

The Supremacy of Christ
05/27/2023 (Week 16) Colossians 3:22-4:1
Instructions for Working Relationships

This is my message written prior to being preached. Please excuse the bullet point format and any grammatical mistakes. This is meant to be spoken.

Introduction & Review

- **Thank Brian for preaching last week.**
- Today, in our study through Paul's letter to the church in **Colossae**,
- we'll finish **Chapter 3** and begin **Chapter 4**.
- So, if you have a **Bible**, and I hope you do, turn with me to **Colossians 3**.
- Where beginning in **verse 22**, the Apostle Paul writes...

²² Bondservants, 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. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

¹ Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (Colossians 3:22 - 4:1)

- Let me set the stage for these verses by **reviewing** what's gone before.
- In the first part of **Colossians** Paul **established** both **the Supremacy of Christ** and that those who trust in Christ will experience **an amazing spiritual transformation**.
- They (we) will both die to our old sinful self and be **reborn** to a new life in Christ.
- **We are new creatures in Christ.**
- But to experience our new life, we must, to use Brian's theme from last week, **walk in the light**.
- We must walk on the path that God, who loves us and wants what is best for us, has laid out in his word.
- **Put simply we must obey God.**
- And in the **second half** of Colossians Paul gives us a number of commands from God, instructing us how to experience our new life in Christ.
- **Two weeks ago**, we looked at **verses 18-21**, here Paul gives instructions for **Family life**.
- To experience the fullness of **our new family life** there are certain ways we, in the power of the Spirit, are to **behave**.
- Wives are to submit to their husbands,
- Husbands are to love their wives.
- Children are to obey their parents.
- And Fathers (parents) are not to provoke their children.

- And if you remember one of the things, I mentioned was that **none of us** fall into all these categories and some of us fall into none of these categories.
- Some are not wives, husbands, children, or parents.
- However, the instructions that Paul gives contain principles that we all should understand,
- **so that**, among other things, we might **Biblically counsel and pray** for those who do fit the specific categories.
- And that brings us to our passage for today, where we face a similar situation.
- Paul is giving instructions to Bondservants (slaves) and Masters.
- And while **slavery** still exists in some parts of our world,
- there are no **Masters** or **Bondservants/slaves** here!
- **However**, the instructions that Paul gives still contain **principles** for areas of our lives.
- In general, they can be applied to any relationship where you find yourself either **under the authority of someone else** or **having authority over someone else**.
- That could be **Teachers and Students, Coaches and Athletes, Pastors Elders and Congregations**.
- These instructions could even apply to **Parents and Children**.
- But in our culture, the most common place, outside of the family, where one person has authority over another, is in the **workplace**.
- And the relationship that these verses are most often applied to are that of **Employer & Employee**.
- So, as we look at our text for today, we'll both examine what Paul is saying in his world.
- And then make practical applications for us in our world.
- But before we look at Paul's **instructions**, we need to understand their cultural context.

1. The Cultural Context for Paul's Instructions

- What was it like in Paul's day (in the Roman World) when these instructions were given?
- And to best understand this we need to look at the **range of meaning** for the **Greek** word **doulos**,
- It's translated **Bondservants** in the **ESV**,

²² **Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, Colossians 3:22**

- The same word (**doulos**) is translated **Servants** in the **KJV**
- and **Slaves** in the **NASB** and **NIV**.
- And as you those English words (bondservants, servants and slaves) you understand that each has different connotations in our culture.
- But in the **Roman Empire** the single word **doulos** could mean any one of the three.

- It most often meant “**slave**” which **refers** to someone who was **owned by someone else**.
- In **the Roman world** there were many ways someone could become a **slave**.
- You could be born into slavery, you could be captured in war,
- Infants who were abandoned at birth were sometimes taken and raised as slaves.
- Or because of poverty or other reasons you could sell yourself into slavery.
- Ancient tradition, dating back to **Aristotle (350 BC)**, classified **slaves** as things, *living tools*.
- One **Roman Scholar** classified **farm implements** into three classes:
- **the articulate**, the inarticulate, and the mute —**the articulate being slaves**.
- **Gaius**, the **Roman lawyer**, said,
We may note that it is universally accepted that the master possesses the power of life and death over a slave. (Gaius of Rome)
- And if a slave ran away, once captured, he was branded on the forehead with the letter **F** for *fugitivus* and sometimes even put to death with no trial.
- So that’s the first meaning of **doulos** and what it looked like in the Roman world.
- And this meaning would be what we think of with regards to **slavery** in our own country during **the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries**.
- The main difference being, the Romans did not discriminate based on the color of skin.
- Black, white and any shade in between could be taken and enslaved.
- So, in the Roman world, as in any world, being a **doulos - slave** was **terrible and dehumanizing**.
- *Now the same word, **doulos** could also mean as the ESV translates “bondservant”*
- This refers to someone who is officially bound under contract to serve his master for a specific period of time.
- When the contract expired, the person was freed,
- They were given the wages that had been saved by the master,
- and they were officially declared a freedman.
- A person could, because of poverty or other reasons, choose to become a bondservant.
- In fact, with no state funded welfare system, bond service (or even as mentioned slavery) was often the only option for some.
- And while a bondservant was still under that authority of their master, they had certain rights (based on the contract) that a slave did not.
- And finally, **doulos** could also mean “**servant**” which was similar to a bondservant but may not involve a contract.
- It refers to someone who is hired to serve in the household.
- Their wages were not held as that of the bondservant but were given in regular intervals.
- They were still under the authority of their master but could also choose to leave at any given time.
- So, this use of the word **doulos** (servant) would be the closest to what we experience today in our workplaces.

- Now all these types of **servitude (slaves, bondservants, servants)** existed in the **Roman World**.
- **Ancient** historians estimate that there were some **60,000,000 - *Doulos of one form or another*** in the **Roman Empire**.
- This is about half the population.
- And because of this, because so many of the **Free Romans Citizens** had/owned **doulos**
- **Work** was considered **below their dignity**.
- Practically everything was done by the **doulos**, even **doctoring and teaching**.
- And Roman society was **clearly divided** into two groups, the **doulos (slaves, bondservants, and servants)** and the free.
- So that's a brief picture of what it meant to be a **doulos** in the **Roman Empire**.
- And into this context, where half the people were slaves, bondservants, and servants, comes Christianity.
- **Specifically**, the Apostle Paul came preaching the **gospel of Jesus Christ**,
- Which included the **explicit doctrine** of **equality** of all people in Christ.
- Consider, **for example**, Paul's teaching in **Galatians 3:28**,

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

- Whether you are wealthiest master or the lowliest slave, in Christ all are one, all are equal.
- All will equally receive the benefits of new life in Christ and eternal life with Christ.
- This was **new, radical, revolutionary teaching**.
- However, some have **questioned** the fact that Paul does not **condemn outright the practice of slavery**.
- Well, a couple of things to note.
- **First**, whether Paul condemned slavery or not, it was a foundational aspect of the culture he was living in and seeking to minister too.
- **His direct condemnation** would not have ended slavery, **but it may have ended his ministry**.
- Don't forget he was not living in a **democracy** with an elected officials.
- He was living in a **Roman controlled dictatorship**.
- Also, he was a Jew, and the Jews like much of the known world, were under the authority (boot) of the Roman Empire.
- And Paul's primary role was not bringing social change but preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- However, as history shows, when the gospel is preached, received, believed, and obeyed inevitably social change comes.
- And as we will see, his instructions to **doulos** and specifically to masters made for a radical rethinking of slavery in all its forms.

- **So, what did Paul think about slavery?**
- Well, we can be certain that Paul was not **pro-slavery**.
- We already saw him say that in Christ there is **neither slave nor free**.
- And in **1 Corinthians 7** speaking to those who had recently converted he said...

²⁰ Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. ²¹ Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) (1 Corinthians 7:20-21)

- This is interesting because Paul is saying, **hey** if you're a **doulos** when you come to Christ,
- don't be concerned, continue to live your life, growing in your relationship with Christ.
- God who is sovereign over all, has a plan for you in your situation.
- However, if you can gain your freedom, do that.
- **Paul says it's better to be free than to be a slave.**
- Also, to those who might say Paul, or the New Testament does not explicitly condemn slavery,
- We can look at **1 Timothy 1:10**
- Here Paul lists those who are lawless, disobedient, ungodly, sinners, unholy and profane... they are...

¹⁰ the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, (1 Timothy 1:10)

- Paul specifically mentions **enslavers**.
- That word in the Greek literally means **men stealer**.
- It includes a slave-dealer or kidnapper.
- **One who unjustly forces a free man into slavery.**
- And this Paul condemns, this would include much of the slavery of the Roman Empire and the slavery that was practiced in our own country.
- So, in **summary**.
- What we need to understand, looking back from our current culture, where slavery in our own country has been rightly and biblically abolished and condemned.
- Is that Paul was not living in our culture, he was walking a fine line.
- Because he was living in a culture where slavery was everywhere, and it had several forms.
- My sense is that Paul does condemn slavery (enslaving people),
- But he also realizes that in the Roman world choosing to be a bondservant, servant or even a slave was often the only way a person or family could survive.

- And so, in this cultural context, Paul provides radical instructions to believing masters and slaves.
- Instruction, that along with other concepts from the New Testament, would radically change and eventually bring slavery to an end.
- And again, from these instructions, even though none of us are slaves or bondservants, we can find important principles that apply to any working relationship.
- And this is important because work is a crucial part of most people's lives.
- Today the average worker still works five days a week.
- And each day is divided into more or less equal periods of eight hours,
- Eight hours of work, eight hours of sleep, and eight hours of "free time."
- So, on average calculating in weekends and vacation, we spend **about ¼ of our lives** working.
- Work is so important that our society normally defines people by what they do.
- I'm a doctor, lawyer, pastor, plumber, teacher, home maker, engineer, businessman etc.....
- And so, in this area of **working relationships** in their many forms,
- We can find principles from the instructions Paul gives to **Doulos and Masters**.
- Principles that if applied will result in experiencing our new life in Christ in our work.
- And for those of you who are retired and are thinking, this doesn't apply to you anymore.
- I would say, **retirement** is a relatively new cultural concept **not a Biblical one**.
- As believers, as Christians in our culture, we may retire from a particular job,
- but as long as God gives us breath and strength we should be working (even volunteering) for our own wellbeing and the furtherance God's Kingdom.
- So, as we look at this text, if you're retired, you might want to consider where you **are or can work for the Lord**.
- And that brings us to our text, where Paul **begins** with...

2. Instructions for *Doulos* - Employees

- Verse 22 begins...

²² ***Bondservants*** (*Doulos*), ***obey in everything those who are your earthly masters...***
(*Colossians 3:22*)

- Hearing these words without the Roman cultural context we just saw; you could easily think Paul was pro-slavery.
- Think of how these words must have sounded to the **exploited or oppressed *doulos***!
- "***Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters***"
- **Now** as we saw with **wives and children in our previous study**,
- I say again, Paul was not demanding submission to sinful commands.
- ***We must obey God rather than men.***

- And yet he uses the word **everything which** is all encompassing.
- **Doulos** were very often asked to do unpleasant things.
- This was a tough command, **especially** when linked with the next phrase:

not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers,

- **Eye service** refers to work that's **only done** when the boss is looking.
- We all know what that's like.
- At the gym, when your trainer is watching there are **perfect pushups**.
- But when he looks away ... **Eye service** results in lazy form.
- The room is swept, but the dirt is brushed under the carpet.
- Work breaks extend until the boss returns.
- Last week, I heard on the radio that the average worker wastes about **2 hours** out of their **8-hour workday**.
- And Paul is saying, this is not the way Christians are to behave!
- Rather, our service/work is to be done ...

with sincerity of heart,

- **With all your heart.**
- And again, this command has **no qualifications**.
- There is no distinction between **pleasant or unpleasant tasks**, dull or challenging work.
- It simply states that everything must be done well, from the heart, whether the boss is present or not.
- Put simply, **Christian doulos (employees) should be hard workers**.
- And even in our modern world this isn't always easy.
- But **image** if you were a **slave** in the Roman world.
- It should be noted that even though Paul is addressing Christian slaves and masters,
- He's not saying these instructions only apply if your master is a Christian and treats you well.
- What if your master treated you badly.
- Wouldn't you naturally want to **stick it to him** by working as little as possible.
- So, what would **motivate** a slave to work hard even when their master is away.
- Well, Paul seeks to motivate obedience to these instructions by opening the mind of the **doulos** to a higher reality.
- Instead of focusing on your **earthly master**, focus on **your master in heaven**.
- At the end of **verse 22** he says obey your **earthly masters**

fearing the Lord.

- Your motivation should not **be fear of your master** but fear (awe, respect) of the Lord.
- Ultimately it will be the Lord who judges your **work ethic** not your **earthly master**.
- Paul continues this theme in **verse 23**

23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, (Colossians 3:23)

- Again, ultimately God will judge our work, because ultimately our work is for him.
- And that should motivate us no matter what our job is.
- This reality is what inspired the great work of **Mother Teresa in Calcutta**.
- Taking Jesus words in **Matthew 25** seriously,

40 ...‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ (Matthew 25:40)

- She believed that when she and her **Sisters of Charity** were cleansing sores and touching the ill, they were doing it **to Christ and for Christ**.
- The most menial tasks — washing floors, scrubbing pots and pans —are for the Lord.
- **Mother Teresa believed and did this truth!**
- Now **Mother Theresa’s** work is seen as noble, **ministering to the poor**.
- But most of us in our **daily work** are not dressing the sores of lepers or tending the dying.
- You may consider your job as nothing more than a means to a paycheck.
- Believing there is nothing **noble** in the tasks you perform.
- **But Paul says, hey, no matter what you are doing, you’re working for God.**
- And that makes any task noble.
- Think about how this truth might transformed the thinking of the Christian **doulos** in the ancient world.
- His or her "nothing" tasks were actually noble when done for Christ.
- Because of this, **Christian slaves** invariably brought higher prices in the slave market.
- By their **good heart-felt hard work** in a difficult even terrible situation,
- they were bringing glory to God.
- **And side note**, if you study the Church History, you will see that the church spread throughout the Roman empire and beyond, not just through the preaching of the Apostles but through the witness of slaves who came to Christ.
- It was the **doulos** who by in large responded to the gospel.
- And it was the **doulos** who took the gospel to the ends of their earth.

- Okay, back to our text,
- In **verses 24 and 25** Paul continues to give motivation for the believers' work ethic.
- Not only are you working for the Lord but also...

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. (Colossians 3:24-25)

- **The Lord we serve** will reward our hard work or punish us for our **wrongdoing**.
- What we receive will be good or bad, depending upon our **performance**.
- **And just to be clear**, we're not talking about working for our salvation.
- That, Paul has already established is a free gift of God's grace, given to those who put their faith in Christ.
- But that being said, all believers will have their works/work judged.
- Paul makes this clear in **2 Corinthians 5:10**

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

- This can be good or bad news, depending upon how we live our Christian lives.
- But to the first-century Christian **doulos** this certainly good news,
- because under **Roman law** a slave could **inherit nothing**.
- Yet here they learned from Paul that they could receive **"an inheritance ... a reward."**
- **God rewards faithful workers.**
- This ought to be an encouragement to us, **whatever our jobs are**.
- God pays us so well that when we get to Heaven, we'll wish we'd worked even harder.
- **So, in verses 22 to 25** we have Paul's instruction and motivation for the work ethic of **doulos** in the Roman World.
- Now let's **apply this to our world and our work ethic...**
- **First, I want us to see that nowhere does Paul promise an earthly reward for our hard work.**
- Yes, he does promise a future **heavenly reward with is far better**,
- and it's certainly possible that we will receive an earthly reward for hard work,
- But we must not think that if we seek to live up to Paul's instruction regarding work, all will go well on the job.
- I learned this early in life, at one of my very first jobs.
- I worked as a "box-boy" at **Stater bros**.
- And it was my goal as a Christian, both because of Paul's instructions and because I wanted to be promoted to checker, **to be the best box-boy ever**.

- So, I worked very hard, running, gathering carts, bagging groceries, helping customers.
- And I did so well that the **manager** made me the **opening box-boy**.
- What that meant was I came in before the store opened and cleaned up after the night crew who had stocked the shelves.
- Now things went well until one morning when I arrived at the store, and it was a total disaster.
- Usually there were a couple of things broken that I had to clean up,
- but on this fatal morning there were **at least 5 broken jars**,
- Plus, there was the regular cardboard I had to pick on every aisle.
- Then I had to sweep and mop the whole store.
- And even though I worked as hard as I could, I didn't finish cleaning up before the manger arrived and opened the store.
- And it wasn't long before I heard, "*Cliff report to the Office*" come over the store speakers.
- When I (***the doulos***) arrived in the office, the manager (my master) began berate me,
- He told me I had failed to do my job.
- And when I tried to explain the unusual circumstances and that I had tried my best.
- I will never forget what he said, He said, "***well your best isn't good enough.***"
- *What do you mean, you Jerk, I am the Best Box Boy you have, I wanted to say, but instead I just took it.*
- How discouraging that was, even though I tried to work my hardest,
- it wasn't good enough for my boss.
- At times like this it is good to know that ultimately God is our master,
- We are working for **Him**, he knows our hearts and our circumstances,
- and he will reward us accordingly.
- But don't expect **constant accolades** from the world even if you follow Paul's instructions,
- instead rest in the fact that God knows and cares about how hard you are working.
- **Second, Paul's teaching here is not a call to workaholism.**
- The Roman ***slave, the bondservant or the servant*** may not have had a choice about how much time they worked.
- **But we do**, and as right as the Biblical work ethic is,
- our desire for wealth can be easily perverted to the worship of work.
- As Paul warns **Timothy...**

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils... (1 Timothy 6:10)

- Yes, we are to work hard, we are not to cheat our employers with laziness.
- But we are not to neglect other areas of our lives.
- Our families, our friends, our churches, our time in the word and prayer.
- So, we are to do our very best at our work, but life is more than work.

- **And then third and most obvious, Christians ought to be the best workers.**
- Remember we're working for the Lord,
- and our work is not only a means to provide for ourselves and our families,
- but it is a way to witness to the world about the God we serve.
- And never forget, as a Christian you will be a witness, one way or another.
- People are watching you to see if you live up to what you say you believe.
- This came home to me when I heard some high school teachers talking about one of their colleagues.
- Isn't he a Christian they said,
- Well, why does he always come late and leave early,
- Why doesn't he ever volunteer for anything outside of his regular classroom teaching.
- This Christian Teacher developed a reputation among his colleagues for being uncaring and lazy.
- This ought not be so.
- Christians, in whatever we do, should have the best in **attitude**,
- the best in **dependability**, and **the best in integrity**.
- All of us who are employed must be **faithful, hard workers or we are sinning**.
- We are disobeying the word God has for us!
- **And finally**, we must realize that there is **nobility** in working for the Lord.
- **19th Century Christian Poet Gerard Manley Hopkins** put it this way:

Smiting on an anvil, sawing a beam, white-washing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in His grace you do it as your duty... He is so great that all things give Him glory if you mean they should. (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

- There is nobility in working for the Lord because God will fill our lives with meaning,
- and he will be Glorified through us when we work for Him.
- **So** those are the **instructions** and some **applications** for the **doulos** (Employee).
- Now we turn to the

3. Instruction for Masters - Employers

- In **Chapter 4 verse 1** of Colossians, we read...

¹ Masters, treat your bondservants (doulos) justly and fairly,... (Colossians 4:1)

- The word **Master** in the Greek is **Kyrios**, and it is the same word used from Lord,
- It means to have authority and control over.

- Now if you notice, the Masters instruction (singular only one) has less words but as we will see it is much more radical for its time.
- In fact, of all of Paul's instruction to wives, husbands, children, parents, and bondservants.
- This one to Masters probably sounded the most radical to the Roman ear.
- Remember in Roman Society **bondservants and servants** were of a much lower standing than their Masters.
- And under Roman law **slaves** had no rights at all.
- Therefore, to instruct a Master to be just and fair with those who were thought of as his property and who he had almost absolute authority over would have been revolutionary.
- Also, in Roman culture, this instruction may have been difficult to carry out.
- Given the **social conditions** of the times,
- any master who sought to provide his slaves "with what is right and fair" ran the risk of being called out and **ostracized** by his fellow slave owners.
- A Master's fair, just treatment of his slaves would have been a **radical departure** from the norm and could have caused slaves of other masters to take notice and become **disgruntled**.
- **Thinking, why can't my master be more like Philemon...**
- But regardless of the cultural backlash these Masters might experience,
- They are to treat their **doulos** justly and fairly.
- That word **justly** means to **equitably or rightly**,
- treat them right, do what is right with regards to your **doulos**
- And that word **fairly** is similar, it includes the idea of **equality**.
- Treat them fairly, justly, equally.
- Or we could sum it up as Jesus did in in what has become known as **The Golden Rule..**

12 "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them... (Matthew 7:12)

- Master's how you want to be treated, treat your **doulos** in the same way (justly, fairly)
- And again, In the Roman world, this would have been a totally radical command for Masters.
- But Paul justifies it by saying...

knowing that you also have a Master in heaven

- Paul puts the Master's treatment of his **doulos** in a **God-Centric** perspective.
- Yes, you are a master on earth, but never forget you **have a Master in Heaven**.
- I think Paul is saying several things here.
- **First**, you have a master in heaven who treats you justly and fairly, be like him.
- **Second**, you have a Master in heaven who owns you, who you must answer to.
- There is one who will reward what you do, either good or evil.

- And third, Paul is reminding *the Master that his servant serves the same Lord*.
- They both have a master in heaven.
- Which means ultimately both master and servant are owned by God.
- Don't forget, Masters, your servants can also be your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- And in Christ there is **no slave or free** therefore treat them justly and fairly in all things.
- I don't know for sure about the Roman World,
- but I do know from recently reading the biography of **Fredrick Douglas**,
- who was born into slavery in the south and escaped to the north becoming a leading **Abolitionist**,
- That some masters in the south after coming to Christ (or getting religion as Douglas puts it) treated their slaves fairly and justly by freeing them.
- Which in the context of slavery would certainly be the right way to treat others as you would like to be treated.
- **But what about our context today!**
- What does this mean for you if you are an Employer in our day.
- Well, I think we can boil it down to one application...
- If you truly realize that you must answer to God for the way you conduct yourself with your employees,

you will care about what happens to them.

- You will be concerned that they are **paid fairly and justly**.
- You will be concerned about their sicknesses, their family.
- You will care about their life, their physical, emotional, and especially their spiritual wellbeing.
- Now this may bring you **more problems than solutions**.
- In fact, this kind of caring attitude for people means involvement in their lives which inevitably means more problems to deal with.
- But it also means great reward both in heaven and on earth.
- As you act as Christ would, with care, with justice and fairness,
- you will experience your new life in Him.
- You will be living in obedience to your master in heaven,
- And as your care for those you have authority over, God will care for you!
- Masters — employers, one thing is for sure:
- No matter how much money you make, no matter how successfully your business is...
- If you ignore the instructions of God's word, if you do not care about your employees,
- you will never experience the **new work life** in Christ you have received.

- **Let me conclude by giving you a brief picture of what this looked like in my early working life.**
- As I prepared this sermon, especially the part about **Masters/Employers**.
- I couldn't help but think about **my first employer** and **supervisor** after I graduated from college.
- I worked for a company called **Donor Automation** as a computer programmer.
- We put together hardware and software for **non-profit organizations**.
- And the owner and my supervisor (along with the rest of the employees) were Christians.
- And throughout my time working there, I, along with the other employees, sought to do our very best.
- Whether we were being watched or not, we wanted to work as unto the Lord.
- But this was not difficult because we were treated both fairly and justly in all circumstances.
- And strange as it may sound this was even true for me when I was fired. (Laid off)
- Let me explain...
- Because the company lost a major client (World Vision),
- there was not enough money to pay everyone,
- and since I was headed for the mission field and was only there temporarily,
- **I was one who had to be laid off.**
- I remember being called into the office of the owner of the company, both he and my supervisor were in tears as they explained the situation.
- I'm not sure if anyone ever felt as bad for their bosses as I did when I was let go.
- These men exemplified the instructions Paul gave to Masters (Employers)...
- Even when they had to let me go...
- They did for me as they would have me do for them.
- They expressed care, concern, they provided some final finances and even expressed a willingness to help me find a new job.
- **And just a side note**, I had a lunch appointment the next day with **Pastor Phil Busbee** who didn't know I was fired the day before but wanted to offer me a job as the Pastoral Intern of this Church.
- **So, surprise, God knew what he was doing!**
- And be assured he knew and knows that he is doing when he gave these sometimes very difficult instruction so ***doulos and masters***.
- So, no matter which role we currently hold, let us seek to live in obedience to the instructions and the principles we have received.
- That we might experience new life in our places of work, wherever they may be.
- **Would you pray with me to that end!**