

THE HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

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MASTER AND SERVANT

Reading through the numerous laws and rules of the Old Law may seem pointless to us today, but there are actually many important things we can learn. I recently read one that made me think:

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out

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by himself. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever." (Exo. 21:2-6)

If you were in the situation to choose between a stable life serving a kind and fair master, having a wife and children you loved, or having your freedom, what would you choose? How much do we value freedom and what price would we be willing to pay for it?

Have you ever thought about how Jesus' life basically mirrored this example? He chose to be a servant (Php. 2:7). He loved His Master (John 14:31). He loved His wife, the Church (2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25). And He served His Master fully! *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Php. 2:8).

Jesus exemplified what He taught: leadership through service. He became the Captain of our salvation and our King through His sacrifice. *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."* (Heb. 2:9-10)

When Israel desired a king, God, through Samuel, warned them of the cost of what they asked (1 Sam. 8:9-18). The bottom line was that their lands, their animals, even they or their children might be taken by the king for his service. In a kingdom, everyone is a servant of the king.

How important is it to God that we are free? *"Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men"* (1 Cor. 7:21-23).

Servitude has actually been very common among God's people. Jacob was a servant unto Laban for twenty years. Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers. The Children of Israel eventually became slaves in Egypt. After gaining the Promised Land, the Children of Israel, because of their continual disobedience, were time and again brought into subjection by the Amorites, Philistines, or some other nation. Eventually the nations of Israel and Judah were conquered and taken captive by the Assyrians and Babylonians respectively. After returning from captivity, the Jews were always in subjection to others. They returned under the rule of the Persians, then were overtaken by the Greeks, and finally the Romans who were still in power in Christ's day.

On a larger scale, Noah's youngest son, Ham, sinned and his descendants were cursed to be servants (Gen. 9:20-27). That is about one-third of the human race who were destined to by-and-large be servants throughout history. After sinning in the Garden of Eden, God spoke to Eve and said, *"thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"* (Gen. 3:16).

The degree to which we find ourselves in subjection to others really matters very little. In fact, the freer a person is, the more opportunity they have to become involved in things that are inappropriate.

This country was founded on the premise that its

citizens should be free. Free from the tyranny of oppression that had been so common in Europe. However, as prosperity increased after the Second World War, freedom began to turn to self-indulgence, decadence, excess, and debauchery.

Jesus said that real freedom was to be found not by escaping tyrants or masters. He said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). We can logically say then, that bondage comes through ignorance and lies. The bondage that we can escape through a knowledge of the truth is the bondage to sin.

Can we really be in bondage to sin? "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*" (Rom. 6:12-13). Sin can reign over us better than any human king. The difference is that we might resist the human king, but we enjoy sin and willingly submit to it, not recognizing our bondage.

As Paul continues in Romans 6 verse 13, he says we do have the option of submitting ourselves to God. As you continue reading the next few verses, one thing becomes very clear: we will be a servant to some master. We will either serve sin, and by default the Devil, or we will serve God. There is no other alternative.

Those of a liberal mindset in the world say that religion is repressive, constraining, and confines and limits the human spirit. These kind of people are like a spoiled two year old throwing a temper tantrum when they don't get their way. "*For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is*

overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Pet. 2:18-19).

Jesus taught many things that appear strange at first glance. He said the *"first shall be last; and the last shall be first"* (Matt. 19:30). *"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant"* (Matt. 23:11). *"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted"* (Matt. 23:12). *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"* (Matt. 19:24).

None of these things Christ said appear to make any sense. And indeed in the world of men they are complete nonsense. But that is really the point. The true wisdom of God often runs contrary to the logic of man.

Man yearns to be free, but in doing so he runs headlong into the Devil's snare and becomes a captive to the most sinister master of them all: sin. Seeking freedom results in bondage. But voluntarily accepting bondage (to God) gives us freedom. *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage"* (Gal. 5:1).

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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Is it appropriate to take the Lord's Supper (Communion) alone when no others in a gathering are partaking?

ANSWER: In Scripture our English words "communion" and "fellowship" are translations from the Greek word "koinōnia." They refer to

something shared in common. Consider the following scriptures where the Greek word "koinōnia" is also used.

- *"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution [koinōnia] for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem"* (Rom. 15:26)
- *"The right hands of fellowship [koinōnia]"* (Gal. 2:9)
- *"For your fellowship [koinōnia] in the gospel"* (Php. 1:5)
- *"For your liberal distribution [koinōnia] unto them"* (2 Cor. 9:13)

All of these scriptures denote common participation.

As it concerns our participation in the Lord's Supper, Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."*

The communion was designed by our Lord to be a time of remembrance, a memorial service. He said to the disciples, *"This do in remembrance of Me"* (Luke 22:19). He assured the early disciples that He would be with them (in spirit) as they continued this observance in the coming kingdom (Matt. 26:29). Confirmation of the continuing observance of the communion is recorded in Acts 20:7, alluded to in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 as a recognized time of assembly, and in Hebrews 10:25 as the writer warned against forsaking the assembly in which the primary purpose was this time of remembrance.

To also be noted is that the communion was never recorded as being observed apart from the assembly. It was designed to be a "joint participa-

tion," as is the meaning of the word communion. In every Biblical example or instruction regarding the communion, an assembly is noted. The original observance (Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22). "*When the disciples came together*" (Acts 20:7). "*That ye come together*" (1 Cor. 11:17). "*When ye come together in the church*" (1 Cor. 11:18). "*When ye come together therefore into one place*" (1 Cor. 11:20). "*When ye come together to eat, tarry one for another*" (1 Cor. 11:33).

The Lord's people normally participate collectively in five actions when they assemble: (1) pray (1 Cor. 11:24, 14:15), (2) sing (1 Cor. 14:15, 26, Heb. 2:12), (3) teach (1 Cor. 14:23-40, Acts 20:7), (4) observe the communion (1 Cor. 11:17-34, 10:16-17) and (5) contribute of one's means (1 Cor. 16:1-2, 2 Cor. 9:7).

Numerous records are found in the New Testament of individual Christians (women as well as men) engaging daily in prayer (Acts 8:22-24, 20:36), singing (Acts 16:25, Jam. 5:13), teaching (Acts 18:24-26, 21:9, 2 Tim. 1:5) and contributing to needs (Acts 4:34-37). It is to be noticed, however, that never do we read of individual Christians observing the communion alone. The Lord designed the communion to be a collective act, not that of an individual apart from the assembly. We are informed in Hebrews 10:24-25 "*to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.*" The communion, even as the word suggests, is not an individual act, but to

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Gospel Meetings

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
May 2 - 4	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 4 - 9	Mount Zion Crab Orchard, KY	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)
May 19 - 21	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

be a joint participation with those of like purpose. This is the reason we do not take the Lord's supper to individuals who may have not been present at the assembly or those who may have been in the hospital. Communion is a collective act - not that of an individual. Paul wrote that our service to God is a "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). We do not forsake the assembly when it is unreasonable for us to be present. We might be seriously ill or have car trouble on the way to the assembly and cannot continue.

If individual communion (which is contrary to the word's meaning) could be taken to one not present and it be communion, then that would logically permit one to partake of his own individual communion while at the lake fishing. Beware what this would permit, for Paul warned of such when he wrote, "*Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*" (Rom. 14:22). We are not at all calling into question one's sincerity or good intent, but simply to place emphasis upon the proper Biblical arrangement of this most meaningful memorial service.

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