

"Our 2nd Relationship with God: Bondslave to Master "

Good morning!

In Post 11 we talked about our foundational relationship with God: he being our Creator and we being his created beings. But that basic relationship alone is seriously inadequate. While we live as 'creatures' under his general grace (Matthew 5:45), we can scarcely know God and certainly cannot fulfill our God-designed destiny in creation.

The horrible reality is that there is nothing we can do to rise above creature status – nothing we can do to know God – nothing we can do to develop relationship with God.

No, we are helpless as fallen creatures -- totally dependent on God to intervene in each of our lives. For unless he chooses to lift us out of our fallen state, we are doomed.

But fortunately he has chosen to do just that in his Son Christ Jesus:

Romans 5: 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

On the cross Jesus took into himself all the sin of the world – all of your sin – all of my sin:

2 Corinthians 5: 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Son of God came and died on the cross NOT to make us better people, but to kill us! To put to death our old fallen nature and transform us into totally new, naturally supernatural beings:

2 Corinthians 5: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation....

Christ has cancelled our sin with its guilt and shame. He has broken the curse of the Law. He has defeated Death. All this he has done for his new creations – as he continues his Prime Directive of creating for himself a unique People called by his Name.

So, how do I become a new creation? How do I escape my fallen condition in order to become a functional part of this unique People of God?

The first step is to admit that I am a fallen sinner deserving of Hell.

That I can do nothing to fix myself or escape my fallen destiny.

I throw myself on the mercy of God and welcome Jesus via his Holy Spirit to come into my heart. I reject my old life with its selfishness – with its lust of the eyes - with its lust of the flesh – with its pride of life. I surrender my will to the will of the Father.

As his Spirit transforms me and indwells me, I set my sights on being transformed into the image of Jesus – to knowing and worshiping and loving Jesus – to obeying and serving and representing Jesus – to enjoying the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit now and forever.

The spiritual giants of the past took this first step. And because they did, they could identify themselves with Jesus Christ as bondslaves:

- Romans 1:1- *"Paul, a bondslave of Christ Jesus..."*
- 2 Peter 1:1- *"Simon Peter, a bondslave and apostle of Jesus Christ..."*
- James 1:1- *"James, a bondslave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ..."*
- Jude 1:1- *"Jude, a bondslave of Jesus Christ..."*
- Revelation 1:1- *"The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his bondslaves what must soon take place... by sending his angel to his bondslave John...."*

All of us want to be free. None of us wants to be owned as a slave by another man. But ironically, the route to true freedom lies in first becoming a bonds slave of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5: 1 *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*

God does not want us to be slaves like the East Africans whom the Muslim slave traders sold into Persian Gulf bondage. No, we're talking about something very different.

In Deuteronomy "bonds slave" is defined:

Deuteronomy 15: 12 *If any of your people—Hebrew men or women—sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. ¹³ And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. ¹⁴ Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. ¹⁶ But if your servant says to you, "I do not want to leave you," because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, ¹⁷ then take an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your female servant.*

A person in bankruptcy sold themselves into indentured servanthood to escape their debts. After six years, their debt to the one who had paid off their debts was worked off and they had to be freed and set up in their own housekeeping.

But if they had become a valued part of the master's house – had become as much family as servants – they could choose to stay permanently. They could become bonds slaves – slaves because they wanted forever to be a part of the master's house.

They were taken to the doorpost of the house and an awl was run through their ear into the wood signifying that they were forever bound to that house and its master. The master thereafter took on permanent responsibility for their care. They pledged faithful service to the master forever.

Do you understand?

Have you utterly, totally given your life to Jesus? Can you say with Paul, *"...Christ...is your life...."* ? (Colossians 3:4)

Have you died to your fallen nature? Have you been born again? Have you been baptized into the household of God? Have you been filled with the Spirit of Jesus? Have you enthusiastically committed to serve at the pleasure of the king forever?

The beginning of true life – the beginning of true freedom – the beginning of heavenly eternity is to die to your corruption and selfishness and vanity and enter into joyous, obedient service of the One who made you and who loves you – now and forever.

If God offered to us only this relationship with him, we would fall on our faces in gratitude for him allowing us to live in his house and serve him forever. (Psalm 23:6)

But there is more. Much, much more.

I'll tell you next week.

God bless you-

Douglas

Douglas Van Devender- Team Jesus Ministries International