

A Christ Centered Work Life

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. I'd ask you to turn in your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3. Colossians 3 will be wrapping up some of the section that Paul deals with about how should a family structure their life, how do households function, this church in Colossae.

I'll be reading verses 22 through chapter 4 verse 1. Colossians 3, 22.

Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ, for the wrongdoer will be paid back according to the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Masters, treat your bond servants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this morning. Thank you for the ability to hear your word.

[1 : 2 0] Thank you for the practical application that we have today of looking at slaves and masters or employees and managers. Lord, help us to hear your word, to apply it.

We would use your spirit to make us more and more into the image of Christ. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. So as I said, we're looking at how Paul is talking to this church in Colossae about the rules for Christian households.

How does a household work? How do wives and husbands, how do children and parents interact? And now we go to slaves and masters. And in this city of Colossae, it's a Greco-Roman type city.

Many of the households had at least one slave. It wasn't uncommon for a house to have at least one slave. And the estimates are 30 to 50 percent of the people you saw on the street that you bumped into were in some capacity a slave in cities like Rome, Colossae, and Ephesus.

These slaves could own property. They could earn money. They could even buy their own freedom. Much of the skilled labor that was done was actually done by slaves of these households.

[2 : 3 4] And so it would be easy for us to wonder, does this have any application to us today? Why does it matter what Paul thinks about slaves and masters in a church in Colossae?

Because in 2024 in America, we don't have slavery like we did in the 19th century. We don't even have slavery like they had in Rome and Colossae and Ephesus. We have a free wage, free market system where most of us commit to work for a company for a set amount of money and benefits in exchange for our work.

In this system, we maintain a concept of employer and employee, boss and team member, manager, and individual contributors. We maintain this hierarchy of authority, much like masters and slaves, where the boss tells you what he wants done, and you strive to accomplish it in exchange for money.

So if the work stops, the money stops, and if the money stops, your work stops. We maintain this authority structure, though, but we are free to leave.

We don't have to stay like slaves did. Some people have costs to leave. Maybe you've got a contract you need to buy out. But we are not slaves in that normal sense of the term.

[3 : 47] The arrangement that we have today is much better than the ones that Paul is talking to. But Paul's overall point really goes to the social structures and goes beyond the social structures of slavery and slaves and masters.

He really is pointing to here's what a Christ-centered, Christ-united person should live like in their work life. So the truth and the concept still apply.

With that said, the original audience that Paul is writing to was slaves and masters, and so we'll be touching back between what Paul is saying and how it applies to us today in our modern time.

And if you look back through this chapter we've read so far, Paul is saying, the Christian, you've been united to Christ. He says you've been seated with Christ. The first verses, right, of Colossians chapter 3 say, if then you've been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. So then he goes through all these things that we're to put off or to put on, ways that Christians are supposed to live because of their union with Christ.

[5 : 03] He calls wives and husbands to live and interact together in certain ways. And he calls children and parents to interact with each other in certain ways. And as we see today, he calls slaves and masters or employees and managers are all called to live in a certain way.

They're called to live in a way that reflects the reality of a union with Christ, reflects who they are in Christ. So today we're going to look at Paul's instructions for the slaves. We're going to look at what the measure of service for a slave or employee is, what the manner of that service is, and then the motive for the service.

And then we'll look at Paul's instructions for what it means to be a manager. And then we'll wrap up with a look at our master who is in heaven today. So the measure of service, the manner of service, and the motive of service.

Paul starts off in verse 22 saying, Obey in everything, Paul says.

He doesn't give a concrete qualifier here. But we can assume that Paul doesn't mean that slaves and Colossians should just do whatever their masters say. If they say murder, you murder. If they say steal, you steal.

[6 : 14] The wording is to obey those who are your earthly masters. With the implied conclusion that if I have an earthly master, then I have a non-earthly master. I have a heavenly master, and that's Christ.

So Paul has just spent the previous few verses, verses 6 through 12 through 17, talking about all the things that Christians should put off and should put on, the ways that Christians should live.

And Paul's writing those words and these words to slaves. And so Paul's not saying, Forget about what I just said, all those verses prior. Whatever your boss says do, you should do it.

Paul adds a qualification in Ephesians chapter 6 where he says, Bondservants, obey your masters, earthly masters, with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ.

1 Peter adds that servants should be subject or submissive. Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 18, Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust.

[7 : 20] The point that Paul and Peter are making here is that a servant or a slave is submissive and obedient when they're given tasks and instructions. They work to serve the desires, the goals, the agenda and plan of their master, much like we work to address and solve and work towards the desires, plans of our employers.

For us today, our laws give us even more freedom than the slaves had. We have the ability to say no when we don't want to do something. If your job is in the accounting department in an office and your boss says, I want you to clean the bathroom, you have the legal right to quit that job and find another.

That's not the case most of us find ourselves in. We aren't getting asked to clean bathrooms. We're not getting asked to do jobs that we think are below us generally. We have what you might call first world work problems.

Maybe our boss asks us to do something one way and we think there's a better way to do it. I bet if I did it differently, it would be better. Or they ask us to do something that's not our favorite type of work.

I really don't like unloading the truck or I don't like doing this or doing that. It's not fun. It's not with the fun coworkers. It's not our favorite type of work. And so it could be easy for us to not want to do those.

[8 : 42] Maybe there are policies and regulations, red tape, that make your life difficult. And you wish that you could do the work without having to fill out this form or do this or all of these steps.

That you could just do the work if you didn't have to worry about it. And if we're honest, I think there are ways that many of us could think of ways that we have not done the things that our managers, our bosses, our companies, our policies have commanded.

We've not done what we've been asked of us. And Paul's point is, even if you don't like it or don't agree, the employee should seek to honor the authority of the manager and work diligently if they expect to get paid, right?

We have the ability as Americans to leave our job. We can say, no, I'm going to leave. But if we're expecting to get paid, if we're going to stay in this job, Paul's point is honor and serve your manager.

Honor and serve your company. Paul clarifies in the rest of verse 22 and 23 with what manner of service? How should we seek to serve as employees?

[9 : 45] He says in Colossians 3, 22 and 23, And then he says in Ephesians 6, 6 and 7, We don't use this phrase, I service, very much.

It's not something you hear or see much. But it really just means doing work only when people are watching. Serving when their eyes are on you. And you can kind of see, this is a behavior we all naturally exhibit.

If you want to see this in practice, what you've got to do is you put a laundry basket downstairs and you ask your kids to fold the towels. And you say, fold the towels and turn a TV show on.

And what will happen is they'll start folding the towels and they'll start slowing down. And you leave the room and eventually the towels will go down. Kids will make their way to the couch. And as you walk out of the room, the work stops.

But then as you walk your way back into the room, you see a bunch of freshly diligent children making their way back to the basket. A renewed vigor to make sure they're not caught for not working.

[11 : 15] That's what eye service is. It's saying, I'm working, I'm not being watched. Does it matter? Do they know? What happens if I don't work? Paul says that Christians, those who are united to Christ, should work not only when the boss is around, not only when people can see them.

Instead, their work should be as if they were working for the Lord. He says, as to the Lord, not to men, as bondservants of Christ, rendering service, doing your work with a goodwill as to the Lord.

Now, we don't see it in English. There's a bit of a wordplay in this passage in verses 22 and 23. The word master and the word Lord is the same word.

It's *kyrgios*. It's the same word that's used interchangeably. And so you could read Colossians 22 and 23 as bondservants, obeying everything, those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service, as people pleasers, but with a sincere heart, fearing the master.

Whatever you do, work heartily as for the master and not for men. In Ephesians 6, 6 and 7, it would sound like, not by way of eye service, as people pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of the Lord from the heart, rendering service with a goodwill as to the master.

[12 : 38] So Paul's saying, we strive for a master. We seek to serve a master. It's just not the master that we would think about. Paul's answer to servants and employees that are tempted to be lazy or to slack off is that they need to remember they're working for a new master.

They're working for Christ, who is the Lord, their master. And so we need to ask ourselves, if we look at this passage, do we work the same way while we're on the clock?

Do we bring glory to Christ with what we do? Do we work in a way that seeks to glorify God in your work? Is whatever you're doing in word and deed being done in the name of Christ?

Does TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube get more of your time than it should while you're at work? Do you know the areas of the building that you could be in where there's no camera, where you could relax and never get caught?

Working for the Lord means that we strive for excellence. We should work in a way that shows that our service is not just for our boss, it's not just for our paycheck, it's not even just for the company's bottom line or the company's agenda, but we work to serve Christ.

[13 : 53] It means not just doing the bare minimum, but going above and beyond. And I'm not talking about working 10 hours instead of eight. I'm talking about working in a way that says, God is the creator, he has given us work to do, and we're called to take dominion, we're called to work, we're called to fight the effects of the fall in our work.

That means leaving something better than you found it. Cleaning up a mess that you didn't make because that makes things better. Communicating clearly in your text messages, in your emails, in your ways you interact with people so that you are doing things well.

Turning over work to the next shift so that it is as seamless as possible. You are doing your service as to the Lord. Now working in a secular vocation, people sometimes think that you've got to do something very Christian like in your work.

How am I going to work to glorify God if I don't, I don't know, blast Christian music or leave Bibles around or draw crosses on my material that I'm making. I struggled with this when I was an intern in college.

I was working for Power Plant in Burbank and I was writing a program to assist with printing out multiple reports. And it was really cool. I felt like a hacker.

[15 : 09] I was just, it was great. I was doing all kinds of neat stuff. It was really exciting. And I wrestled with, how do I do this work? I'm having fun and enjoying it. How do I do this work for the glory of God?

My naive response was to write a very long comment atop of the program that said something like, this application was developed by Paul Thompson for the glory of the God. My thinking was, no one will know that I did this for God's glory if I don't tell them that I did it for God's glory.

I came back to that same company years later as an employee. My comment was gone. The next person had removed it. But the application that I worked on was still functioning, was still doing the work that I had done.

And I failed to see that writing a program that saved people in the plant hours and hours of work a day was in and of itself glorifying to God. My desire to create something that was well designed and effective was that Paul was getting at here.

It was serving and it was building, it was creating so that things are improved, so that we're serving as if we're serving God. Our work may seem like it's less spiritual.

[16 : 16] We're called to work and serve to the glory of God. God uses all types of vocations and people. Doctors, mechanics, engineers, stay-at-home moms, Uber drivers, cleaners, analysts.

God is using those people to do the work of redemption and restoration. When we view our work as fighting against the curse, when we view our work as we're serving Christ with the things that we're doing, when we're taking dominion and restoring order, the work that used to seem tedious to us can be done with joy and passion because we are doing it for Christ.

We are rendering service with the goodwill as to the Lord and not to man. Paul goes on then talking into why should we do this.

What is our motive for our service? He says in verses 24 and 25, knowing that from the Lord, you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done. There is no partiality. And then Ephesians 6, 8, Paul says, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

[17 : 39] And it's easy for us to kind of rush past this statement and say, yep, they're going to get what's owed to them. But think about this from a perspective of a slave who never would have even had the thought of receiving an inheritance.

Paul is saying, you slaves who work are going to receive an inheritance. They never had things passed on to them. Maybe they were not going to pass things on to the next generation.

And now Paul is saying, you have an inheritance because of your new master, because of Christ. He's also making this connection that even if you're not getting paid, even if you're like these slaves, you're not getting paid, even if your work isn't the same as it was in the past, it wasn't your favorite job, even if it's not as exciting as it used to be, the work that we do in service to Christ will receive a reward.

And he's also saying that a failure to do the work that we're called will result in consequences. That means that if I get an inheritance from Christ for the work that I do, regardless of whether I get paid or how much I get paid, the CEO and the intern both glorify God with the work that they do.

The missionary and the factory worker both glorify God in their work. The housekeeper and the stay-at-home mom glorify God in their work and will receive a reward. And if they fail to do what they're called to do, if they fail to do their work, if they steal, cheat, and lie, they'll receive the consequences.

[19 : 14] They'll be paid back. They'll receive the consequences for their wrongdoing. You see this very clearly explained to us in the familiar parable of the talents. These three servants, he's given a number of talents, which by the way is just money.

It's not a parable on using your skills or talents. But these three servants were given talents. One was given five, one was given two, one was given one.

One takes what was entrusted to him and he doubles it. He turns five into ten. The second one takes what's entrusted to him and doubles it, turning two into four.

The third one, though, we're familiar with this parable, the third one squanders it. He buries it, he keeps it, he doesn't do anything with it because he's afraid of what the master will do. He receives consequences for his decision.

The master returns and he says, you wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers.

[20 : 18] At my coming, I should have received what was mine with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. There are two things that stand out to me in this parable.

The first is that the master called the servant to hid the money, slothful and wicked. He'd given him a task to do. He says, take my money. Maybe it wasn't as grand as the guy that was given five talents.

Maybe he felt jealous. Maybe he was scared, but he squandered it. He was tasked with the work that would have contributed to his master's wealth. It would have benefited the company, if you will.

But he failed to steward the work given him and he failed to even try to be profitable with what he was given. The second thing that stands out to me is these men worked for their master.

He gave them five talents and two talents and one talent. But he lets the men who are productive keep their reward. He says in verse 28, so take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.

[21 : 23] The man who worked and turned five talents into five more keeps the full ten. He gets an inheritance. He also gets the one from the lazy servant. The parable points to the end of the age and the judgment, right?

In verse 21 it says, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. And then when he's talking to the unfaithful servant, he says, cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The point that Paul is getting at is one day in heaven, there will be no slaves. There will be no masters.

We will receive the reward and the inheritance for our faithful service. This isn't tied to our justification and our salvation. We aren't getting right with God because we're doing things.

We're laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven. That's what Jesus told us in Luke chapter 12. He says, Fear not, little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

[22 : 29] Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail. Where no thief approaches and no moth destroys, but where your treasure is, there your heart will be awesome.

We aren't promised an inheritance today. We aren't promised to make the money we want to make or the job we want to have. We're not promised that our work today will be financially and physically productive. We may not get what we feel we deserve.

We are promised that if our work is for Christ, we will receive the reward. Do you work today in your job with the motive of laying up treasures in heaven? You probably don't think about that much.

It's my job laying up treasures in heaven. But where is your heart? What is your heart's desire to see? Maybe you see the discrepancy between your pay and a co-worker's or your pay and the CEO's and you feel less inclined to do your best because you're not getting paid the same.

Do you take the attitude then of the old and slightly edited saying, boss makes a dollar, I make a dime, I'll use the bathroom on company time. Do we not do our work because we're afraid that if I work, I won't get what I'm earning, right?

[23 : 49] You've probably heard of this phrase called quiet quitting where people cut back the work they're doing. They work 30 hours instead of 40 because they want to make more money per hour and so they reduce the amount of work that they do and so do we take that attitude?

Do we reduce our work output because we're worried that we're not going to get paid the same instead of saying, I'm doing the work God's given me to do and I'm going to do it as the Lord and I will receive the reward from Him.

As Christians, our focus can't be on the immediate and the temporal. We have to remind ourselves that even if I'm not paid what we like or the same as somebody else, or we didn't get the raise, if we didn't get the promotion, we serve Christ and He will reward our faithfulness.

The point of this passage, even Luke, is to say, where your heart is, there your treasure will be also and so where our heart is, there we invest our time and I make a connection that's not really in this passage, but when we're talking about our work and the vocation we do and the service of God and even the ways we disconnect our work from the kingdom, we can argue from this entire chapter that we also need to ask ourselves, do we serve our brothers and sisters?

Do we serve the church? Do we invest in this inheritance, the people around you? Do you seek to lay up treasures in heaven when it regards the people you will spend eternity with?

[25 : 12] Is your heart here? Is your heart looking forward to heaven? Are you laying up treasures there? God's placed you in this body together. That's been the point of this chapter altogether.

Paul is saying, you live together, you united to Christ together, live this way, put off these things that break your unity, put on these things that make it stronger. Members who are, members of this church took a membership pledge about becoming a member that includes commitments like praying for each other, assembling together, taking the Lord's table together, giving financially in support of the church.

So my question is, do you value the work of the church? Do you value God's kingdom being built? Do you value the fellowship of the saints? Do you value the ordinances?

Are you laying up treasures in heaven when it comes to what Christ has given? There are ways that our church could be used, could use service, we could use nursery workers and people who can give the gospel for the food distribution, people who can help on the food distribution.

And so as much as we're talking about serving our work and serving our jobs, I want us to also think, don't squander the gifts that you've been given in service to the church. Don't squander the ordinary means of grace that God has given his church and his people.

[26 : 33] Corporate worship, preaching of the word, the Lord's Supper and fellowship. Don't blow off Sunday worship or other opportunities to be with God's people to serve and grow together.

We're members one of another. We need each other. Our service to the body and our service to each other is critical for us becoming more and more like Christ. This is a place that our master, Christ, ordained for us to meet him.

We honor and obey him by making it a priority. And so as much as we have a focus on getting our work done and focusing on making sure that we serve and do our work right, I want us to also think, how do we serve and invest in each other?

How do we care for each other? So Paul moves on from addressing slaves to those who had slaves. Paul goes on to talk about those who are the masters.

He says, Masters, treat your bond servants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. In Ephesians 6, the parallel passage, he says, Masters, do the same to them.

[27 : 40] Stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their master and yours is in heaven, that there is no partiality with him. I mentioned earlier that most families in Rome and places like Colossae had at least one slave or servant.

Paul addresses the common temptation that probably was there for those who owned slaves. Paul doesn't command that the slaves be set free. That might be a surprise to us to read this and hear Paul to say, Masters, set all your slaves free.

He seems to address this concept of slavery and masters owning slaves without outright condemning it. And there are probably reasons for this, but the reason most commentators agree on is that it was such a common thing that not even slaves could conceive of a city or of a society working without that type of slavery.

I mentioned 50% of the people that were doing the work were slaves. And while there were exceptions, most of the slaves that we're discussing here weren't treated the way we see slaves treated in our history in America.

Most of the doctors, financial managers, and lawyers were educated slaves. So Paul doesn't come in with guns blazing and say, burn it to the ground.

[29 : 00] He does come in and he gives guidelines, which when properly implemented, start to undermine the structure of slavery, causing its eventual collapse.

Paul's command is to remind the slave owners that they and their slaves are seen by God as the same. There's no partiality with their creator, so there should be no partiality with their master.

He gives the command with a reason. He says, treat them justly, treat them fairly. Don't threaten them because you have a master in heaven. Today, if you're a manager or a boss, you won't be threatening your employees.

I hope not. You will find HR showing you no partiality. But it can be easy to be unjust. It can be easy to be unfair. And by fair, I don't mean that we're saying treat everybody the same, everybody gets the same treatment, everybody gets the same.

No, they're employees that deserve more money, that deserve more responsibility, that have shown that they can do the work better. We saw that in the parable of the talents. Now, fair means the manager should be as helpful and as supportive to one employee or to one slave in this case, but as helpful and supportive and directive as he is to one as he is to another.

[30 : 17] When COVID hit and my office went complete work from home, so many things turned upside down. Some people needed more guidance and assistance when they weren't in the office every day.

New employees needed unique mentorship that we've never done before. How do you onboard an employee you've never met in person? And being just and fair means that a manager needs to understand those types of dynamic fluctuations, making sure he doesn't assume all people can do the same thing the same way at the same time.

A good manager needs to understand that people working for him are people. They're people just like he is with the family, with appointments, with birthday parties, with sickness.

He needs to understand that these are human people with human lives. A good manager recognizes he too has a manager. He isn't a dictator. He leads by example doing what his boss directs.

Instead of commanding. Ultimately, a good manager recognizes that his work and his team's work should be done to the glory of God. It should be done as part of that redemptive work that God's calling us to.

[31 : 28] So if you're a manager, if you've got employees reporting to you, if you've got people that do what you ask them to do, do you treat them justly and fairly? Do you give them what they need to be successful?

Or do you ask them to make bricks without straw? Do you threaten them? Or do you provide sound guidance and appropriate discipline when needed? Being a good God-glorifying manager hinges on understanding and knowing that we have our master in heaven.

That was Paul's point. If you read back verse, at the end of verse 1 in chapter 4, he says, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. And his point is, Christ is now in heaven, and he's thinking about, he's saying, live out your work as a slave because you've got a master in heaven, and work out and live out your life as a master or employer because you've a master in heaven.

And think about this for a second. We talk about a master. The Bible says that Christ came as a servant, yet returned to heaven as king and master of all.

Listen to what Paul says in Philippians chapter 2, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

[32 : 56] Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Here we have Christ, the second person of the Trinity.

we've talked about this and we read our catechism question today. Humbled himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And that could be the way the story ended.

We could have a man, God who came to earth and lived and died as a servant. Paul goes on in Philippians chapter 2 verse 9, he says, Therefore, because of his obedience to death on the cross, therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth, under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. So Christ became the suffering servant.

Christ endured the shame of the cross for the joy that was set before him, his people. His people were the promised inheritance he was going to gain. A name above every name and glory to the Father.

[34 : 08] Psalm 2 records this offer. We sometimes refer to this as the covenant of redemption, but Psalm 2 records the Father talking to the Son. He says, I will tell the decree. The Lord said to me, You are my Son.

Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces with the potter's vessel.

Christ was offered before the creation of the world a people, the nations. He was offered people, you and me. And all he had to do was come and live as a servant and die and suffer for them, for us.

They would be his sheep and he would be his sheep. He'd be their shepherd. He'd be their kind, gentle, and lowly of spirit master.

So Paul makes the argument in our passage that slaves are to obey because their true master is in heaven. And he tells masters to be just and fair because they themselves have this master in heaven.

[35 : 22] But the apostle Paul, when he's talking, sorry, when the apostle Peter is talking to slaves, he takes a different argument, a different approach. And I want to close by looking at 1 Peter chapter 2, 18 to 21.

1 Peter 2, Peter is saying, servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows when suffering unjustly.

But what credit is it when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

For to this you've been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you as an example so that you might follow in his steps. We might say that Peter sounds a little bit extreme here.

He wants me to respect the good and the bad master, the good and the bad boss. We know our history, we've seen the pictures, we know that bad masters could be really bad.

[36 : 30] But his point is, Peter's point, is it's suffering, and he develops this all throughout the rest of 1 Peter chapter 2, but suffering is the call of a Christian.

Suffering is what Christians will do, they will suffer. They will suffer trials and difficulty because it makes us more and more like Christ.

It makes us like Christ because Christ himself suffered in both his life and his death. He suffered unjustly, not by accident, but by intentionally, willingly suffering in our place.

And here, Peter's making this connection. Christ suffered for you, you can deal with a bad boss. If these slaves were told to obey an unkind master who beat them and caused sorrow and injustice, you and I can survive our voluntary employment and bosses, good or bad.

But Peter goes on in verses 22 and following to really double down this connection that he has with Christ and servant suffering. He says in 1 Peter 2, 22, He, which is Christ, committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

[37 : 44] When he was reviled, he did not revile and return. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but now have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. So here is our Savior. Here is our servant Savior.

Savior, humbled himself to make his people his. He was sinless, but he bore our sins on the tree.

He had no deceit in his mouth, but carried the weight of our every lying. He didn't return evil for evil, but carried, sorry, he did not return evil for evil.

He did not mock or revile when he was mocked. He did not threaten when he was caused to suffer. He suffered and died so that his people could die to sin and live for righteousness.

[38 : 54] The wounds of the innocent suffering servant healed the sinful slaves. By his wounds you and I have been healed.

That's our new master. That's the servant that came, lived a perfect life without sin, died a death he didn't deserve, buried in a tomb he didn't own, ascended to the right hand of the Father to be given his promised inheritance.

For those who were in him, for the ones united to him, we were crucified with him. Our sin was nailed to that cross and we were put in that tomb with him.

It was a tomb we deserved. But our sins didn't stay, our sins stayed on the cross. We didn't.

We were buried with him. We were raised with him. And then, and this just blows my mind, we've been seated with him in the heavenly places.

[39 : 58] Ephesians 2, 4-6 says, But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you've been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places. That's what enables Paul to so confidently say to Jews and Gentiles, to slaves and masters, in Galatians 3, there's neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free, there's no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

You may have a terrible boss and your great, great, great, great grandparents could have had a terrible master or could have been a terrible master. But Christ is the master of all.

He's the perfect servant, the perfect servant, the perfect employee, the perfect Lord and master. He was obedient when we have not been.

He was kind when we've not been. Like Christ, we can entrust ourselves to the one who judges justly when our work is difficult. We can work with diligence doing our work for the Lord, not just for our boss, but doing our work in service to Christ.

[41 : 22] May our labor and our service be done to the glory and honor of our master that's in heaven who gave himself for us and bought us for himself. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the fact that even though we don't deserve a bit of it, because you are a God that reconciles, you sent Christ and Christ humbled himself and lived and died on a cross that we deserved.

and he made us kings and priests to our God and he's reconciled us through his body on the flesh and the cross that now we can come together Jew, Greek, male, female, slave or master, we can come together because you have united us together because we're united together in Christ.

Lord, help us to take the Lord's Supper in just a moment to remember your sacrifice and your care for us. In Jesus' name, amen. I'll ask the men that are who is and I CPU will be understanding as you take the Lord's of course and youracho and the of course the other half names andures