

"Serving and Supervising"

Ephesians 6:5-8

- There are terms in today's text that apply to each one of us
- We may not use the terms in the same way Paul used them in addressing the Ephesians
- But we know what they mean and understand their significance

- The terms bondservant and master appear in our very first verse
- Bondservants could have been those who were hired as servants
- Or those who were sold into service (on their own accord or by others)
- Sometimes in an effort to pay debt
- To avoid other forms of prosecution for crimes
- Or even voluntarily, after serving a period of involuntary service
- Masters could have been paying these servants for an agreed period of time
- Or may have purchased or received these bondservants as means of payment

- We operate with no such system and have very little modern reference
- But understand that we serve those who pay us to do work
- The arrangements are quite different, but certain principles continue to apply

- We hope to learn from those principles, as outlined in Ephesians 6
- As we approach the theme "Serving and Supervising"

- Understanding most of us are responsible to someone else for doing work
- Holding the position of servant in some way (even if it is voluntarily)
- Being ethically and often contractually responsible to serve
- We can approach the passage with a certain level of understanding

- As it begins...

Ephesians 6:5

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

- This is addressing those who have faith in Jesus
- Who are serving Him as a disciple
- And committed to doing His will

- He is obviously their master, but they also have masters "according to the flesh"
- Those to whom they are responsible in this world
- Those whom they serve doing work

- And as they are obedient to Christ, they must obey masters
- And should do so as one who is under the weight of solemn responsibility
- Having the utmost care and diligence
- Understanding the gravity (the danger) of taking responsibilities lightly or flippantly

- They (we) should do so with sincerity of heart
- In the very same way that we serve Christ
- Because, in fact, our service to anyone else is service for Christ
- All of life (for the Christian) belongs to Him and must be devoted to Him
- Therefore, there are things to avoid...

Ephesians 6:6

6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

- It would go (almost) without saying that one serving Christ should avoid dishonesty
- Appearing to work only when the master is paying attention
- While refusing to work when they walk away
- Yet, the warning remains
- For this is common among men, human nature, in keeping with fleshly desires
- This should never be true of those who have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside
- Servants of Christ must work with integrity
- Laboring with all the effort Christ (not just the supervisor) deserves
- This is only right
- It is the will of God
- Something that should be done enthusiastically, from the heart
- Because it is Him we serve...

Ephesians 6:7-8

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

- Our work, service to men, should be with good will
- This is exactly the right kind of attitude
- Because all we do as believers in Jesus is done for Him
- And while we are assigned and supervised by men
- And have the requisite respect and honor for men
- We do this work not for them, but for our Lord
- These are not reward-less efforts
- Honoring God in our work brings Him glory and is its own reward
- And God sees both the labor and the attitude in labor
- He is just, He is kind, and He blesses His servants
- Those who serve both in bondage and in freedom
- There are great challenges, we understand, doing this consistently

- Circumstances often threaten our perspective and our attitude
- But these scriptures (and others) remind and encourage - serve as unto the Lord
- Supervisors have instructions too...

Ephesians 6:9

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.

- That which is required of believing servants is likewise required of masters
- The care, the diligence, the sincerity, the honesty, the enthusiasm, and good will
- All required of those who oversee
- Because all masters have a Master (capital "M") that is greater
- He sees all, knows all, understands all, and has rule over all
- And He is nothing like man
- He makes no distinction between master and bondservant
- (Treating one differently than the other)
- No, there is no respect of persons with Him
- So do not threaten
- For He knows perfectly the heart
- And has no partiality
- Bondservants and masters who have faith in Christ are responsible to Him
- All of their worldly service must be "as unto Him"
- Lest we find ourselves searching for exceptions, let us conclude in...

I Peter 2:18-21

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. [crooked, wicked, unfair]

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: