

“Called as Stewards - *In the World*”

Introduction

- Through the Cultural Mandate of Gen. 1:28, God commanded mankind to work in the world in order that it might flourish for His glory. The entrance of sin into the world meant that workers were now in bondage to sin (prone to rebellion and selfishness) and work itself was subjected to futility. In order to serve God faithfully in their work, sinful men and women would need to be redeemed. The ultimate OT picture of this is found in the Exodus.
- In Christ, God has accomplished a greater redemption than even the Exodus. Believers are delivered from slavery to sin, becoming servants (*oikonomoi/douloi*) of the Lord Jesus.

1 Cor. 7:22-23a—²² *For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ.* ²³ *You were bought with a price;*

Key Point: As those who have been bought with a price, we view our work in the world as a _____ from God to serve Him for His glory, and others for their good.

The Significance of Lordship Imagery

Lordship & the Exodus

- Having been delivered from death through the work of Joseph, the people of Israel had flourished in Egypt (Exod. 1:1-7). Eventually, the Pharaoh who did not know Joseph determined to treat them as slaves rather than willing servants.

Exod. 7:10-11a—¹⁰ *Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.* ¹¹ *Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens.*

- The Lord determined to rescue Israel from these earthly masters because He was their true Lord.

Exod. 3:7—*Then the Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,*

Exod. 3:13-15—¹³ *Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”* ¹⁴ *God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”* ¹⁵ *God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘THE LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.*

⇒ The name “Yahweh” (Jehovah), translated as “THE LORD,” recognizes God as “the unchanging, eternal, self-existent God.” Although all owe their existence to Him, it is those who experience His redemption that truly come to know THE LORD as *their* Lord.

Exod. 7:16a—*And you shall say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.”’*

Key Point: The people of Israel were to understand themselves as the _____ of the Lord in light of the redemption that He has accomplished for them and to conduct themselves as such.

Lordship & Slavery in Rome

- Slaves in the Roman world were often foreigners who were prisoners of war, sailors captured and sold by pirates, or slaves bought outside Roman territory. Many slaves worked as household servants and some were even educated. A distinct feature of Roman slavery was that of manumission (the ability of slaves to be freed).
- In the NT, instructions are given to both bondservants (slaves) and masters as to how to conduct themselves as believers. Moreover, the imagery of slavery and freedom is used to help Christians understand their identity in relation to the Lord Jesus.

1 Pet. 1:18-19—¹⁸ *knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,* ¹⁹ *but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

Jude 1:4b—*...ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Key Point: As believers, we are to understand ourselves as the servants of the Lord in light of the _____ that has been accomplished for us in Christ and to conduct ourselves as such.

Working for Our True Master & Lord

Eph. 6:5-9—⁵ *Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶ not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. ⁹ Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.*

Observations

1. Believers are to recognize the legitimate, _____ authority of those who employ them.
2. For believers, our _____ conduct should reflect the _____ change that Christ has made in us.
3. Our work is ultimately to be done in service to _____, who will reward His faithful servants.
4. Those who have authority over others are to exercise it as those who know that they themselves have a _____.

Titus 2:9-10—⁹ *Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.*

Observations

1. Believers are to honor those in authority over them in terms of both our _____ and our _____.
2. Believers are to be considered _____ by those with authority over them.
3. Our testimony in our work is to reflect positively on the _____.

1 Pet. 1:18-19, 21—¹⁸ *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly...²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps*

Observations

1. Believers must recognize that there will be times where we will _____ unjustly in our work.
2. We must keep the _____ central in our minds and hearts as we face the frustrations and difficulties of working in the world.

Key Point: Our recognition of Jesus' _____ should significantly affect how we view our work as well as those for whom and with whom we work.

Concluding Thought

- **Through the redemption that is in Christ, our work here on earth has _____ as well as temporal value because we are serving God as we serve others.**

“Everyone will be forgotten, nothing we do will make any difference, and all good endeavors, even the best, will come to naught. Unless there is God. If the God of the Bible exists, and there is a True Reality beneath and behind this one, and this life is not the only life, then every good endeavor, even the simplest ones, pursued in response to God's calling, can matter forever.”

Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*