

The Master & His Slaves – 2 Corinthians 4:5

I. INTRODUCTION – Read Vs. 1-5

A. Preach the Word

1. A couple weeks ago, attended a conference at Harvest in Riverside where Greg Laurie is pastor.
2. Some great Bible teachers were there; Chuck Swindoll, Alistair Begg, John MacArthur & others
3. MacArthur shared a great message, I gleaned some important lessons from it & want to share them this morning. They relate to v. 5

B. Context

1. Let's begin by setting the context.
 2. As we saw last week, Paul contrasted the Old & New covenants.
 - a. *Moses* brought the *Law*, which though glorious, was *temporary*.
 - b. *Paul* brought the *Gospel* which *fulfills* the law.
 - c. The glory of the Gospel is *permanent* & centered in Jesus Christ,
 - d. Whose glorious image His followers are being changed into.
 3. Though the Gospel is glorious, not everyone *sees* it. Some remain blind & continue in unbelief.
 4. They reject the truth that **Jesus Christ is LORD.**
 5. That's the crucial point & what I want to key on this morning.
 6. V. 5 is one of those passages we read over quickly, *oblivious* to the fact that what we find here conveys a truth that, as John MacArthur says, "*has sailed down to us on a sea of blood.*"
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II. TEXT

A. V. 5

⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

1. Rather than straight translation, the NKJ does a little *interpreting* here.
 2. It would be better to render it–
We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus AS Lord, & ourselves your SLAVES for Jesus' sake.
 3. If I say, "Jesus is Lord, the head of the Church," you say, "***Sure!***"
 4. That's a truth we readily acknowledge. We don't realize what that truth has cost over the centuries.
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B. John Hus

1. John Hus was born to a poor family in a village of Bohemia, modern day Croatia, in 1372.
2. In those days about the only sure way to make a living was to become a priest, so Hus went to school. Being bright, he earned a bachelors, Masters, & Doctorate.
3. Ordained to the priesthood in 1401, he was assigned to Bethlehem Chapel in Prague.
4. It sat 3,000 & Hus quickly filled it. He did something unheard of; he preached

- in the people's language instead of Latin, the language of scholars.
5. Hus read a lot of John Wycliffe's writings, the English priest who believed the Bible was the only source of faith & practice & ought to be taught to the common people.
 6. Every time Hus climbed into the pulpit, *he simply explained the Bible simply*.
 7. He said, "I desire to hold, believe, & assent to whatever is contained in the Scriptures as long as I have breath."
 8. This presented a challenge to the Roman Church of which he was a part because so many of the Church's practices were *contrary* to scripture.
 9. And Hus had become quite popular with the people.
 10. When he failed to heed the warnings of his superiors to preach church policies rather than the Bible he was removed from his position at Bethlehem Chapel.
 11. He remained in Prague preaching & teaching but when the Church banned anyone who went to hear him from taking communion or being able to have a Christian burial, *for their sakes*, Hus withdrew to the countryside, where he *continued* his ministry.
 12. And write. He wrote, & wrote, & wrote.
 13. *Everything* he wrote was taken *back* to Prague where it was read in both private & public.
 14. His most famous writing was a tract called, "*The Church*."
 - a. It held what then were considered *3 radical ideas* . . .
 - 1) **The church is made up of all believers.**
 - a) That was Hus' 1st heresy.
 - b) You see, the Roman church said only the *clergy* were the church.
 - c) Everyone else could only commune with the church through communion.
 - 2) **The Bible is a higher authority than the church.**
 - 3) ***This is the one that got Hus in real trouble – Jesus Christ, not the pope, is the head of the Church.***
 15. When it became clear Hus would *not* back down from clinging to what the Bible made clear about the Lordship / headship of Jesus over the church, the *Council of Constance* declared him a heretic & ordered him burnt at the stake.
 16. On July 6th, 1415, he was dressed in his preaching garments, then one at a time they were stripped off in a public *defrocking*.
 - a. Left in undergarments, he was tied to a stake, kindling was heaped around him,
 - b. It was doused with oil & set alight.
 - c. The execution was presided over by the Bishop of Constance.
 - d. As the flames rose, Hus prayed, "Lord Jesus, it is for You I patiently endure this cruel death. Have mercy on my enemies."
 - e. As the flames consumed his body, he was heard singing praises to God.
 - f. Fearful his many supporters would turn Hus' ashes into a relic & venerate them, the executioners scattered them over a nearby lake.
 17. Hus' followers had been well taught. They didn't need a relic. They started a movement called the *United Fraternity*, later known as the *Moravians*, one of the earliest & most powerful missionary groups, from whom came people like

John Wesley.

- a. Wesley preached in England & the US.
 - b. And became a key leader in the movement that gave rise to the evangelical church.
 - c. We can trace our roots back to both Wesley & Hus. **We** are their spiritual descendants.
18. The name Hus means **Goose**.
- a. When he was tied to the stake, just before the wood was set alight, he said to the bishop of Constance who'd condemned him,
 - b. "You may kill this goose, but someday a **swan** will come."

C. Martin Luther

1. A hundred years later, the swan arrived in the person of Martin Luther.
2. Luther was in his study one day, going through his books when he came upon a stack of sermons hand-written by John Hus.
3. He began to read them & was struck by Hus' simple manner of teaching the Bible.
4. John Hus became Luther's hero.
5. Luther wrote, "I was overwhelmed with astonishment. I could not understand for what cause they had hurt so great a man, who explained the scriptures with such gravity and skill."
6. Writing of Hus' martyrdom, he said, "The goose was cooked," the origin of that saying.
7. It was from Hus' sermons Luther got so many of his reforms that launched the Reformation.

D. Who Is the Head of the Church?

1. But the **main battle** between Rome & the Reformers was the central issue that had led to Hus' death –
2. **Who is the head of the Church?** Jesus or the Pope.
3. While Martin Luther penned 95 different ways in which church policy differed from the Bible, everything else **paled in comparison** to this one thing.
4. **The Reformers** said Jesus was the Lord & head of the church. **Rome** said the Pope was.
5. I know there are many here from a Catholic background.
 - a. Please understand I am not bashing Catholics.
 - b. This is simply a matter of history. This is the way things both were & are.
6. It's **still** the position of Rome that the Pope is head of the church. According to Church doctrine . . .

If anyone says the Roman Pontiff has **only** the office of inspection or direction, [&] not the full & supreme power of jurisdiction over the **universal** Church, not only in things which pertain to faith & morals, but also in those which pertain to the discipline & **government** of the Church spread over the whole world; . . . let him be anathema [accursed]. ^[1]

7. Luther's battle with Rome over this issue was long & bitter. In one of his

Tabletalks, he wrote,

I am persuaded that if at this time the Apostle Peter in person should preach all the Holy Scripture & only deny the Pope's headship, they would hang him. Yes, if Christ Himself were to appear on earth & should claim the headship without a doubt the pope would crucify Him again.

8. All the Reformers battled Rome on this issue.
 9. From 1555-8 in England, Bloody Mary's reign of terror saw 283 Protestants put to death because they said Jesus was the head of the Church.
 10. Then Henry 8th came to the throne. When the Pope refused to grant him a divorce, he renounced the Pope as head of the church & made himself its head.
 - a. He then demanded every English household take an oath of loyalty to him as the head of the Church.
 - b. Those who refused were hanged, drawn, & quartered.
 11. When Charles I reigned, he too demanded to be honored as head of the Church.
 - a. In 1560 the Scots rebelled, saying they would never recognize any head but Jesus.
 - b. In 1637, the English sent an emissary to negotiate with the Scots.
 - c. He brought with him a new prayer book which affirmed the headship of the king over the church.
 - d. As he read from it in St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, a woman named Jenny Geddes got so mad she threw her stool at him.
 - e. That started a rebellion that led to the Scottish National Covenant, signed by 60,000 that pledged the Church of Scotland to the headship of Jesus Christ.
 - f. England responded by sending troops that killed people from one end of Scotland to the other.
 12. All of this trouble caused the Reformers to hammer out a clear understanding of what the Bible says about the Lordship of Jesus.
 - a. After all, why endure such hardship if it wasn't a truth revealed in the Word?
 - b. Every new round of persecution drove them back to the Bible to see what it said about the headship of Christ.
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13. But today, when I say, "Christ is the head of the church" you say, "Sure. Right. So?"

14. As MacArthur said, we must understand this is a doctrine that has sailed down to us on a sea of blood.

15. Thousands have died rather than forsake it.

16. It's a truth the Apostle Paul reveals here in v. 5.

We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus AS Lord, and ourselves your SLAVES for Jesus' sake.

E. Jesus IS Lord !

1. It's difficult for us as Americans to grasp why this issue was the point of such contention & why people would go to their death for it.
2. We've never had a king. We've never been subjects of a tyrant or despot.

- a. We've never had one-man rule.
- b. We go all over the world trying to prevent it.
- c. We've been on a long national campaign to bring democracy to the rest of the world,
- d. To liberate people struggling under the tyranny of a dictator.
3. We've never experienced absolute sovereignty & **abhor slavery**.
4. But for most of history, including throughout the Reformation, nearly all people lived from cradle to grave under the control of a sovereign ruler.
5. For centuries, the Pope was little different from one of the kings of Europe.
 - a. His realm wasn't defined by borders but by belief.
 - b. His subjects were all Christians. His word was law.
 - c. The Pope & Church exercised domination of every area of peoples' lives.
 - d. Since the pope was thought to possess the keys of the Kingdom, he decided who went to heaven & who didn't.
6. That is, until people began to read the Bible which said Jesus was the head of the Church, **HE** is Lord, & His followers are to obey Him.
7. What He commanded was often quite different from what Rome said.

8. It's no different today. Jesus is still the **head** of the Church.
9. He is still Lord. And if He's our Lord, **what does that make us?**
 - a. How does Paul say it here? "Your **servants** for Jesus' sake."
 - b. **Because** He's Lord, we're His servants, who serve Him by serving one another.
10. Paul uses 2 words we have to dig in to; **Lord & servants**
 - a. Lord = **Kurios**:
 - 1) MASTER, Sovereign, Supreme Ruler, Owner, absolute right to command. 747 times in NT.
 - 2) Always **connected** to kurios, are those he rules.
 - 3) They are known as → **slaves**.
 - b. That's the other word; **doulos** = translated here as **servants**
 - 1) That's unfortunate, because it ought to be **slaves**.
 - 2) A **servant** is an **employee** & serves at their own will.
 - 3) The **slave** is **owned**; their will is a non-issue.
 - 4) There is no kurios without douloi, no doulos without a kurios.
 - 5) Because of the connotation attached to the word "slave," modern translations use "servant" instead.
 - 6) Yet THE recognized authority on the Greek language, *Kittell's Theological Dictionary of the NT* says about doulos –

This word . . . describes [either] the status or attitude of a **slave**. ^[2] [It refers to] service which is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, which he has to perform whether he likes or not, because he is subject as a slave to . . . the will of his owner.

7) Kittell says it's **pointless** to attach any other meaning to the word doulos than this.

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11. Is Jesus your Lord? Your kurios? Is He your Master, Sovereign?

12. In 1 Cor. 6:20, Paul says–

You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body & in your spirit, which are God's.

- a. Jesus bought us! The price He paid was His blood. We belong to Him. ^[3]
- b. So we have an *obligation* to do what He says.
- c. What He commands is our *obedience*; an obedience that yields the greatest liberation.
- d. We were not created to do our own autonomous will;
- e. We were created to choose & do God's perfect will.
- f. When we do, we find real freedom, not the illusion sin offers – that's cruel bondage.

III. CONCLUSION

A. The Church

1. The Church is a collection of people who embrace Jesus as Head, as Master = Lord.
2. Obedience to Him is our status quo.
3. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus said -

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

WHERE DO WE FIND THAT? [Bible]

4. In 2 Cor. 10:5, Paul says we are to take *every thought* captive to the obedience of Christ.
5. Where do we find God's will? Where do we go to discover what obedience to Him looks like? [Bible]
6. We are not here to share the opinions or philosophical musings of man.
7. We are here to *learn, then live this*, from cover to cover.
8. This is where we discover the mind & heart of our Lord.

B. Friends

1. In John 15 Jesus said to the disciples –

¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

- a. What kind of friendship is that?
- b. Can you imagine a friend saying, “If you want to be my friend, do what I say”?
- c. That sounds more like a dictatorship. / He goes on . . .

¹⁵No longer do I call you servants [slaves], for a [slave] does not know what his master [kurios] is doing; but I have called you friends,

2. Then He tells us what allows our friendship with God to *transcend* the Master-slave relationship?

for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

3. God has shared His heart with us! *We're on the inside!*
4. He *remains* Lord & we slaves, but our obedience transcends mere mindless compliance.

5. We joyfully embrace His will as the highest good & sweetest freedom.

C. The Swan

1. The doctrine of the Lordship of Christ has been one of the most important truths the Church has maintained over the centuries.
2. When kings & queens, governments & despots have demanded God's people do that which was *contrary* to the Word & Will of God, they've humbly clung to their obedience to Christ – looking to Him as their Higher Sovereign.
3. Their chief desire is that when they slip the bonds of this earth, they will stand before their Kurios & hear Him say, “Well done my good & faithful **SLAVE**. Enter into the joy of your **LORD**.”

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4. I said earlier that when John Hus was being burned, he said to the Bishop of Constance who'd condemned him, “You've killed the goose, but someday a swan will come.”
 5. A hundred year later, Martin Luther was taking his vows as a monk.
 - a. To do so, he lay prostrate on the ground in front of the altar of the church in Erfurt, Germany.
 - a. Directly beneath him was the tomb of that bishop who'd condemned Hus.
 - b. The swan had arrived.

[1] Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (1831)

[2] “The meaning is so unequivocal and self-contained that it is superfluous to give examples of the individual terms or to trace [its] history.”

[3] 1 Peter 1:19