope we don't. I hope so. Right?

We're called to look deeper into our sin. We're called to find out what's really going on instead of writing it off or figuring out a quick fix, right? We're called to look beneath the surface. And I want us as parents to take the same approach with our kids that we do with our own sin. Pleases the Lord. So the disobedience that we see displayed in our kids comes from the inside just like it does from adults.

And so, let's insert the effort to get our kids to understand heart work and not sin management alone. And let's remind them that they are capable of obedience even when it seems really hard. Even when they want to go out and play. Even when they don't want to eat what's on their dinner plate. It is possible to obey because if they know Jesus personally, right, they've been given a new heart with a new desire.

[26 : 57] Praise the Lord for that. Now, I'm not going to use those words with my two-year-old, right? She's not going to understand when I say, Ellie, you've been given a new heart and new desires. She's going to say, hmm?

But, what she will understand is when I say, Ella, let's pray to Jesus because when we disobeyed, we made Him sad.

And, Jesus wants us to live right and according to the Bible's rules. And, that it's possible to obey with a happy heart because it pleases the Lord when we do.

Do you understand those words? Those are the things we say. get our child to understand that their aim is to please the Lord. So, a charge.

Parents, continue to be diligent and faithful to God's word with your children, encouraging them in ways appropriate to their developmental level to consider what it means to set their mind on things above and to put off the old self and put on the new.

[28 : 02] And, let's be diligent also to pursue those things in our own lives. We're their role models. We're the ones that see Him the most. And so, we need to be set an example for our kids.

We're going to talk about parents in just a moment. May the Lord God be deeply pleased by the obedience that comes from our children both now, right, and when they're adults.

When they have an opportunity to make their own choice to follow the Lord with their lives. It's not what we want for our children. Proverbs 22, 6 says, Train up a child in the way he should go.

Even when he's old, he will not depart from it. Amen. So, the final command in this little section here is to fathers. So, let's go back to our text in verse 21.

Read with me. Fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. This command is given to fathers, right, but because the principles of child rearing and child discipline, the husband and wife are a team.

[29 : 11] That's how God designed it. So, this applies to the fathers and mothers. Let's not forget that. So, what does it mean to provoke its disciplining in a way that irritates or embitters or brings about feelings of resentment in your children?

Though we ought to never desire those things, right, because some of those words Paul mentions as being part of the fruit of the flesh of sin, not fruit of the spirit. We don't want those things to be present in our children.

Paul's thinking here in verse 21 was more along the lines of what we see in his letter to Thessalonians in chapter 2, verse 11, where he says this, we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children.

There is no provoking and encouraging, exhorting, and imploring that Paul talked about there. But I can attest for sure that I've found myself both feeling this way in my heart, but sometimes acting this way outwardly as a parent.

And maybe it's enforcing rules that are like a little silly and a little too heavy on the firm handedness and not heavy enough on the grace side of things.

[30 : 35] Always being on top of my child, quick to discipline, slow to listen to what they have to say. Right? But oh how much we love our children. Oh how much we long for our children to obey but sometimes we can take things too far I think.

And so Paul calls us not to provoke our children to discouragement through our parenting. And I honestly think that sometimes this happens because of what's going on in our own lives.

Right? And just like any other time we don't follow commands, we can think of a series of reasons. And so things like, I don't know, I'm anxious, I'm discouraged, I haven't had enough coffee, right? And this is just how I feel today. I don't know. It's how I feel so I'm going to parent. Right? But praise be to God because of the new life we have in Jesus Christ. I've been given a new heart that can put off anger, that can put off frustration that my toddler brings to me and put on a heart of compassion and sympathy, right?

And I don't have to choose to respond like that anymore in compliance with my old self under the reign of sin and death because I have the spirit of Almighty God leading and empowering me.

[31 : 55] And that's the beauty of the gospel, that's how the gospel transforms our parenting. It's not about changing my child's sleep patterns or how firm or loose my rules are.

I think when we start believing the truth about who we are and the inner man, and once we start setting our eyes above, remembering that the melted popsicle on your kitchen floor really isn't that big of a deal.

How much frustration can that lead to? And our actions will begin to follow suit and will align more with parenting that equips, that encourages, and disciplines, and love, and does not lead our children to being discouraged and hopeless because they can never please you or live up to your standards.

The gospel changes everything. I've been challenged in the last few months to wake up in the morning early before anyone else wakes up.

And I used to have this as my habit and I need it even more now since I have a second child. And I've found that it's just been very easy to be grumpy with my kids and my wife.

[33 : 12] And so I wake up in the morning and I sit before the Lord and I pray and I read my Bible and I say, Lord, I need to be saturated in your word today. Dave talked about that last week. The way we put, one of the three ways we put on the new man is to let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Let it dwell. Let it sit there. Let it simmer. Right? Let it linger in your heart. And so I've noticed that when I, when I approach the Lord in the morning before anyone else is up, before I have an opportunity to parent poorly or to not love my wife well.

Right? I've seen tremendous fruit of that. And yeah, I'm more tired and yeah, I have to put extra effort in and yeah, I have to change around my schedule and go to bed earlier and this, that, and the other thing.

Right? But the fruit that it yields is truly amazing. And the patience that the Lord has enabled me to put on is both humbling but also a reason for joy.

And so putting on the armor of God each morning leads to parenting with grace and parenting with love and patience. My most difficult virtue to put on.

[34 : 23] Fathers and mothers, let God's word be your clothing. That's what put on means, Colossians 3. Let God's word be your clothing. Put it on. And let your life in Christ not only be what your family sees when they look at you but be the foundation of parenting.

So this is the second half of our verses today. Turn with me back to our text. Verse 22. Let's read together. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.

And so, if you're not married and you're not a husband or wife, you don't have kids and you're not a parent, and if you've checked out so far, this is going to be especially important time for you to check in because even if you don't have a physical job working for a boss or company or whatever, you still work every day.

We all work. And so, let's refocus. And if you're not married, if you don't have kids, well, you may be someday.

I was going to say this earlier. These are still truths that are true for us at all times. We still need to get in the habit of loving well and knowing what it means to submit for you who will be wives.

[35 : 40] We need to observe the people who parent that are around us at church. My wife and I have done an incredible amount of observing other parents, and that's been tremendously fruitful.

Even before we have kids, we did that. So, verse 22. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters. What is a bond servant? The idea of masters and bond servants in biblical times can be confusing, but I found this really, really helpful explanation.

The Roman institution of being a bond servant or slave was different from the institution of slavery in North America during the 17th through 19th centuries. Slaves were generally permitted to work

for pay and to save enough money to buy their freedom.

The New Testament assumes that trafficking humans is a sin, and Paul urges Christian slaves who can gain freedom to do so.

And the released slave was officially designated as a freed man and frequently continued to work for his former master. And so, bond servants were not always treated fairly, that's just the reality of the situation.

[36 : 52] But Paul doesn't, in these verses, his aim isn't to support or condemn slavery, right? His aim is to merely put boundaries on the interactions that slaves and masters are to have with each other.

And so, here it comes, get ready. It's thought that more than 50% of people in the Roman Empire were considered bond servants during the time of Paul's writing to Colossians. These men and women were an essential part of a household's everyday work.

bond servants may have signed contracts tying them to a particular master for a designated amount of time. They are then, eh, to be considered today's equivalent of employees.

They were operating under a contract, the authority of a boss who assigned them work, usually allowing them to earn a wage.

All right? Now we see what's going on here. So back to our verse. It could be understood as, in our modern context, employees, obey in everything those who are your employers or your earthly authorities.

[38 : 06] Obey here is the same exact word we see for children in relation to their parents. But before we learn how and why we're to obey, verse 23 shares two ways we're not to obey.

And these really get to the heart. Verse 23, look at the text with me. Not by way of eye service, but as pupil pleasers. So what's eye service, right? So eye service is what happens when you're sitting at your desk or whatever you do for work, work, and you're doing whatever you're doing and the boss comes around the corner, right?

And so you straighten up, you change your conversation to something work related, you stop playing with your phone or watching that YouTube video, you click out of the web browser because you don't need to be looking at the news right now, you need to be looking at how you can finish that assignment you were given.

and so you really quick fix what you're doing to look focused, to look like you're doing work, I'm doing work, right?

Maybe you tuck away your cell phone or the paper football that you were playing with, remember that? And so that's what eye service is.

[39 : 16] Maybe that resonates with you. people pleasing, the second thing Paul lists here, is saying or doing things so the boss might say, right, you're the best, good job, we like you, right?

But the problem is that these kind of things, right, they're not the good old fashioned hard work kind of things that your boss appreciates. What we read in this text from the words that are used here is that, and the original language is that this is, people pleasing are things that involve sacrificing a loyalty to God.

And so, maybe that means being a little relaxed with your language and your word choice at work, or the jokes you tell, or how you act in ways that frankly contradict your faith in Christ.

Maybe it's supporting what you know is wrong, or not sticking up for what you know is right. bring back some memories probably. And this is all done, right, for the sake of how you look in front of other people.

Just think about that for a minute. So, how are believers to obey and work? Verse 22 continues. Look at the text again.

[40 : 36] Sorry, not verse 22, it's verse 23. with sincerity of heart, pleasing the Lord. And so, eye service and people pleasing is not only often sin, right, outright sin, but it's 100% insincere, right?

So, sincerity of heart, it's insincere, it's fake, right? And usually we know that too, we know what we're doing isn't sincere, but we do it because we fear the repercussions of our misused time, or we fear what our coworkers might think if we don't fit in with them or if we don't connect with our boss, right?

It's true. We're not fearing the Lord, we're not sincere. I must admit, right, I'm guilty of some of these things. There's some rules at work which, I don't know, I just don't like them, right?

They're just like, who made that up? I've, I can recall saying things like that before to coworkers not necessarily the bosses, but who made these rules, right?

Who's on the rule committee here, right? I mean, a lot of times it's small stuff, right? It's not big stuff, it's not big violations of rules. Coast guard cadets have a lot of rules.

[41 : 55] Yeah, I saw some good smirks there, right? Maybe there's a lot of rules for EV employees down in the shipyard or wherever you work. But, even the rules that seem small to us are significant.

And I see myself saying, Matt, you don't have to follow these, right? Nobody's looking, nobody's watching you right now. I don't have to follow this rule. It's not a big one, right? It's just a small rule. Because it's inconvenient, right? But, and it's easy to condemn the rules that the bosses have to justify our actions, right?

I don't have to obey this rule about whatever this is, right? Because it's a silly rule. Oh, I just justified my action right there. No problem. Move on. Right?

But there's a war being waged in our mind each day at work, right? To do the things we ought to do, to obey our bosses, to follow the rules of our companies, or wherever we work.

[43 : 01] There's a war. It's hard to obey at work. Maybe you said some of these things, because my manager's not worthy of my hard work. They don't respect me.

They waste my time. They don't appreciate my expertise, my qualification, my big degree, my attitude at the office. They don't respect that.

They don't even care. Why am I going to listen to them? If these thoughts and actions may be true of us at times, think about this.

How much more do we think it would have been true of thoughts of the bond servants who at many times were literally physically abused? Sometimes their rights were taken and they were possessions more than they were people.

This is who Paul's talking to, right? So if he's calling them to act in a certain way of obedience, certainly it's true for us. They're treated far more poorly than we ever would be at our workplaces.

[44 : 05] So the answer to complying with this command to obey at work isn't about, this hits home for me, it's not about getting a new job. I'm not going to obey better by changing departments or trying to work harder at work.

I'm not going to obey better by trying to get my boss fired or trying to join the committee that makes the rules so we can abolish the silly ones. It's not about reading a book that gives you tips on making the most of your workplace or trying to rewrite the rules, right?

New life in Christ actually changes what my work looks like. And so we're going to see that in the next few verses here. Read with me again in verse 23.

This is the last section of our text here. Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you'll receive your inheritance as a reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. A wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he's done. There is no partiality. And then masters, treat your bond servants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

[45 : 26] So regardless of what you do for work, if it's at home, if it's at the office, if it's on the road, if it's at the Coast Guard Academy, if it's in college, whether you're the boss or you're the employee, right?

A Christian's true master is the master in heaven, right? The Lord Jesus. It's Christ that you're working for each time you speak, each time you write or type or go to a meeting or drive or read or care for your children or whatever you're doing from the smallest task to the most significant, right?

I wonder if we'd put more effort in if Christ was the one checking our work, right? If Christ was the one that was coming around the corner at any second, if Christ was the one that we had to show our assignments to or show our completed work to, if Christ was the one that was sitting next to us in a meeting when we were doing something we should and are acting how we shouldn't, how would that change our integrity at work?

Would it? What if he was the one that was watching? And how much more would our work be, right? How much more of Christ in me would my coworkers see?

And what about the chances to share the gospel? Right? But that's the truth, right? Jesus Christ is our master. He is.

[46 : 58] Right? The boss we serve at work isn't our ultimate authority. But the way we submit to Christ, Paul says, is that we need to obey our earthly masters.

We do. And so even in our silly, dumb tasks at work that we're just like, this is so silly. This isn't worth it. We're still serving the Lord and doing that.

And so it can seem so menial, but it's so important in the Lord's eyes that we work with diligence in those things. Christ is our master.

We are bound to him as his servants. In him is our greatest reward, as the text talks about, for any work that could ever be done, for any employee, for all of time.

What I may or might not earn from my boss as a reward, right, it's dust compared to the precious inheritance of a life with God for all of eternity.

[47 : 56] And that's the reward for those whose master is Christ. Right, so he is my motivation for work, not what I see when I go to the office.

all of life is meant to be lived in light of the one who is our heavenly master. Jesus' death on the cross has made a future as part of his family possible.

This gift is bestowed upon those who accept through faith by grace the sufficiency of his blood which is spilled on the cross so that the full wrath of God was taken upon his shoulders and not mine.

And so if you're here today and you haven't made that decision to trust Christ through faith, please do it and begin to walk in the reality, the greatest reality of what it's like to serve the greatest master, the greatest boss, the greatest authority in Christ Jesus and let your work become so much more efficient and so much more effective by serving the Lord Christ and not the person that sits behind the desk.

The Bible says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. And make this choice and begin serving the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[49 : 22] And that's the Christian gospel. And so friends, in closing, that's how it all ties back together when comes to the gospel, right? In our verses today we've seen Paul's command for living in the Christian household and in work.

And we see that these very difficult commands, and they are, these outward displays of Christian living are only possible through new life in Christ.

And when the gospel has brought about real changes in the inner man, through the power and equipment of God's spirit, we're able to set our mind on things above, to put off the old and put on the new man, living informed by who we really are and not the circumstances around us.

We will then, without a doubt, manifest the external expressions of that which we have been called to as God's beloved children. Please pray with me.

Lord God, I pray that each of us here, Lord, would be affected with your word this morning. God, that our lives would be transformed and made new in our interactions at home and at work.

[50 : 48] Whoever we are, whatever we do for work, however big or small our family is, God, may our lives be affected externally by the realization and empowerment of your spirit that has changed us inside.

And God, I thank you for the good and precious gospel truth that those who trust in you for their sufficiency before the Father, Lord, are saved and they've passed from death to life, Lord, and they have joined your family.

God, may we make you, Lord, each day our master. God, may we serve you in our homes and in work, for you are worthy of this thing. In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.