

EPHESIANS - Ephesians 6:5-8

Message 92

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Reading: Ephesians 5:28-33

INTRO: In Ephesians 5:15 we began a section I called, "Walk Circumspectly." It deals with the Christian life in general and then with relation to the spiritual life of the believer. The believer is not to be controlled, or drunk with wine. He is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

But Paul deals then with some specifics. In the specifics he deals with several key areas in life in which God works sanctification in us. These areas are the family, the job, and church life. In our section in Ephesians he deals specifically with family life and the workplace. In family life Paul deals with husbands and wives. Much of life involves husband and wife relationships. Today many marriages end in divorce and remarriage and quite often another divorce and remarriage. Marriage is a most crucial relationship. We have covered that. This is Ephesians 5:22-33. Then we have the relationship of children to their parents, and then how dads are to deal with their children.

I have read some very alarming things that children in some public schools are being taught. The things they are being taught are not fit to discuss among adults. It is sick enough to be called reprobate. The public school has been undermining morality for many years. Now the children of such training are writing curriculum for schools, and the writers of at least some of that material are perverts. Once again, I warn parents, beware what kind of reading material you get for your children. Be careful what kinds of toys you buy for them. Be very careful what kinds of games you allow them to play on the computer or other means of electronic games.

What we have in our text now is the workplace. So much happens in the workplace that tests our spiritual life. On the job our character will show itself. We have come then to this very important matter of servants and masters and we will look at that this morning. What a very important area this is in Christian life.

b. Work related (6:5-9)

1) Servants 6:5-8)

We begin by reading 5-8 of Ephesians 6. It says:

*5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

*6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,*

*7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,*

*8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

It will interest you to know that the servants spoken of here are slaves. The word translated "servants" is *doulos*, which generally means a slave. It is very common for us to think of slavery as wrong. According to the Bible it is not. You might wish to turn to Leviticus 25. Slavery lends itself to abuse by masters, and the abuse is what is wrong. Some of the most horrible acts of humans against humans have taken place in slavery and this is what makes us think that all slavery is wrong. In the 1800's, after years of much abuse, slavery became illegal in Britain, France, and the United States.

But slavery was allowed by God, but He set out laws that governed it. Turn to Leviticus 25. We begin in verse 39:

*39 'And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave.*

*40 'As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you*

until the Year of Jubilee.

41 *'And then he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers.*

42 *'For they are My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves.*

43 *'You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God.*

This was the law with regard to those of the Jewish nation if anyone fell into poverty and sold himself to another to be his servant.

Verse 44:

44 *'And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves.*

45 *'Moreover you may buy the children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property.*

46 *'And you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them as a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.*

There are numerous other laws God set out to govern slavery. I only give this passage to show that slavery was allowed.

Now, in the days when the NT was being written, slavery was common. Our passage now deals with the relationship of a slave who became a Christian to his owner and the

owner to his slave if he was a Christian. But what is said here can be applied to all types of employers and employees situations.

Now bosses and workers has always been an area that has caused much friction in relationships. Today we have unions and various efforts to bring the law into play so that workers do not get abused by bosses. But now the unions are making it miserable for bosses. So this is an area of life that brings much friction in relationships.

With regard to slaves, one can imagine that if a slave became a Christian, that this would cause great difficulties. Things he would have had no trouble doing as a non-Christian that were not right all of a sudden had become wrong. As an unbelieving slave he might learn how to do many things wrong. He might steal whenever he could get away with it or not work when the master was not around and many such things. The sinful nature of man helps him to learn how to get away with things.

But, when an unbelieving slave becomes a Christian and reads the words of our text, all of a sudden he has come under a second master and this new Master he now wants to please. Surely every slave must have asked himself: What is my duty to my master now that I am a Christian? So Paul answers this question like this:

*5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

*6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,*

*7 with goodwill doing service, as to the*

*Lord, and not to men,*

*8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

Now this converted slave's whole outlook toward his master is to be treated in an entirely new way, a way that cut directly across his natural human nature. In light of this listen to 1 Peter 2:18-19:

*18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.*

*19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

Although the servant in this passage is not a slave, but a householder, yet the principles apply. As a Christian, the slave in our passage is not only under a human master, he is now under a divine Master as well. That is true of all employees.

So look at verse 5 in our passage. Here the slave is now told how to serve his master:

*5 Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ;*

Here we have command number 1, servants are to be obedient to their masters. The word translated "masters" is "lords." We call Jesus our Lord. But He is Lord of lords. He is over every lord. So, we note that these masters are masters according to the flesh. They too are human, just like the slave. Bosses are to be treated as lords, small 1. That places him in rightful position over the slave and the slave must remember that.

In the previous message I encouraged

parents to teach their children respect for age. I had not realized the difficulties that puts parents into in modern cultures where that is often a thing of the past. In our German language we have in pronouns that I would call the plural of respect. When we address older people, we use a plural pronoun for the older person. But I was informed that numerous older people object to being addressed by this pronoun. This can become very stressful for younger people who have been properly taught to respect older people. May the Lord give our parents wisdom in how to teach their children respect for age. And if you are an older person and younger people address you with this term of respect, don't rob them of proper respect by telling them not to do it.

In our text now, we are taught to respect the station of a person in life. Here specifically, it is one's boss in the workplace. The command is to obey them. Like children are to obey their parents, so workers are to obey their bosses.

The second command is that the servant is to serve with fear and trembling. These are the same words Paul uses for Christians who are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. That means the worker should remember that the master is in authority over the worker and has authority to deal with him if he does wrong.

Today, with unions in place, a worker hardly has to serve with fear and trembling. In many places bosses live in fear and trembling under the unions. Man is prone to extremes.

We note third that the servant is to serve with sincerity of heart. That means his heart has a single goal, which is what the word *sincere* here means. The heart, of course is the mind. The worker's goal is to

do his job well.

Fourth, our service is to be as to Christ! Wow! Now, as a Christian, I am to work, not only as a slave to another human being, but as slave to Jesus Christ! What a word is this to servants!

I ask, are you an employee? Here is the word of our text to you: On the job, the you should keep in mind at all times is that you are to do your job as if the Lord Jesus Christ is your boss. That means I don't grumble and try to get away with anything. The passage in Peter we read earlier an employee is to serve like this, *"not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh."*

Now, if you think you have a legitimate complaint, it is not that there is not something you can do. Kindly ask your boss if you could bring something to his attention. And then speak to him as if he is boss, and not you. You see, you are to serve as if you are serving Jesus Christ.

Consider now the next verse:

*6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,*

The fifth command is to not serve with eye service. How do you serve with eye-service? Well, you try to impress your boss when he is around and as soon as he is gone, you slack off. Is this a temptation for workers? Let me shorten an account I have told you before. A missionary had a number of native people working on a landing strip for the mission airplane. As long as he was there they worked. When he was gone, they slacked off.

So one day he called them all in. He said, "I am leaving for a while." And then to

their horror, he pulled out one of his eyes, he had a glass eye, and set it on a stump. Then he said, "While I am gone, I will keep an eye on you." Well, it worked a number of times. But finally a native got wise and snuck up behind the stump and slapped a tin can over the eye and they had siesta. That is eye service.

So Paul says, "Not with eye-service, as men pleasers." That is what eye service is all about. Eye service is done to please men, sincere service is done with singleness of heart and that is to please God.

Then we have a sixth command. We have had the negative, our job is not to be done with eye-service, but now the positive: It to be *as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart*. We saw earlier that an employee or a slave is to do his work as unto Jesus Christ. Now he says it is to be as bondservants, slaves of Jesus Christ. We saw this earlier. But the command in this sixth point is the worker is to do his job as a slave.

Turn to Luke 7 to see how a slave served. It is so foreign to us that we will likely balk when we hear it. A slave had few rights other than to do the will of his owner. In this passage Jesus is talking to those who know what slavery is like. We do not know what it is like. We begin in verse 7:

7 *"And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?"*

8 *"But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"*

9 *"Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.*

10 *"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"*

So the Christian who works for a boss is to serve him as a slave serves.

Seventh, the worker is to do his job as a slave who is doing the will of God. Again I ask, are you an employee? Then know that doing your job as if you are working for Jesus Christ is God's will for you. If your boss is an unbeliever, it is most crucial that you do your work like this. Your work is your testimony to your boss of Jesus Christ! If your boss is a Christian, it is also important to serve as if you are serving Jesus Christ!

Now note that the worker is to do his job as a slave from the heart. That means from the mind. The instruction as to how one does that from the mind is given right in this passage. Fill the mind with this teaching and one will know how to serve. This is how we are to think about our job. I think like this: I am working, not only for a human boss, but for Jesus Christ. And by how I do my job I show how important doing the will of God is for me. God wants me to do my job as if Jesus Christ was my boss.

Eighth, verse 7 tells us further how to do our job. We are to do our job:

7 *with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,*

The employee is to serve with good will. The word has to do with a good mind, the word for mind being *nous* with which you are

familiar. I think a close idea in our language would be working with a good attitude. How much difference does a good attitude make in how one does one's work? If you are a boss, may I ask you how much difference does a good attitude in a worker make? If I would read this literally, it would be, "slaving with a good attitude."

Paul then shows how this is to be done, both positively and negatively. The servant is to slave as to the Lord. The attitude of one's work is that it is to be done as to the Lord. How often have we seen this now? Here is a slave who has become a Christian, and now he is to do his work as if he is slaving for the Lord. That is especially difficult if you do not have a good boss! And then negatively, the slave is to slave, not as to men. If our service is to the Lord, and not as to men, this will greatly affect how we work.

Now there is a very encouraging matter that will help the worker to fulfill such very high standards of workmanship. And it seems to me that verse 8 gives the whole context in which the worker should do all his work. In all his work he should be mindful of something very, very important. It is given like this:

*8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

What does one say to this? Wow! Here is a slave, slaving away. Payment is room and board. Maybe the master is harsh. And he is to work as if he is working for the Lord, not a fellow human being. Why would the Lord make such a requirement? Here is the reason: Because whatever good a believer in the Lord does, even though he is working for a human master, maybe not even a nice master, and he is not getting anything from his human master; yet he will receive a

reward from the Lord according to the work he did. And we can infer that if he does not do a good job, he will receive from the Lord accordingly as well.

Now for all those who work for someone, consider this now. Someday life in this present body will be over for all of us. But we do not come to an end, when life here ends. If we are a true believer, when we die, or if the Lord comes before we die, we go to be with the Lord. And when we arrive in heaven we will have arrived at one of the most crucial moments of all eternity.

Here is my view of what happens. Turn to Revelation 6. How I have come to love this passage. The tribulation time on earth is in progress. The antichrist is killing Christians, literally by the millions. And when they are dead, the very same thing that has happened to all believers who died from Adam and Eve on, happens to them.

We begin in verse 9:

*9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.*

*10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

*11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

All I want to say here, since I have preached this numerous times, is that I believe when a Christian enters heaven, he enters at the altar. The altar of sacrifice was the very first thing the Israeli met when he entered into the fence of the tabernacle.

It is my view that here, the believer meets what is called the judgment seat of Christ and here all of the believer's life works come up for review. I believe this is one of the very first things that happens when we enter heaven. And here everything we have done in this life will come up for judgment. And when the believer has been judged, here he is given a white robe. This pictures righteousness. Christians who have entered heaven and been there for 500 years, a thousand years, or for however long they have been here, are enjoying heaven in their white robes.

Now we know that the unbeliever and believers who have rejected the faith, those that willfully live in sin, will not come before this judgment. They will meet the Lord at the judgement of the lost, known as the Great White Throne judgment. After they are judged they are cast into hell.

But here, at the judgment seat of Christ, every thought, every work, every word will be judged. And it is here the worker will receive according to how he did his work for his boss. When the believer comes past this altar we see that white robes are given to them. White represents righteousness. Those who come past this altar enter the city dressed in righteousness.

Go now to 1 Corinthians 3. When we enter glory, we will come before the judgment seat of Christ. No believer is ever judged to see if they go to heaven or not. That is decided by our decision here on earth. If we reject Christ, we are not going to heaven at all. That is our decision here.

Look at verses 11-15 now:

*11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus*

*Christ.*

*12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

*13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*

The Christian's works will be tested by fire. And in the next verses we find the results of when the fire is done. Verse 14:

*14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

*15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

Now what we must remember when we do a job is that when the Christian stands in the day of judgment, how one does one's job is one of the things that will be put in the fire. Now notice that if one's works endure the fire, the Christian will be rewarded for it. What I want to remind us of is that here on earth we may receive rewards, but after a time the glory fades. But the rewards received here are eternal. If we do our work here well, it will pay eternal dividends.

Maybe our boss was not nice, but we did our job as if it was to the Lord. And when we come to this judgment, every work that was done according to Paul's instructions in our passage will stand the test of the fire and it will be rewarded. And the rewards that are given here are eternal! They will never end!

How we did our work is one small part of this judgment, but here it will all be dealt with. And if I did not do my work as

Paul outlined in our passage, when the fire has done its test, whatever job we have not done right will be gone.

We note further that there are works that will burn up, and if they do, the one whose works burn up will suffer loss. We might ask ourselves, in light of how I live, what may the fire do with my works?

So listen to verse 8 of our text once more:

*8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.*

You see, whether one is a slave or whether one is a free worker and one gets paid, at the judgment the Lord will deal with both the same. In Christ there is neither slave nor free. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

## 2) Masters (6:9)

Well, we go on verse 9. Paul has a word of masters as well. He says:

*9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

We noted earlier that these masters are called lords. They are not capital L lords. They are a lord of slaves. They are the boss of other human beings.

Now note that the boss was to do the same things. We must ask, what same things? It means, I believe, that as servants were to be towards their masters, so masters should be toward their Master. They too have a Master. They should obey Him. Just as servants or slaves should serve with fear and trembling, so the boss should do his job with fear and trembling. A slave is under the authority of his owner; the

owner, if he is a Christian, is under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The servant was to do his job understanding it is the will of God. He was to serve from the heart. So the master should be master understanding it is to be done as one would do the will of the Lord, serving their Lord with a good attitude knowing that someday he will give account to his master. At the judgment day, the boss will be rewarded or lose rewards in direct proportion to how he was boss.

We noted earlier that servants should serve with fear and trembling. When Paul wrote to the Philippians he said this in 2:12:

*12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

In verses 1-4 Paul had given this instruction:

*1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,*

*2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

*3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

*4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Now it is evident that they had some trouble getting along and that selfishness was present among them. So Paul instructs

them on what to do and then as an example, he gives them a picture of how Christ gave up everything for others and in the end He was highly exalted though He had suffered great wrong.

And then he tells them to work out their salvation, that is live the Christian life in fear and trembling. Why would that be? In the end, when they stand before God, they will give account of all they have done, how they have lived their Christian life. It is fear of doing that which will not meet the approval of God because it is God before whom we must all stand and give account someday. There are so many times when we are tempted to do wrong, and it should cause fear and trembling within us. I have no doubt at all that when we stand before God and judgment is about to begin, we will hope that things will go well and wish we had not failed in even one thing. Why fear and trembling? Because the Lord whom we profess to know is the ultimate Master and will judge everything we have done with perfect righteousness.

And why should a servant do his service with fear and trembling? His boss has authority to deal with all that is not right.

Then bosses should forbear threatening. Well, what is a threat? It is the promise of harm or pain in order to get done what you want done. Here is one of the weaknesses of some bosses. This is also a great weakness of parents.

The boss should not threaten. He should spell out the requirements and what the cost is for disobedience and then carry those out in a way that is right. When a boss has to threaten it shows his own failure as a boss.

Parents who threaten, usually deal with

wrongdoing when they have become angry. The discipline then may do more damage than good because the child recognizes injustice and wrong.

When you are in authority, set out the guidelines and then maintain them with godliness. When a Christian boss threatens and then deals with a servant in anger, he needs to remember verse 9 says:

*9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

Now consider, the slave's master is on earth. The boss's Master is in heaven and He is the ultimate Master with ultimate authority. The boss needs to remember that he will someday stand and give account to his Master. And the Lord will show no partiality. Because you were a boss and not a worker will make no difference. Justice, what is right, will be the deciding factor.

There is a book in the NT that is written to a boss who is a slave owner. And the book is written to him concerning his slave. Does anyone know which book that is?

Turn now to the little book of Philemon. We begin in verse 1:

*1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer,*

*2 to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:*

Aphia may well have been the wife of Archippus. It seems to me to be to personal a letter to address it to Aphia and Archippus. But it may be Paul felt they would benefit by knowing what he is going

to instruct Archippus.

Verse 3:

*3 Grace to you and peace from God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*4 I thank my God, making mention of you  
always in my prayers,*

*5 hearing of your love and faith which you  
have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all  
the saints,*

*6 that the sharing of your faith may  
become effective by the acknowledgment of  
every good thing which is in you in Christ  
Jesus.*

*7 For we have great joy and consolation in  
your love, because the hearts of the saints  
have been refreshed by you, brother.*

Paul writes a number of the nice things he knows about Archippus and then makes his request. So he now writes:

*8 Therefore, though I might be very bold  
in Christ to command you what is fitting,*

*9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to  
you -being such a one as Paul, the aged,  
and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ-*

*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.*

Apparently Onesimus was a slave who belonged to Archippus and he had run away and had gone to see Paul while Paul was in prison. And Paul led Archippus to salvation and now he is sending him back to his owner. And Paul, though he could command Archippus to receive him back, rather

appeals to him to do so. There are great lessons to be learned here.

And Paul says Onesimus had not been a profitable slave, but now that he is saved he is profitable both to Archippus and himself. So he appeals to Archippus to receive Onesimus back now, as a believer in Christ. So here we have the situation of our text in Ephesians.

Verse 12:

*12 I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,*

*13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.*

*14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.*

*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.*

*17 If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me.*

*18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.*

*19 I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides.*

*20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.*

*21 Having confidence in your obedience, I*

*write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.*

*22 But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.*

*23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,*

*24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers.*

*25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

Well, how could any Christian slave owner but do as Paul wished, especially knowing that Paul would be coming in person when he can.

Though we do not have time for it, there are many lessons to be learned for anyone who is a boss in this little letter.

CONCL: So we conclude on this subject of bosses and servants. Whether the servant is a slave or working for a wage, the passage is equally applicable. Servants are to be obedient to their masters. They must remember he is in authority. They should serve with singleness of mind and serve as if their service was to Christ. They should not serve with eyeservice. They should not serve as men-pleasers. They should serve as slaves of Christ, realizing doing a good job is the will of God. Their attitude should be as if they are serving God, not men.

And the context in which they should do their job is with a realization, whether their boss is good or harsh; fair or not, the Lord keeps detailed track of how they serve. And the day will come when they will be fully rewarded, or they will lose rewards in direct proportion to their service. The Bible instructs us to lay up treasures in heaven. Here is one of the things that is important for that.

Then bosses should serve their Master in the same way as servants are to serve them. God will judge impartially. Being boss does not change how one will be judged. It will be based on what is right and what is not right.

