

112 - Masters, Your Master Also Is in Heaven - Ephesians 6:9 - 2016-10-02

Call to Worship: Isaiah 26:1-2

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 26:4-13

Sermon: "Masters, Your Master Also Is in Heaven" Ephesians 6:9

Benediction: Isaiah 26:3

Ephesians 6:9 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.

INTRODUCTION

The Lord Jesus, when He was about to die on the cross for us sinners, promised He would send another counselor, the Holy Spirit, who would be in us. Now we, the disciples of Jesus Christ, have the Holy Spirit in us. We are charged to be filled with the Spirit. Part of what it is to be filled with the Spirit is to act according to the Word of God toward those people with whom we have close relationships---those whom we live with and work with.

We have heard the commands of the Lord for our conduct in these relationships:

Wives

Husbands

Children

Fathers

Servants

Now one more: masters.

Hear the word of the Lord.

TEXT

Ephesians 6:5-9 ~~Bonds~~servants, 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 ~~bonds~~servants 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. (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.

BODY

- I. Masters Called to Attention: And You Masters
 - A. Granted no one here is exactly as master with servants; but this doctrine has application for anyone who directs the work of other people
 1. business owners
 2. managers
 3. dads and moms, or big brothers and big sisters
 4. military officers and NCOs
 - B. Those who are used to giving the orders become unused to being ordered; so take a moment and ponder that you are being ordered.
 1. you will never be a boss so high up that there is no one to give you orders
 2. illus. The highest 4-star general in the army, with 25 years experience, a chestfull of medals, and half a million soldiers under his command, stands at attention before the president and salutes; when ordered, he says, "Yes, sir," and goes off to do as he is told.
 3. but even the president, one of the highest Lords on earth, is issued his orders by the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, through His servants, the prophets and apostles, as recorded in the bible
 4. I'm not ordering you, except as a servant of Jesus Christ; He is giving you your orders
 - C. Masters have duty, just as servants have
 1. for servants, it is easier to be mindful of the fact that you have duty, because you are forced to do your duty
 - a) a slave might be beaten, or have his food withheld
 - b) an employee would be fired
 2. for masters, it is harder to be mindful of the fact that you have duty, because you are seldom forced to do your duty
 3. so be reminded that you have your own duty to perform, just as servants have, and it is all the more important that you do yours, because more people are more directly affected by it
 - D. It was pleasant in your years to hear servants commanded to obey, to work hard in your service; let it be as pleasant in your ears to hear yourself commanded in how your Master in heaven will have you treat those who serve you
 1. Do unto others . . .
 - E. Do not commend yourself for doing what is merely your duty
 1. you owe certain things to your servants as a debt
 - a) NKJV Romans 4:4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.
 - b) ESV Romans 4:4 Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.
 - c) the moment your servant has worked for you, you owe him his wages until you pay them
 - (1) it is not expedient to pay a worker by the minute, but theoretically, that would be just
 - (2) pay should be delayed only as long as is necessary
 - (3) the longer wages are delayed, the more convenient for the boss, but the more distressing to the laborer

- F. Remember the foundational principle: We are servants of the Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ our Savior
 - 1. who humbled Himself for our sake (expound)
 - 2. who is now exalted in heaven above every other master
- II. The Duty of Masters Stated Positively: Do the Same Things to Them
 - A. Calvin stated that this is all about love; other authors have followed suit
 - B. verse 5 rule over your servants with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ
 - C. verse 6 rule over your servants not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ
 - D. verse 6 rule over your servants doing the will of God from the heart
 - 1. what will govern me as I govern those under me today? the will of God
 - 2. how will I decide what to do toward my servants? I will learn what the bible says about it
 - E. verse 7 rule over your servants with good will, as to the Lord, and not to men
 - F. Colossians 4:1 Masters, give your servants what is just and fair
 - G. Set an example for your servants.
 - 1. Do you think they will work faithfully if they see that you do not? Maybe, but it would be in spite of you, not because of you.
 - 2. Do you think they will be careful to do right by you if you do not do right by them? Maybe, but . . .
- III. The Duty of Masters Stated Negatively: Giving Up Threatening
 - A. "give up" KJV "forbear" ESV "stop"
 - 1. more literally: to loosen up, to relax, to moderate
 - B. threatening: the thing itself
 - 1. what is being forbidden
 - a) speaking harshly to servants, which often takes the form of threats
 - b) this is the form of cruelty easiest to perform, and with the lightest consequences to the one who does it
 - c) it is the easiest form of abuse of power to fall into
 - 2. what should be done in its place
 - a) conscientious instruction and supervision suited to the servant's character and progress
 - (1) i.e. the boss would like to not have to supervise the employee very closely, and have the employee still do just what he is supposed to do; this is not reasonable in many cases
 - b) correction not in terms of threats, but of reason
 - (1) "this is right"
 - (2) this is good for you, for customer, for me, for everyone
 - (3) "the Word of God says"
 - c) threatening of consequences only when necessary
 - d) threatening of consequences in a moderate, reasonable manner
 - e) remember: let your speech be always full of grace, seasoned with salt
 - C. threatening: as representative of a whole category of behavior
 - 1. Calvin (as others): Under this one description, Paul forbids every kind of disdainful and barbarous treatment.

2. certainly not doing to any servant what the master has no moral right to do
 - a) honor thy father and mother
 - (1) disobey any laws, any codes, any ordinances
 - b) thou shalt not kill - do him no harm
 - (1) work in unsafe environment
 - c) thou shalt not steal - do not cause him any loss
 - (1) bear expenses really your expenses
 - (2) go without pay
 - (3) go without whatever time off is right
 - d) thou shalt not bear false witness
 - (1) lead or pressure him to falsify anything
 - (2) say anything false about him
 - (3) say anything false to him
3. not doing even what he has the right to do unless it is best to do
 - a) you have the right to discipline him, but should only do what is best, not whatever you feel like in anger
 - b) you have the right to fire him, but should do so only if it truly is best, not just because you are mad
4. flaring up in anger
 - a) be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires
5. making the servant always fearful of losing his place with you not because of wrongdoing, but because of your own whims or moods

IV. The Duty of Masters Stated in Principle: Knowing That Your Master Also Is in Heaven

- A. You masters are strongly tempted to sinful behavior toward your servants because you can get away with it, whereas they cannot. But be mindful of the fact that if you mistreat your servants, you are getting away with it only for a time.
 1. Matthew 24:45-51 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? (46) Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. (47) Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. (48) But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' (49) and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, (50) the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, (51) and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- B. You masters are strongly tempted to sinful behavior toward your servants because you get rewards here on earth even if you are. But consider that eternal rewards in heaven are for those who are faithful. Your mistreatment of servants here will not be rewarded by the Lord Jesus.
- C. Consider that the Master you have in heaven is absolutely impartial.
 1. He does not judge servants more strictly than masters.
 2. He does not wink at sins masters commit against servants.
 3. You and your servants will stand at the judgment seat of Christ on equal terms.

CONCLUSION

Ephesians 5:17-6:9 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (18) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, (20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, (21) submitting to one another in the fear of God. (22) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. (23) For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. (24) Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. (25) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (26) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, (27) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (28) So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. (29) For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (30) For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. (31) "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." (32) This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (33) Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (6:1) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (2) "HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER," which is the first commandment with promise: (3) "THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH." (4) And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (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. (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.

you, masters

JRY:

the more someone is in your power, the more tempted you are to abuse your authority,
and the more the servant can be harmed by that abuse

do the same things to them

JRY:

that is, deal with them unto the Lord
it sounds good to you for your servants to act according to what has already been
taught; then you should live by the same principles

Calvin:

Perform the duty which on your part you owe to them.

What he calls in another epistle, "that which is just and equal," is precisely what, in this passage, he calls, "the same things."

This analogy is greatly misunderstood; because men do not try it by the law of love, which is the only true standard. Such is the import of Paul's phrase, the same things;

Trapp:

That is, Do your parts and duties by them; and use them as men, not as beasts.

Bayne:

thinking how we may do them good as well as be benefited by them; and especially, it will appear, if they be sick (Matthew 8:6)

Ferguson:

the master is bound to discharge his duty towards his servants in singleness of heart, as service to Christ, in obedience to the will and command of God, from his heart, with love and good-will

Poole:

do your duty to them with good will, with an eye to God and Christ, &c.; or rather, do your duty mutually to them, according to your condition and calling

Henry:

that is, act after the same manner. Be just to them, as you expect they should be to you: show the like good-will and concern

Wesley:

That is, act toward them from the same principle.

Gill:

singleness of heart, benevolence, humanity, and a regard to Christ, and the will of God, and to the doing of good things, and to the performance of their duty, as they would have their servants do theirs

with respect to their souls,

to instruct them in, and use them to religious exercises,

to pray with them, and for them,

to set them good examples,

to prevent them falling into, bad company, and

to allow them proper time for religious duties

with respect to their bodies, and outward concerns,

to provide sufficient food and proper raiment for them, or

to give them their due wages,

to take care of them when sick or lame, and show compassion and humanity to them,

to encourage those that are prudent, faithful, and laborious, and

to correct the disobedient, and expel the incorrigible:

Clarke:

Act in the same affectionate, conscientious manner towards your slaves and servants, as they do towards you.

JFB:

Show the same regard to God's will, and to your servants' well-being, in your relation to them, as they ought to have in their relation to you. Love regulates the duties both of servants and masters, as one and the same light

Hodge:

Masters are to act towards their slaves with the same regard to the will of God, with the same recognition of the authority of Christ, with the same sincerity and good feeling which had been enjoined on the slaves themselves

the same great principles of moral and religious obligation govern both classes

act towards them on the principles of justice and equity. Justice requires that all their rights, as men, as husbands, and as parents should be regarded. And these rights are not to be determined by the civil law, but by the law of God

Slaves are to be treated by their masters on the principles of equality. Not that they are to be equal with their masters in authority, or station, or circumstances; but they are to be treated as having, as men, as husbands, and as parents, equal rights with their masters. It is just as great a sin to deprive a slave of the just recompense for his labor, or to keep him in ignorance, or to take from him his wife or child, as it is to act thus towards a free man. This is the equality which the law of God demands, and on this principle the final judgment is to be administered.

Barnes:

He had required servants to act conscientiously; to remember that the eye of God was upon them, and that in that condition in life they were to regard themselves as serving God, and as mainly answerable to him. The same things the apostle would have masters feel.

EB:

be as good to your slaves as they are required to be towards you.

Pattison:

that is, fulfil your relative duties to your servants with the same exactness, and from the same motives---to please God.

Silverside:

the best preservative of human rights is recognizing the crown rights of Christ

giving up threatening

Ferguson: or rather to relax and moderate threatening, as the word doth signify

Barnes: Margin, "moderating." The Greek word means to "relax, loosen;" and then, to "omit, cease from."

RWP: to loosen up, to relax. "Letting up on threatening."

Calvin:

They are charged not to assume a lordly air or a terrific attitude, as if they were constantly threatening some evil against their servants, when they have occasion to address them. Threatenings, and every kind of barbarity, originate in this, that masters look upon their servants as if they had been born for their sake alone, and treat them as if they were of no more value than cattle. Under this one description, Paul forbids every kind of disdainful and barbarous treatment.

Ferguson:

Trapp:

Those blusters and terrible thunder cracks of fierce and furious language found in the mouths of many masters, if never so little crossed.

Servants should be chidden with good words, with God's words, and not reviled.

Bayne:

forbidding all crooked and cruel dealing toward them, the cruelty of words most usual put for the whole

currishness in speech is here named, because men break the most into it, and think the least of it; for words are wind

The meaning is not that a master may not threaten, when he hath cause, by way of caution; for God himself doth threaten when he hath cause; and it is great mercy when we do it to prevent further anger; but this vixen-like rating, and huckster-like menacing of them on every occasion is here forbidden; this worm which cuaseth raving speech, the Holy Ghost would take out of the tongue of you

What do our sour looks? What do our words so cruel and base? make a servant have no heart to us. It maketh them turn against us, or else it maketh them despise us as barking curs are

How shall we think of our estate who are cruel to our brethren, when a just man is merciful to his beast!

Poole:

i.e. do not carry yourselves angrily to them, (which appears in vehement and frequent threatenings), when ye may otherwise maintain your authority over them.

Wesley:

Behaving with gentleness and humanity, not in a harsh or domineering way.

Gill:

not that they may not in any sense threaten, but not always, nor too often, nor too much, and with great things on light occasions; nor should they be too forward to execute their threatenings, especially when their servants repent and amend; they should then forbear them and forgive

this is opposed to all hard rigour, and ill usage, either by words or blows

should speak him (his servant) quietly, and in a still manner, and he will hear his objections, or arguments and reasons:

Clarke:

If they should transgress at any time, lean more to the side of mercy than justice; and when ye are obliged to punish, let it be as light and as moderate as possible; and let revenge have no part in the chastisement, for that is of the devil, and not of God.

The words, forbearing threatening; ανιεντες την απειλην, signify to mitigate, relax, or not exact threatening; that is, the threatened punishment. The sense is given above.

Hodge:

Paul carries this so far as to apply the principle not only to the acts, but to the temper of masters.

This includes all manifestations of contempt and ill temper, or undue severity.

Ellicott:

threatening implies at every moment compulsion and coercion from a position of tyrannical superiority; dealing with the slave as one who has in him no free energy and no sense of duty, and who must be driven like a brute-beast, not led or guided as a man.

Barnes:

It does not mean that they were to remit punishment where it was deserved; but the object is to guard against that to which they were so much exposed in their condition - a fretful, dissatisfied temper; a disposition to govern by terror rather than by love.

it would be worth the trial of those who sustain the relation of masters, to see whether it would not be "possible" to govern their servants, as the apostle here advises, by the exercise of love. Might not kindness, and confidence, and the fear of the Lord, be substituted for threats and stripes?

Dickson:

bee moderate in threatnings

Pattison:

Power engenders haughtiness.

JRY:

This would not mean the boss should not say to his worker, "If you keep acting like that, I will reduce your hourly wage." or "If you do that again, you will be fired on the spot." Instead, it would mean that the boss should not have angry, threatening language to be the normal way he deals with the people who work for him.

There is, in the master-servant relationship, the principle that if the servant will not serve, the master will do to the servant what the servant does not want done, to discipline him, to compel him to serve.

knowing that your own Master also is in heaven

Geneva:

seeing that they in another respect have a common master who is in heaven

Bayne:

This doth let us gather an argument that our God will be a good master, for he will not bid us be one thing and himself another
an excellent consideration to beat down all proud cruelty, to bethink us of our Master in heaven, that can call us to reckoning

Gill:

he is the common master of masters and servants;
who employs, provides for, and uses well all his servants
to whom masters must be accountable for their usage of servants
he being in heaven overlooks and takes notice of all their actions, as the omniscient God being omnipotent, has it in his power to plead and avenge the cause of the injured:

JFB:

The oldest manuscripts read, "the Master both of them and you": "their Master and yours." This more forcibly brings out the equality of slaves and masters in the sight of God.

Hodge:

masters have a master in heaven to whom they are responsible for their treatment of their slaves

Ellicott:

The stronger marginal reading is perhaps better, their Master and yours.

Barnes:

this fact should be allowed to influence them in a proper manner. This it would do in two ways:

(1) By the fact that injustice toward their servants would then be punished as it deserved - since there was no respect of persons with God.

(2) it would lead them to act toward their servants as they would desire God to treat them. Nothing would be better adapted to do this than the feeling that they had a common Master, and that they were soon to stand at his bar.

and there is no partiality with Him

KJV: neither is there respect of persons with him

Colossians 3:25

Calvin:

By person is meant anything about a man which does not belong to the real question, and which we take into account in forming a judgment. Relationship, beauty, rank, wealth, friendship, and everything of this sort, gain our favor; while the opposite qualities produce contempt and sometimes hatred.

Poole:

he is just as well as powerful, and will neither spare you because you are masters, nor punish them because they are servants:

Clarke:

As you deal with them, so God will deal with you; for do not suppose, because their condition on earth is inferior to yours, that God considers them to be less worthy of his regard than you are; this is not so, for there is no respect of persons with Him.

Hodge:

Christ will punish the master for defrauding the slave as severely as he will punish the slave for robbing his master. The same penalty will be inflicted for the violation of the conjugal or parental rights of the one as of the other. For, as the apostle adds, there is no respect of persons with him. At his bar the question will be, 'What was done,' not 'who did it?'

Barnes:

If the master and the slave were both Christians, even if the relation continued, it would be rather a relation of mutual confidence. The master would become the protector, the teacher, the guide, the friend; the servant would become the faithful helper - rendering service to one whom he loved, and to whom he felt himself bound by the obligations of gratitude and affection.

Jeremiah 34:13-17 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, (14) "At the end of seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you." But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear. (15) Then you recently turned and did what was right in My sight--every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name. (16) Then you turned around

and profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom he had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves.' (17) "Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,' says the LORD 'to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth.

Bayne:

a great want in masters:

1. Many have no care of religion. What such an one getteth us, shall have a curse going with it. And if receiving a traitor be dangerous, it cannot but endanger us to receive such who are open rebels to the ways of God.
2. they are careful to keep bodily infection away, but manners, which are more contagious, they receive any
3. for love, we prize them not, care not for them, further than to serve ourselves by them thinking all too much, but what for shame must, that is bestowed on them

Let us for their outward man keep them in awe, employ them with direction, shew love, and do that which is just to them.