

December 8, 2019

"...so that you may know him better..."

"You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free."

"And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him."

Ephesians 4:22-6:5-9

As we continue in our study of Paul's letter to the believers in Ephesus we need to remember the basic principles that the Apostle has given us. When we come to truly and fully know Christ then our lives will be changed or transformed because we will be putting off the old man of sin and becoming a new selfless being.

Paul has been building on this principle of transformation as it effects our relationships in the church, in the marriage, in the family and in our context for today, the workplace. When the Apostle addresses the workplace he does so from the perspective of the first century Roman empire where a small aristocracy and a small artisan class were far outnumbered by slaves. Most believers were, in fact, slaves.

In our time we can apply the same principles of selfless service to the workplace. So, employees need to obey their employers as they would Jesus and serve on the job as they would serve God. And in turn, employers must treat their employees as they wish their heaven Master to treat them.

It is, I think, essential to understand that the Apostle is setting a consistent standard of conduct for those of us who have died to self and become new creations. We cannot live like those around us so often live. As new creations, new beings, we are called to become selfless servants and that selflessness always shows through our relationships.

So in a time when churches are splintering, when marriages are failing, when parents and children are so often at war and when the workplace is divided and contentious we, who wear the name of Jesus, must be different. We cannot, we must not, live like those around us.

As believers we must, ***"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*** Our every effort absolutely begins with us personally and individually. It begins with our personal willingness to ***"Be completely humble and gentle;"*** and to ***"...be patient, bearing with one another in love."***

As we noted when we looked at this passage a few weeks ago, humility equals an emptied self. Paul wrote to the Philippian believers, ***"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing..."*** (Philippians 2:5-6)

When we empty out our selves, when we make ourselves nothing, and willingly give up the selfish pursuit of our own way, we can and will become new creatures. But, if we are unwilling to give up our self-serving ways then we are still those old sin-condemned selves living without hope. God calls us to live like Jesus, to follow him along the same road that led him to die on the cross. We, like our Master, must pick up our own cross and allow our self-serving ways to die.

When we do this, when we let that old, self-serving man of sin who is us die, then, and only then will we become new. And, when we become that selfless new being it will change every single aspect of every single relationship we share and the light of Jesus will shine through us, through our selfless example, to a dark and broken world.

Serving 
from the
Heart