

“Response to Injustice”

Colossians 3:22-4:1

New Hope Community Church

November 10, 2018

A. Historical Setting

1. Slavery in the Roman Empire was cruel and unjust.
 - a. 20% of Roman population were slaves
 - b. Jewish Slavery in OT was an indentured servant system
 - c. Roman Slavery in NT was a property system
2. The book of Philemon
 - a. Onesimus means useful but he stole and ran away
 - b. Onesimus was saved in Rome and disciplined by Paul

B. Paul Addresses slaves (Col. 3:22-24)

1. Paul reminds them of their true Master (22)
2. Paul confronts the motive of pride and selfishness (22)
3. Paul gives a new motive: Serve Christ! (23, 24)

Application: *We must take our eyes off injustice and remind ourselves to make Christ our motive*

C. Paul Addresses the Seriousness of the Command (3:25)

1. Everyone will be repaid with no loop holes.

Application: *We must take the high road even when it isn't convenient.*

D. Paul Addresses the Slave Owners (4:1)

1. The same firm warning applies to them (25)
2. They are held to their Master's standard of justice and fairness

Application: *We are held accountable for how we treat people.*

E. Apologetic Moment: Why does Paul not condemn slavery?

1. In our culture slavery has an emotional stigma
2. God's original plan did not involve slavery, but freedom.
3. God is more concerned with our heart response than the system
4. The Gospel is not about changing institutions but about changing hearts which will change institutions.
5. This is not an excuse to remain silent when injustice happens.
6. We should encourage those being oppressed to use the law.
7. As a Church we need to reflect God's ideal society to the World.

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Life Group Questions

1. Read Colossians 3:22-4:1
2. Share something the Lord taught you from the sermon or something from the passage that stands out to you.
3. Has anyone ever seen or experienced oppression or injustice first hand? If so share about event.
4. Paul addresses slaves to obey, same word used for children to obey, why do we not want to obey when wronged or when we experience injustice?
5. What are some practical ways that we can make Christ our motive in work or in anything we do where we are being unfairly treated?
6. Why is convenience so important to us? Why do we use it as a reason to justify breaking the rules?
7. How do we know what God's standard of justice and fairness is?
8. How can we practically check our interactions with those in our authority to see if we are meeting God's standard ?
9. Why do we want to blame institutions or systems instead of focusing on our responsibility when dealing with injustice?
10. Has anyone had a conversation with someone offended by how the Bible addresses slavery or injustice? How can we discuss this with unbelievers when the topic comes up? What should we emphasize?
11. Pray for each other!