

Pierce My Ear

by Tim Dooley

In Exodus 19 we read about the preparations made before Moses goes up to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. In chapter 20 the commandments and in chapter 21 we have some explicit ordinances commanded by God. Particularly, in 21:1–11 there are restrictions given about owning a Hebrew male slave. No one could own a Hebrew male slave for more than six years. At the end of the six years the slave was to be set free, including his wife and children. But only if he was already married and had children prior to his servitude. If the master gave the slave a wife during his service, the wife and any children born to the union belonged to the master. At the end of his six-year service he had a decision to make. He could leave and be a free man without his wife and children, or he could choose to remain a servant, keep his wife and children, and serve the master for the rest of his life. “I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man, then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently” (Exodus 21:5–6).

As Americans we like the idea of freedom, yet we often take our freedom for granted. Many Christians

likewise take their freedom in Christ for granted or fail to understand what true freedom is because we like to attach to it our own definitions and concepts. We are to be permanent slaves for Christ (Romans 6:17). We were once slaves to sin but Jesus bought us and we are to have had our ear (heart) pierced in eternal devotion to Him. Romans 6:18 says, “and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” We make a choice, we can either become a slave to righteousness or a slave to sin.

The law of Moses was not about vengeance, but justice. God protects the helpless, provides for the needy, and blesses the righteous. He gave the children of Israel a pattern to follow in all things. He too gives us a pattern and a law. Indeed, if we love the Master, and our families, we will allow Him to pierce our ear, and we will serve Him forever (21:5–6). Be faithful!

Internal Battles

by Brad Harrub

Just how much do we value feeling comfortable? I believe the preaching over the last 15-25 years reveals that modern Christians in the New Testament church want sound preaching, as long as it doesn't force us out of our comfort zones. We want to be able to sit back and listen to a well-prepared preacher from padded pews or chairs, and then slip right back into our normal walks of life afterwards. The take home message: "Don't convict me too much and don't weigh your lesson down with too much application. Because then you've gone from preaching to meddling."

So what happens when a family truly engages in the Culture War? Or what happens when someone begins to really carry out the great commission? Having traveled all across the country I have had the pleasure of meeting individuals who "get it." I have spoken to Christians who desire more than comfortable Christianity. They understand the gravity of the situation, and they are doing whatever they can to ensure the spiritual well-being of their children/grandchildren, all the while looking for ways to reach out to the lost around them.

The problem is these individuals often make "comfortable" Christians in their own home congregations feel very uncomfortable—and this discomfort often results in an internal battle. Maybe it's because these zealous Christians desire to study the Bible deeper and spend less time on fluffy topics. Or maybe it's because they won't allow their children to participate in certain worldly activities. Or maybe it's because they are constantly pointing out additional ways the congregation could outreach. Or maybe it's because they are tired of all the "internal" programs.

Whatever it is, these individuals often stand out—like a fish trying to go upstream against the current, when all the other fish are swimming downstream. Their existence among comfortable Christians causes friction. These zealous Christians honestly desire to be Holy, and so their entire lives focus on how to be more Christ-like and how to share the good news. Yet, they are surrounded by people who are comfortable right where they are—people who believe they have checked all the right boxes, and therefore they don't want someone constantly reminding them they could be doing more or could be shaping their own lives better.

Many older Christians view these zealous Christians in a critical fashion. Rather than support

the quest of those who want to be more Holy, comfortable Christians end up tearing them down and question how they are raising their children. After all, they believe if it was good enough for them, then it ought to be good enough for everyone. (These are the same comfortable Christians who totally ignore the real statistics of how many of our children we are retaining in the church.) And sadly, these zealous Christians wake up and discover one of their toughest battles is actually in their own congregations.

I have seen it all over—people who earnestly desire focus their entire lives on Christ who have been basically ostracized by those who have grown comfortable in the pew. Some of these "comfortable" Christians describe themselves as pillars in the congregation, and yet they stopped growing spiritually years ago. For those of you who are zealous and looking for more ways to follow after Christ, let this be an encouragement to you. Do not grow weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9 [Open in Logos Bible Software \(if available\)](#)). Keep on teaching your children His ways. Keep on distancing yourself from the darkness of the world. Keep on looking for ways to tell people about Christ. Don't be satisfied with the "norm."

For those who are comfortable—might I suggest you consider your ways (Haggai 1:5 [Open in Logos Bible Software \(if available\)](#)), [7](#) [Open in Logos Bible Software \(if available\)](#)) and examine yourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5 [Open in Logos Bible Software \(if available\)](#))? Have you ever considered what your discouragement is ultimately doing to His kingdom? Might I suggest that comfortable preaching has duped you into thinking you are a pretty good person. And maybe you are when compared to the world. But you are not so "good" when compared to a holy God (Isaiah 64:6 [Open in Logos Bible Software \(if available\)](#)). Stop using the world as your standard. Repent from trying to dim the light of those who seek to serve Him more faithfully. Tame your tongue and look at the fruit (Matthew 7) that a comfortable life produces, versus one who is truly committed to Christ. Stop trying to silence those in your congregation who desire a closer relationship with Him and look for ways to relight your own fire. Stop warring against brothers and sisters in Christ and go after the real adversary! The reality is we are on the same team—isn't it time we started acting like it?!

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Mission Works

Westhill Works

Benevolence Program

Local Works

Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org
House to House, Heart to Heart
In Search of the Lord's Way
Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies
The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv
WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

Four Seas Bible College, Singapore - Peter & Pooi Fun Chin
New Zealand Harvest Missions - James & Emily Cammock

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Cory Myers - 512.627.6672 (Youth & Family)
Tim Cooke - 903.641.5515 (Seniors)

Prayer List

Our Heartfelt Love & Sympathy are extended to Carol Barham and her family at the passing of her brother, Don Nash. Please, keep them in your prayers as they mourn this loss.

Continue to Remember: Gayle Garner, Sharon Mahoney, Velma McDougald, Bud Moore, Henry & Eula Parrish, Barbara Shore, Mollie Southard, Paula Spillyards, Patty Williams, Meagan Gould

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart

Birthdays This Week

May 27 - Larry Green
May 31 - Oliver Jackson, Nancy Milam
June 2 - Faith Beamon
June 4 - Gunner Myers

Next Week's Adult Class

Healing the Blind Man and Return to Galilee (Mat. 19:1; Mark 9:30; John 9:1-41)

Announcements

5th Sunday Today. Everyone is invited to join us for lunch and stay for our second service led by the young men. There will be no 6:00 PM service.

Kids for Christ Devo this evening at 5:00 at Greg & Lindsay Olsen's house. Boys bring drinks, girls bring desserts. Let Greg know if you can attend.

Register Now for the 2016 WOW Ladies' Retreat - September 23-24 at the Summers Mill Retreat Center in Salado, TX. Jeanny Gilpin of Salem, VA will speak on "Mary in a Martha World." Cost: \$65 for room and two meals; Optional \$12 for T-shirt.

Registration Is Now Open Online for both the Girls' & Boys' Leadership Initiatives. Please, register. All of the information is available online with the form.

End of Year Open Door Thursday this week! All Jr. High and High School kids are welcome 3:30 to 6:30 in the Outreach Center.

Important Dates:

- Camp Ida - June 12-17
- Girls' Leadership Initiative - June 24-26
- Vacation Bible School - July 11-13
- Youth Mission Trip - July 16-20
- Boys' Leadership Initiative - July 29-31
- Summer Youth Series (Here!) - August 2

Records for May 22, 2016

Bible Class	155
AM Worship.....	229
PM Worship.....	132
Wednesday	150
Contribution	\$5,850.50

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	Cory Myers
Opening Prayer	Paul Slaughter
Communion Leader	Darwin Thomas
Communion Servers	
Scott Barham	David Baumgartner
Joshua Haden	Seth Haden
Jimmy Horn	Don Ivy
Zack Lewis	Justin Mahoney
Rusty Owens	Aubrey Parrish
Paul Stewart	Robby Thomas
Mike Wylie	
Closing Prayer	Jim Milam
Nursery	Dianne & Colton Stewart
Security	Scott Barham, Terry Barrett, Zach Drain
PM Song Leader	Young Men
PM Opening Prayer	Young Men
PM Closing Prayer	Young Men
Wed. Song Leader	Jimmy Horn
Wed. Devotional	Darrell Olsen
May Contact Elder	Darwin Thomas - 903.695.0176