



Jesus is Lord!
GCSP – 03/15/2008

As of a couple of weeks ago I was planning on preaching a sermon about what God's Word says about dealing with difficult times. We seem to currently have an inordinate amount of folks in our church who are indeed dealing with difficult times. Some are dealing with severe financial struggles, some are dealing with emotional strain over family issues, and many are dealing with elderly parents and relatives who are facing their final stage of life. That was my plan anyway.

While I was attending the pastor's conference last week, the Holy Spirit prompted me to go in a different direction. And while tonight's topic is not specifically on how to deal with tough times, I believe in the end the principle we will study this evening is truly the key to dealing with difficulty in any area of human life.

Let's pray.

This Book we call the Bible is offensive. It is offensive to unbelievers and it is even at times offensive to believers. The terms, concepts, and principles contained within its pages are in direct opposition with how the world and how most Christians desire to live.

- The world proclaims that we should have a life of luxury and ease; the Bible says we are to live a life of contentment no matter what our circumstances may be.
- The world says that we should live in the moment and to always choose what is best for you; the Bible says to live with eternity in view and to always do what is best for others.
- The world says that if your good outweighs your bad you will go to heaven; the Bible says no one can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ.
- The world says we should be tolerant of all beliefs (except Christianity), all creeds, all sexual orientations, all women's right to choose, and all moral differences; the Bible says there is only one righteous choice in all things.

Unfortunately, as the case is almost always, the church has by and large submitted to the authority of the world and shunned the authority of the Bible. And in her attempt to be less offensive, the church has shifted her focus on many key and core doctrines of God's Word.

For example: The church has focused on Jesus as Savior and has minimized the fact that He is Lord. If you were to do a careful word study through the New Testament, you would find that Jesus is referred to as Lord over 600 times, while He is referred to as Savior only 21 times. That is an amazing statistic.

I have heard many people in the churches I have been a part of make the following statement, "*I accepted Jesus as my Savior many years ago but only recently made Him Lord of my life.*" While I may understand their meaning, and while they may be trying to say something else, beloved you simply cannot separate the two. You cannot have Jesus as your Savior if you do not also have Him as your Lord.

But having a lord over your life is offensive. If you have a lord then you must also have a servant. A lord has to be lord over someone or something to be a lord. It's just like the being a leader; you have to have followers to be a leader. If you think you are leading other people and you turn to find no one is following, you are just taking a walk. So the concept of having a lord over your life is making a statement that you are the servant; and the world has proclaimed that being a servant is offensive.

If you think that is offensive, you haven't seen anything yet. I am going to reveal something to you tonight that may shock you. It has in essence been a cover up though the centuries in Bible translation to avoid being offensive.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Romans 1**.

Romans 1:1a

I am sure we have several different Bible translations represented in this crowd tonight, so I want you to read that very first phrase to us.

Almost all major translations all the way back to Tyndale, who was the first to translate the entire Bible into English, use the term servant or bond-servant for the Greek word "*doulos*." The only modern translation that consistently translates *doulos* properly is the Holman Christian Standard Bible, which says, "**Paul, a *slave* of Jesus Christ.**" The New American Standard Bible does a decent job of properly translating *doulos* but only when the context is generic and less specific to us personally.

The purposeful error of translating *doulos* as servant or bond-servant, made by Tyndale, Calvin, and the team commissioned by King James, has continued even today. Another new English translation is in the works right now and a well-known pastor asked one of the translators what they did with the word *doulos*. The translator simply hung his head, not needing to say anything to the pastor.

This translator along with every other translator through the ages knows that the only valid translation of *doulos* is slave. There are other Greek words that can rightfully be translated as servant, but not *doulos*.

The Holman Christian Standard Bible has this to say in its notes concerning *doulos*:

*"The strong Greek word *doulos* cannot be accurately translated in English by servant or bond-servant; the HCSB translates this word as slave, not out of insensitivity to the legitimate concerns of modern English speakers, but out of a commitment to accurately convey the brutal reality of the Roman empire's inhumane institution as well as the ownership called for by Christ."*

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, considered by most Bible scholars to be the finest, most exhaustive, and most accurate dictionary of Greek words, says *doulos* is slavery, compulsory service, dependence on a lord. The word has a sense of a violent aversion to bondage.

Strong's Concordance simply defines *doulos* as "a slave."

Vines Expository Dictionary defines *doulos* as "in bondage."

The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary defines *doulos* as "slave."

You will not find any reliable biblical resource that defines or translates *doulos* as servant or bond-servant; it simply cannot be done and stay true to the meaning of the word. As a matter of fact, whenever you see the prefix "bond" added to the word servant you must understand that "bond" never appears at all in the Greek. But I will say that the translators who added the word "bond" were at least making an attempt to move closer to the true meaning of *doulos*.

Let's go through several verses that use the word *doulos* or a form of the word (about 150 in total).

Matthew 8:5-9

Many translations properly translate *doulos* in **verse 9**, primarily because we are dealing with a Roman centurion as the master, or lord, over this person. It is somehow not so offensive in this instance.

Matthew 10:24-25

Again, many translations properly use the word slave in this passage because it is used in a more generic sense.

Matthew 18:21-35

This is again a generic story where the use of the word slave would be expected and would not necessarily offend anyone.

Matthew 23:11

Now we are getting more personal. Jesus isn't telling a parable or a story about the hated and cruel Romans, now He is speaking directly to His disciples and directly to you and me in the context of this verse. Here is where most translators determined that slave was too offensive to use.

This is the pattern throughout the Gospel accounts. When Jesus is relating a story or a parable, the word slave is used in many of the modern translations, but when He is speaking directly to His disciples or when the application is made to His followers, it is usually translated as servant. We are going to look at another Gospel example in a little while but I want to first move on to several instances in the rest of the New Testament.

Galatians 1:10

Paul is stating in this argument that he is a slave of Jesus Christ, not simply a servant.

Colossians 4:12

The NASB got closer here but somehow felt the need to add that prefix "bond."
Epaphras was a slave of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:22-26

"The Lord's slaves..." refers to whom in this passage? That would be us. If you are a genuine Christian you are a slave of Jesus Christ; which is a good thing because you once were a slave to sin and a slave to Satan – even if you didn't realize it.

James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Revelation 1:1

Each of these godly men had no qualms at all referring to themselves as slaves of Jesus Christ. Why the translators felt they needed to soften the term is a mystery.

So you may be wondering what the big deal is? Does it really matter? Is the difference between a servant and a slave all that important in the scheme of things?

Let me answer by asking a different question. Does a servant have a choice when given a command? If he or she wants to keep their position as servant then they do not have a choice, but if they decide they don't want to put up with this anymore they can choose to disobey and move on.

Does a slave have a choice when given a command?

It is a somewhat subtle but profound paradigm shift isn't it? When you rightfully see yourself as the slave of Jesus Christ instead of the servant of Jesus Christ it adds a whole new dimension to your call of obedience to His Word. A slave does not question His Lord's command. A slave doesn't say "I'm not feeling up to doing that today." A slave doesn't pick and choose which commands he or she is going to obey. A slave has absolutely no rights; and that is offensive, especially to American Christians.

Let's go back to the first passage we looked at. Turn with me in your Bibles to **Matthew 8**.

Matthew 8:5-13

What is the primary characteristic of a slave according to this passage? – Immediate and complete obedience. The Roman centurion says that when he tells his slave to do something, he does it. The slave doesn't have to stop and think about it, the slave doesn't get into a discussion with his lord, the slave doesn't come up with a better plan or a better solution, but instead the slave simply does what he is told, and he does it immediately.

As a side note, not only are genuine Christians, slaves of Jesus Christ, but sickness and disease are slaves of Jesus Christ according to this passage. The centurion understood this when he rightly affirmed that Jesus did not have to bother coming to his house to heal his slave, all He had to do was command the sickness to leave.

Slaves do what they are told, period, end of story.

Jesus is your Lord! Jesus is your Master! Jesus is not your buddy. He is not simply a friend who winks at your disobedience and is okay with you living your life as you see fit. He is loving and compassionate and longsuffering, but He is not idly standing by ignoring your disobedience. He is Lord!

And just because you do not get punished immediately for your disobedience does not mean you will not be punished. When most Christians do receive a divine whipping they quite honestly have no idea why. They are flabbergasted. They look to heaven and say, "Why me Lord?"

This is not a trick question, but how many of you believe the Bible is absolutely, 100% true? So when the Bible says that you will reap what you sow, why don't we ever apply that to our own lives? Why don't we look at some of the hard times we go through as just that?

Obviously not all of the hard times we experience are a form of divine punishment, but beloved, it definitely is more often than we want to admit. Some of our hard times are just part of living in a sinful, cursed world. Some of our hard times are specifically to strengthen our faith and to refine us as mature and complete children of God. But quite often the hard times we experience are totally self-inflicted as we are being scourged for past disobedience to the Word of God. We are being punished as a slave who did not do what his Lord commanded of him.

Are you beginning to get the picture of what it means to claim that Jesus is your Lord? He is not just a Savior; He is not just a fire escape out of hell. Jesus is the sovereign and all-powerful Lord and Master, and we are the slaves!

This message could not be preached in the majority of churches across the country today. The people wouldn't stand for it and the leadership would call the pastor on the carpet for speaking such words.

Let's wrap up tonight by turning with me in your Bibles to **John 15**.

This passage could be taught in the aforementioned churches but only if taken out of context.

John 15:12-17

Ah, this is more like it. Jesus is my friend. I am not a slave any more.

Is that what it says? What's the condition listed here to be Jesus' friend? – Obedience. And does He say you are no longer a slave? – No, He says I will no longer call you a slave because I am doing something that masters do not do with their slaves; I am revealing to you what I am going to do. Masters have no obligation or inclination to reveal anything personal to their slaves.

What is the Lord saying here? The Lord is showing us that He is a compassionate Master. He is showing us that although we are His slaves, we will be treated as His friends if we simply do what He tells us to do. Obedience is the key. Obedience is still required and we are still slaves of Jesus Christ, but obedience brings friendship and obedience brings joy and obedience brings revelation from God.

Disobedience brings pain and suffering. Disobedience brings separation from your Lord. Disobedience brings loneliness and discontentment. Disobedience brings guilt and shame. Disobedience wipes out any chance of hearing God's voice. Disobedience will

cause you to play the fool; and according to the Book of Proverbs, the fool is the person who is influenced by anyone and everyone. The fool tries to live his life with one foot in the world and one foot in the church. The fool believes what the world tells him. The fool is trying to be some form of a quasi-servant instead of being a slave.

So how does this tie into dealing with difficult times as I mentioned in my introduction?

When you rightly affirm in your heart and by your actions that Jesus is your Lord and Master, you will view the circumstances in your life differently. You will understand that the Lord is not required to give explanation for His actions. You will understand that your loving and compassionate Lord will never bring anything into your life that is not for your ultimate good, and that He will always provide you the strength and courage and will to endure.

When you rightly affirm that Jesus is the Sovereign Lord and you are the obedient slave, no trial is too difficult, and no tribulation is too oppressive, and no burden is too heavy.

Let's look at one last passage in closing. Turn with me in your Bibles to **Luke 17**.

Luke 17:7-10

The reason we struggle so much with the aspect of being a slave is we have grown up in a country where we expect entitlement. We expect everything to be given to us. We demand to be properly acknowledged and thanked when we simply do what is expected of us. We expect trophies and plaques and rewards and raises in pay for simply doing our jobs. We expect to be treated as the Master when we are the slave.

Are you fulfilling your calling? Are you obeying your Lord and Master? Or have you decided that you are the master of your own life?

Let's pray.