

Freedom In Servitude

1Co 7:22 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**. **23** Ye are **bought with a price**; be not ye the servants of men. (*1 Pet 1:18-19 ...precious blood of Christ...*)

- A paradox is a statement or word, according to Webster, *that seems contradictory, but may be true in fact* and is also *a statement that is self-contradictory and hence, false*. Thus, for there to be freedom in servitude, it would depend on the context under discussion. Most people don't know what it's like to be a slave. There are those whose ancestors were slaves but only know through the stories that were passed down from generation to generation as to the magnitude of the things their ancestors suffered at the hands of their masters. And not all slaves were of **African** descent either. There were many who came to **America** to escape the ruthlessness of their land owners where they were considered nothing more than chattel that was sold with the very property they lived on. So to many today, being considered a slave might not carry much personal meaning but to those in **Christ** it should mean the world, as it especially did to those **Christians** who lived during the height of the **Roman Empire**. Then, persecution was permitted and even encouraged because of the vanity and jealousy of the **Caesars** that anyone would worship something or someone before the emperors themselves.

2Ti 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

- Even **Roman** citizens, who were given certain privileges because of their birth, weren't immune to the wrath of the government. (*For example, Paul wasn't crucified as was Peter but was beheaded instead because of his status as a Roman citizen.*) Any citizen of an occupied country would have been considered a servant to the occupiers but those who were born in a province of the dominant country, in **Paul's** case **Rome**, were considered citizens of that country.

Act 22:3 I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

Act 22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. **23** And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air, **24** The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. **25** And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and un-condemned? **26** When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. **27** Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. **28** And the chief captain answered, **With a great sum** obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was **free born**. **29** Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Old Testament Servitude

Lev 25:39 And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt **not compel him to serve as a bondservant**: 40 **But as an hired servant** (*In Lk 15:19 the “prodigal” son asked his father to make him as one of the “hired servants”.*), and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, *and* shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: 41 And *then* shall he depart from thee, *both* he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. 42 For they *are* My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bondmen. 43 Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor; but shalt fear thy God.

Deu 15:16 And it shall be, if he say unto thee (*after his time was fulfilled that he should serve*), I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; 17 Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust *it* through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant forever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

- Thus the ring in an ear denotes the person wearing it as someone's slave and it was their choice to serve their master for the rest of their lives. After slavery was abolished in this country, there were many slaves who stayed on with their former masters because of the positive treatment they received as slaves. **Jews** were not permitted to keep each other as slaves, unless it was of a mutual understanding and only then as “hired servants”, but they could purchase from among the **Gentiles** as slaves, who were living in the land of promise.

Lev 25:44 Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, **shall be of the heathen that are round about you**; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. 45 Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

New Testament Servitude

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (*Everyone is to be of equal status under the New Testament.*)

- Whatever the case was between **Onesimus** and **Philemon**, their relationship was that of a servant to his master. Since **Philemon** was a noted **Gentile Christian** his treatment of **Onesimus** would **not** have been so harsh that **Onesimus** would leave him for that reason.

Phm 5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; 6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

- Whether **Onesimus** was working off a debt or was sold to **Philemon** as a slave, **Philemon** had certain rights to him that **Onesimus** had violated by leaving.

Phm 10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds (*Became a Christian from Paul's teaching while in prison.*): 11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

- His return to face whatever consequences, then having been due to his acknowledging his service to **Philemon**, was actually recognized, to him, as fulfilling his service to **Christ**. As a **Christian** now, **Onesimus** would have been taught by **Paul** what his responsibilities to **Philemon**, as a servant, actually were.

Col 3:22 Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as menpleasers (*don't obey them only in their presence*); but in singleness of heart (*sincerity of mind*), fearing God: **23** And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, **as to the Lord**, and not unto men; **24** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: **for ye serve the Lord Christ**. (*Our ultimate wages come from service to Christ.*)

Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free. **9** And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. (*Our status with God isn't determined by whether we are "masters" or "slaves", employers or employees. What matters to Him is how we treat each other according to His will. And our work ethic should be as though God is our Employer!*)

"Scripture does not sanction slavery, but at the same time does not begin a political crusade against it. It sets forth principles of love to our fellow men which were sure (as they have done) in due time to undermine and overthrow it, without violently convulsing the then existing political fabric, by stirring up slaves against their masters." (JFB Commentary)

- Slavery comes in different forms. According to **Jesus** one can be a slave to sin.

Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, **If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33** They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? **34** Jesus answered them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35** And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but the Son abideth ever.* **36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

- Servants were not considered as heirs of the inheritance of their masters. But **Jesus**, as the sole **Heir of God's inheritance**, the church, can distribute it to whomever **He** will.

Heb 2:10 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. **11** For both He that sanctifieth **and they who are sanctified** *are* all of **one**: for which cause **He is not ashamed to call them brethren**, **12** Saying, I will declare Thy name **unto My brethren, in the midst of the church** will I sing praise unto Thee.

- In order to receive the inheritance then, **Jesus** makes us **His siblings** by **His sacrifice** and our obedience. The **Jews** were enslaved to the **Old Mosaic Law**.

Gal 4:1 Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child (*here referring to the state of Israel under the Old Covenant*), differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; **2** But is under **tutors and governors** (*Mosaic law*) **until the time appointed** of the father. **3** Even so we, **when we were children, were in bondage** under the elements of the world:

Gal 3:23 But **before faith came, we were kept under the law**, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. **24** Wherefore the **law was our schoolmaster** to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. **25** But after that faith (*gospel*) is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (*Mosaic law*).

Gal 4:4 But when the **fulness of the time was come**, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman (*came in physical form, a body was prepared for Him – Heb 10:5*), made under the law (*when the Old Testament sacrificial system was still in affect*), **5** To redeem them that were under the law (*the Jews*), that **we** might receive the **adoption of sons** (*just as the Gentiles did*). **6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. **7** Wherefore thou art **no more a servant, but a son**; and if a son, **then an heir** of God **through Christ**.

Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized **into Jesus Christ** were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was **raised up** from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also** should walk in newness of life. **5** For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

- The **Jews** were not automatically transferred into the **New Testament** relationship as sons of **God** without first being “*born*” into it. But they weren’t the only ones who could enter it either.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

Gal 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Rom 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you (*Jew or Gentile*), He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. **12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. **14** For **as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God**. **15** For ye have not received the **spirit of bondage*** again to fear; but ye have received the **Spirit of adoption**, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit Himself **beareth witness with our spirit**, that **we are the children of God**: **17** And **if children, then heirs**; heirs of God, and **joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with *Him*, that we may be also glorified together.

- spirit of bondage- **Christians live under a New Covenant with God which is contrary to the Old Covenant under which only the Jews lived.** “*The [Mosaic] law contained more than 600 laws and this system burdened those who lived under it*”. (Brad Price) The “*Spiritual Jews*” (*which include both Jew and Gentile-Rom 2:28-29*) live under a system of adoption whereby we have freedom through our **voluntary** servitude to the **Master**.
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- beareth witness with our spirit- **This is done when we mortify the deeds of the body.** As we are led by the **Spirit** breathed pages of the **New Testament** we bear witness that we are the **children of God** thus **Holy Spirit** confirms it. “*The Spirit’s evidence to prove that someone is a Christian is so strong there is no doubt as to who is saved and who is not*”. (Brad Price)

Col 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, Who hath **made us meet** (*Gk.2427- to enable, that is, to qualify*) **to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:** **13** Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness**, and hath **translated** (*Gk.3179- to transfer, exchange*) **us into the kingdom of His dear Son:** (*We have been transferred, as was Enoch [Gen 5:24], from one realm into another; from the physical into the spiritual, from an earthly citizenship into a heavenly one.*) **14** In Whom we have **redemption through His blood**, *even* the forgiveness of sins: **15** Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn (*Gk.4416- Firstbegotten*) of every creature: **16** For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: **17** And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. **18** And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead (*first to be resurrected never to die again*); that in all *things* He might have the preeminence.

- **Once the “Only-begotten Son” of God (1 Jn 4:9) through His sacrifice He was able to bring “many sons unto glory” (Heb 2:10) thus becoming the Firstborn from the dead.**

“God’s interest in us has been compared to children from broken homes. Because of divorce, parents often “sue for custody rights.” In these cases judges may grant weekend visitation rights, holiday rights, summer rights, etc. Many parents want “full custody” of their children, and this is how God the Father views His children. He doesn’t want “weekend” or “summer” rights to them [God doesn’t only want us on Sundays!]. He wants His to be His people all the time. Satan also wants “visitation rights” in our lives, and he too is willing to adopt us into his family. We decide who we want to be with, and when we decide for God, we have all spiritual blessings if we remain faithful to the Lord.” (Brad Price)

The Price of Servitude

Rom 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? **17** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. **18** Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. **19** I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. **20** For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness (*could do whatever you wanted unleashed*). **21** What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. **22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye **have your fruit unto holiness**, and the end everlasting life. **23** For the **wages (“paycheck”) of sin (what I earn for sinning) is death**; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that **ye were not redeemed with corruptible things**, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation **received by tradition from your fathers;** **19** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot:

Lev 25:47 And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger *or* sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: **48** After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: **49** Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or

any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. 50 And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubilee: and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. 51 If *there be* yet many years *behind*, according unto them he shall give again **the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.** 52 And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, *and* according unto his years shall he give him again **the price of his redemption.**

Joh 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will *My* Father honour.

Gal 5:13 For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty (*Gk.1657- freedom*); only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh (*Gk.4561- human nature*), but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

- Our human nature brings out our selfishness. We are to serve our neighbor as we would serve the self.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should **not serve sin.** 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God (*the gospel*); but with the flesh (*Gk.4561- human nature*) the law of sin.

1Pe 2:15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 As free (*Gk.1658- unrestrained, that is, [as a citizen-here of Heaven] not a slave-here of the physical*), and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness (*Don't hide behind the gospel as means to get away with sin, just as Paul could not hide behind his Roman citizenship to get away with insurrection.*), but as the servants (*Gk.1401- a slave [voluntarily]*) of God.

3Jn 9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who **loveth to have the preeminence** among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church. 11 Beloved, **follow not that which is evil**, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, **He led captivity captive**, and gave gifts unto men.

- Those who once served sin unto death now serve **Christ** unto eternal life.

Heb 12:27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we **receiving a kingdom** which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God *is a consuming fire*.

- All the physical creation will one day be dissolved so that the only thing that will remain is that which cannot be dissolved, the spiritual realms of **Heaven and Hell**. Receiving a kingdom means it is still available to those who are being added to her, those who are being “translated in the kingdom (*i.e., the church*) of His dear Son” (*Col 1:13*).

Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word **were baptized**: and the same day there were **added unto them about three thousand souls**. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And **the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved**.

- In order to be added to the church, people need first to believe in God, but...

Hear: **Romans 10:14** ... "how shall they believe in **Him Whom** they have not heard?"

Believe: **Heb 11:6** ... "for he that commeth to **God** must believe that **He** is"...

Repent: **Act 3:19** ... "Repent ... be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..."

Confess: **Mat 10:32** "**Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Who is in Heaven.**"

Be baptized: **Acts 2:38** "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name (*authority*) of Jesus Christ **for** the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Remain faithful: **1 Cor 6:20** ... "For ye are bought with a price (*God is our rightful owner because He bought us with the precious blood of His Son our Saviour*): therefore glorify **God** in your body, and in your spirit, which are **God's**."

We are either owned by God or by Satan and our decision in life determines who has “custody” of us. We also determine who has “visitation rights” and sometimes Christians haven’t given their entire time over to the Father. There needs to be a commitment as to who will have the ultimate custody of our souls when this life is over. Whether an eternal life in Heaven with God or an eternal condemnation in Hell forever separated from the Father. The choice is up to us.

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