

SERMON NOTES - Leaders and Authorities #2 - "Masters"

A Recap: Authority affects all of us all the time, and how you respond and relate to authority is a major factor in how happy and successful you will be on earth, and in where you spend eternity - heaven or hell - because God is a King Ps 47:7.

Romans 13:1 - "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God."

Proverbs 29:2 NKJV - "2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan." (Also see 1 Peter 2:17 & Titus 3:1-2)

Purpose of authority:

- For God's blessing and good to flow to people - Rom 13:4
- To bring about peace and order - 1 Tim 2:2
- To facilitate God's will and plan, most importantly so that people can get saved - 1 Tim 2:4

Why do we allow people to tell us what to do? Why can governments and others control our lives? There are 3+1 reasons...people are either UNINFORMED, COERCED, SUBMITTING WILLINGLY (though often reluctantly), or doing it in order to obey and serve GOD.

Bosses & "Masters", Slaves and Employees

Do you hate your job? Are you just working to pay the bills so you can enjoy your "real" life outside of work? When do you do your "ministry"? What does God say about employees, our jobs, and being a boss?

Paul's life and teachings regarding work, bosses and being an employee / servant:

AD 49 / 51 - Paul 45 yoa - Galatians early in his ministry.

Galatians 3:28 — There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

AD 51 - Paul 46 yoa - From Corinth where he was working as a tentmaker (Acts 18:1-3) - 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 - "11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing."

AD 54 - Paul 49 yoa - 1 Corinthians from **Ephesus** while **working** making tents.

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

1 Corinthians 10:31 - "31 Therefore, whether you **eat or drink, or whatever you do**, do all to the glory of God."

2 Corinthians 4:5 - "5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your **bondservants** for Jesus' sake."

In his **Ephesus** time with Priscilla and Aquila, Paul worked with Priscilla and Aquila in the tent business with amazing results - See Below*

AD 60 - Paul 55 yoa in prison - Philemon was written by Paul from **Rome** to Philemon in **Colosse** about **Onesimus** (which means "**profitable**"), a runaway slave.

Philemon 1:10-11 - "10 I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains, 11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me."

Philemon 1:15-16 - "15 For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave--a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord."

Also written from **Rome** =

Colossians 3:22-4:1 - "22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. 1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

Also written from **Rome** (to Timothy in **Ephesus**) =

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

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

Also written from **Rome** = **Ephesians 6:5-9**

The main points

- Serve as to God, not men
- Serve sincerely and well - it matters
- Be a witness at work
- God is your boss and He pays your salary, but He also wants workers in all places (Lk 10:1-7)

We spend so much time and energy at work - it MUST matter to God and be for God.

* Paul as a Tentmaker in Corinth and Ephesus

Acts 18:1-3 — After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

Acts 18:18-19 — So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts 20:33-35 — "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. "I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Acts 19:10-12 - "10 And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them."

What was a “Bondservant” / slave?

By New Testament times, one third of the Roman population were slaves, and another third had been slaves earlier in life but had secured their freedom usually by paying their way out.

1. Treat them well

Colossians 4:1 - "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

In the Jewish OT law slaves were freed after 6 years, but could voluntarily remain or become slaves. Exodus 21:2 . If a master beat or harmed a slave, then the slave could go free. Exodus 21:26-27

2. Slave trading disallowed

Exodus 21:16 - "16 "He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death."

1 Timothy 1:9-10 NIV - "9 We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10 for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine"

3. They were often rich and respected

Jesus referred to slaves and owners in His parables - Matthew 25:14-30 - (A "talent" in Bible times was worth £264,000 today)

Luke 12:44 - "Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has."

They were often highly paid and trusted servants of higher social standing than day labourers and could include doctors. They could normally buy their freedom by age 30.

4. We are all slaves of God and serve people as part of our service to God

Mark 10:43-44 - "43 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. 44 "And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all." (Philippians 2:5-7)

What about a bad or unfair boss?

- Stay and submit until you can no longer endure
- Obey unless it is a command to sin
- Leave if you must - e.g. David fled from his boss, Saul.

Being a good boss - Colossians 4:1 - "Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

The purpose of authority - to establish God's kingdom and purposes on earth -

1 Timothy 2:1-4 — Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.