

# Introduction

## Attention

Happy New Year!

- How many made a New Year's resolution?
- How many ... last year? That you kept?

**Forbes magazine: Most popular resolutions**

- **Get in shape**
- **Save more money**
- **Lose weight**
- **Improve diet**

Remained top resolutions consistently.

WHY? Because most don't keep them!

- If we got in shape and STAYED in shape...

## Need

Why such fickle creatures?

- Make promises don't keep

Used to think: "Not lack ... but overcommitted."

- ... to too many things

But older ... = not really committed to anything.

- After all, if everything equally important, nothing is.

Must be SOLD OUT to one goal, thing, person.

Topic: being SOLD OUT to Christ

- ... in 2026
- Rest of life!

## Passage Intro

Peculiar passage of Scripture: Deuteronomy 15:12-18

- Describes strange OT ceremonies
- For years, couldn't understand why part of it (vv.16-17) was even mentioned

› \*\*\* READ TEXT HERE \*\*\*

## Prayer

- TY Lord for your Word... privilege to study it.
- Guide our thinking.      • Keep us focused on your voice.
- Hurt us if necessary.      • Confront our wandering hearts.
- Show us your glory and your worth.
- HS, make this text come alive to us.

## Passage Background

- Every text has a context.
- More confusing ... context » important.

Here, wider context = dealing w/ vulnerable in society

- 14:27-29 -- Levites: "no portion or inheritance" || Solution: the tithe.
- 15:1-11 -- default on interest-free loans || Solution: balance forgiven every 7 years
- 15:12-18 -- impoverished, indebted, destitute || Solution: indentured servitude for 6 years, released (if desired) in 7th
  - **18** Not release begrudgingly; but w/ GENEROSITY.
  - **13 & 14** Show what that was to look like:
    - **13** *not ... empty-handed* rather...
    - **14** *furnish him liberally out of your resources. Give as [according to the same abundance] the LORD ... has blessed you.*

Very similar to parallel passage:

### Leviticus 25:39-42 **ESV**

<sup>39</sup> "If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave: <sup>40</sup> he shall be with you as a hired worker and as a sojourner. He shall serve with you until the year of the jubilee. <sup>41</sup> Then he shall go out from you,

he and his children with him, and go back to his own clan and return to the possession of his fathers. <sup>42</sup> For they are my servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves.

**Interesting: both passages contrast *hired worker* with *slave*.**

- Hired worker = received wages, served temporarily via contract.
  - Provided low-wage labor. But earned wages; belonged to worker.
  - Landowner provided room & board ∈ compensation.
  - Comparable to share-cropping in our history.
- Slave was a life-long commitment
  - No independence. Rather completely dependent upon their master to provide all necessities of life itself.
  - No self-will. The will of a slave is completely absorbed into the will of the Master.

**Σ = God's people should care about / for vulnerable in society; not take advantage.**

**So WHY does this passage include vv. 16 & 17**

**Deuteronomy 15:16–17** ESV

<sup>16</sup> But if [your hired worker, at the time he can be released] says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he is well-off with you, <sup>17</sup> then you shall take an awl, and put it through his [ear lobe] into the door, and he shall be your slave forever. And to your female slave you shall do the same.

**Why is that included here?**

Main teaching — "What to do w/ vulnerable...?" — answered WITHOUT need for strange ceremony.

And why would it ever be needed anyway?

- Who wouldn't want their freedom back?
- What kind of servant would prefer a lifetime of slavery > "new start"?

**Come to see ... wrong question!**

**Right question:** "What kind of master ... so wonderful ≈ slavery preferable to freedom & independence?"

- **16** *I will not* (not "cannot") *go out from you*
- Free-will choice to abandon free will.

And why?

- Motivation: **16** *he loves* [his Master] ... *he is well-off* [better off with his Master].
- "There's no place I'd rather be!"

### What kind of Master inspires that kind of commitment?

- ... worth being 'sold out' for? • **17** *slave forever* for?
- life-long, blank contract commitment

**There may be a few earthly masters like this.**

**But, I've only known one Master who is worth that kind of commitment: JESUS!**

- Psalm 84:10: "A day in His courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."
- "I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked."
- "I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today."

**Be "sold out" to Jesus. He really is worth it!**

## Transition/Keyword

**What would it look like to be "sold out" to Jesus?**

5 CHARACTERISTICS of a "sold out" servant of Christ

### 01 — *Cheerful Surrender*

## Discover

This ceremony was brutal.

Sealed the future of the servant.

- No more independence.
- No more "my life."

Must die to self in order to live entirely for someone else.

**Not by compulsion, but by request!**

**Not forced into slavery. A choice!**

- Sure, it's prescribed by the Law.

- Carried out by the Master.

All requires submission of the servant.

**Interesting: “slave” in some Near Eastern languages = “listener.”**

- Slave is to listen to his Master’s voice from now on.

## Argue/Explain

**What are the voices that influence your life?**

- Fox News?
- TikTok?
- Your friends?

**What would it look like in 2026, if Jesus’ voice was the only one that mattered?**

- Whatever HE wanted, you wanted.
- HIS plan was the ONLY plan.

And this all ... with cheerful surrender!

**Is Jesus worth this level of obedience? Such sacrifice? YES!!!**

When you consider what He has done for you...

**1 Peter 1:18–19 ESV**

<sup>18</sup> [You were] ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ.

Favorite hymn: *Man of Sorrows, What A Name!*

Man of sorrows what a name for the Son of God, who came  
ruined sinners to reclaim:  
Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Surrender is worship, not duty.

**Romans 12:1 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

- *a living sacrifice* is worship (the acknowledgment of the value) of Christ’s sacrifice.

## Application

Cheerful surrender not about losing freedom – finding freedom & joy by yielding God.

- Begin each day saying, “Lord, I yield my plans to You.”
- Thank God for changed plans! (I don’t like that.)

- Sovereign = it could have been otherwise
- Goodness = His plan is better than mine

## Transition

**Will you “sell out” on yourself and the world ... “sold out” to Christ?**

**That’s what cheerful surrender looks like.**

- It means killing my pride...
- ...and joyfully submitting to His control.

2nd characteristic of a “sold out” servant of Christ

## 02 — Open Identification

### Discover

New relationship needed to be formalized.

- Hole in ear lobe identified servant with master for life!
- Conspicuous mark not easily hidden.

### Illustration

**How many of you have a Hopewell sticker on your car?**

- Most b/c you are proud of HBC.
- TY!

Imagine:

- Discipleship Pastor arrested for embezzling funds
- All over the news
- People leaving: rats off sinking ship.

How long would that sticker stay on your car?

Logos identify us w/ what they represent.

- We receive the love or hate public has for the company / owner.

Jesus expects us to “wear His logo.”

- Not: just “wear a cross.” >> >>
- Identify openly with all He stands for.

## Argue/Explain

### Matthew 10:32–33 ESV

<sup>32</sup> everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Living faith boldly & joyfully essential to being a Xn.

### Romans 10:9 ESV

<sup>9</sup> If you confess with your mouth (openly) that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

- There is no “secret service” in Christianity.
- We are called to openly (unashamedly) identify as a Christ-follower.

If you follow Him openly, be prepared for the world to hate you.

### John 15:18–20 ESV

<sup>18</sup> “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

## Is Jesus worth possible ridicule / shame / suffering?

Consider what He suffered publicly for you.

- 6 hrs, exposed on criminal’s cross
- Cursed      • Spit upon

My sin — your sin heaped upon Him.

| Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood,  
| sealed my pardon with his blood:

| Hallelujah! What a Savior!

**If Jesus wasn’t ashamed to die publicly for you, don’t be ashamed to live publicly for Him!**

## Application

- Speak openly about your faith at work, school, and home.

What if I get in trouble?

- Not saying be rude or try to get in trouble.

- But if their “1st Amendment rights” allow them to express what they believe...
- Pray for courage.      • Encourage others who struggle with fear.
- Live consistently. If actions don’t match words, words will never be heard.

## Transition

Any limits I can put on my service to Christ?

3rd characteristic of a “sold out” servant of Christ

### 03 — *Unlimited Service*

## Illustration

Margins in your Bibles.

No “margins” / No “limits” in our service to Christ.

## Discover

**17** hole went through slave’s ear and *into the door*

Marked servant as permanent member of the household.

But also marked the door itself. (a hole, a blood stain)

- Every time servant passed through that door ... reminded.
- Whether going out or coming in ... serving / representing the Master.

## Argue/Explain

**Everywhere we go, whatever we do, we serve one Master: Jesus.**

- At work
- At practice
- At home

**There is not a “room” in the house of our life where Master has no authority.**

**Is Jesus worth a “blank check” on my life? YES!**

**Colossians 1:16–18** **ESV**

<sup>16</sup> For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>



And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

He truly is Lord of All!

- He's not "Lord over what you give Him permission to be Lord over."
- Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, Judge, and Coming King over ALL.
- Either Lord over ALL of your life; or you are a treasonous rebel! /// No in-between.

## Application

Two most popular "margins" I've seen: Time & Money.

- Your money is NOT your money.
  - "I earned it." /// How?
  - "I work hard." /// How are you able to do that? (Who gave you the job? Strength. Breath.)
  - Nothing you are / have is YOURS.
- Your time is NOT your time.
  - "Church is 'me time.'"
  - Begin each day: "Lord, how can I serve You today."

## Transition

4th (last) characteristic of a "sold out" servant of Christ

### 04 — Complete Dependence

## Discover

**17** *he shall be your slave forever*

- Yes, slave is giving up freedom forever.
- Slave is completely dependent upon Master's provision.

But, Master is now responsible for slave.

## Argue/Explain

- Began with wrong question: "What kind of servant would...?"
- Correct question: "What kind of Master is worth this?"

**Answer: Kind that gives up everything, to give everything, to those that deserve nothing!**

## Think about what He has done for us!

### 1 Thessalonians 5:23 **ESV**

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- *the God of peace* :: Made peace with us through blood of His Son
- *himself* :: Personally involved; not given to a prophet or angel
- *sanctify you* :: "make you holy," includes...
  - saved you
  - changing you
- *completely* :: will never give up or quit on you
- *be kept blameless* :: will KEEP you saved by grace
- *at the coming* :: He is coming!

| Guilty, vile, and helpless, we. Spotless Lamb of God was He.  
Full atonement — can it be?

| Hallelujah! What a Savior!

| Lifted up was He to die. "It is finished!" was His cry.  
Now in Heaven exalted high!

| Hallelujah! What a Savior!

## Application

- You cannot be saved on your own. You must trust Him.
- You cannot follow Jesus in your own strength. You must trust Him.
- If ... you will see everything He promised. You CAN trust Him.

## Call to Faith

## Visualize

**Which servant are you?**

**First one?**

- Watched the Lord bring you through one crisis after another.
- But back on your feet now. Ready to take control of your own life again.
- Not that you are unthankful. Just rather “make it on your own.”

Beware. You are walking away from the only safe place there is.

- Not freedom. Bondage to worry, stress, fear and death.
- Old masters – World, Flesh, Devil – are waiting, chains in hand.

### Second one?

- You love Jesus. Love His home. This family.
- You remember where you were — where He brought you from.
- You know there’s no better place than in His service.

## Appeal/Apply

### So be “sold out” to Jesus!

- Cheerfully submit to His authority — He always does what’s best.
- Willingly sacrifice whatever stands between you and Him.
- Openly identify yourself as a Christ-follower.
  - “Jesus is Lord. I want to follow Him.”
  - Be baptized.
  - Join this (or another bible-teaching) church.
- Erase the margins on the contract of your life.
- Come find the freedom of complete dependence on Jesus.
  - No worry.      • No fear.      • No regrets.

When He comes, our glorious King, all His ransomed Home to bring,  
Then anew this song we’ll sing!

Hallelujah! What a Savior!