



18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. (1 Peter 2:18-25)

There have been many different kinds of servants throughout the annals of history. There is the paid servant on staff of a wealthy home or business, there are 'indentured' servants who have contracted to be so obligated for a designated period of time (such as two former Presidents of the USA – Andrew Johnson and Millard Fillmore), some are indentured servants today serving in China and the Middle East, and others were forced into servant slavery for all of their lives.

There was a class of servant that existed in old Israel under bondage of the Mosaic law. But their terms of required service was limited to six years. They had agreed to servanthood for a certain reward in treasure. Just as there were six days of labor in a week, and the seventh was the Sabbath; so were there six years running of labor, and the seventh was a sabbatical year. *And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day. And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee; Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise. (Deut 15:12-17)*

Thus, when we see the girly-boys wearing earrings, we know from whence the practice comes – they are slaves by choice to someone or something. (I might suggest, of

sin) If you recall the portraits drawn of the Genie of Arabic culture, the Genie always wears a golden earring to fill the hole made by the awl and to signify that he is a servant forever. There is a greater spiritual significance, too, in the awl, the doorpost, and the servant's ear. Only those servants who are offered their freedom after six years, but refuse to leave their masters, have the awl driven through the lower lobe of the ear to the doorpost. What does this signify? To me, it means being crucified with Christ and becoming His forever – not as a slave or servant, but as a brother, friend, child, and disciple. *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* Romans 6:6 (KJV) We are now members of the household of Christ, being crucified with Him and are family in the Kingdom: *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”* (John 15:14-15)

Of course, not every person that becomes a permanent part of the Kingdom may remain so. Remember, the old masters of Israel chose who would be their indentured servants for a price, but later that servant may opt to go away after six years. He chose us; He called us; and we must follow on. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.* (John 15:16) The decision to become forever family of Christ is prompted, not by our own initiative, but by His providential grace and mercy.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. We all deserve the pits of Hell, but it is God's unmerited grace that draws us from jaws of death and places us in High Places. We suffer for our errors and wrong decisions in this life – for our sins and misdoings. That is deserved and without excuse. But what of those saints who suffer for the sake of righteousness and love of Christ? It is happening to an accelerating measure in our world today – even little children of Iraq and Syria who refuse to renounce our Lord Jesus Christ are brutally tortured and finally beheaded. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* (Phil 1:29) If we are persecuted and harshly treated for our own doings, well deserved is the treatment. But if we are despitefully used for His sake, what a blessed Spirit with which we are imbued: *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* (Matt 5:11-12)

The above argument is fairly sealed in today's text: *21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* The Roman Emperor sealed his proclamations and orders with a red-wax seal; but Christ seals His Testament with the crimson Blood of His own Body.

So how is a servant, or member of the household, called to a higher service? Is it not through an eager willingness to serve? The story is told of an event in the ranks of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. As he was about to mount his horse and lead off as the commander of his armies, he dropped the reins of his horse as he mounted the saddle. Perhaps being short was a detriment to the proper mounting of the steed. The horse immediately began to run as the Emperor attempted in vain to regain the dangling

reins. A private soldier standing in the ranks as the horse advanced before him ran out and grabbed the reins and handed them to Napoleon. The great leader exclaimed to the private soldier, "Thank you, Captain!" "Of which brigade?" responded the quick-witted private. Impressed at his keen response, Napoleon glanced about at his personal staff and replied, "Of my personal staff!" Immediately, the soldier laid down His rifle and walked over to join the Imperial Staff. Disgruntled at a private soldier joining their ranks, they asked, "Who do you think you are to stand with us?" The soldier responded, " a Captain of the Imperial Guard." "By whose orders?" asked the Commander of the Guard. Pointing to Napoleon, the newly commissioned captain replied, "By his orders." The Commander of the Guard responded, "Sorry, sir, I did not know of it." Thus the newly commissioned man took his place in the Guard.

It is obvious that the new captain did nothing of worth to deserve his elevation in rank. He merely did that which was both a duty and a courtesy for his Emperor. Should we not be like-minded with the former private seeking ways always to honor our Lord and be of worth to the advancement of His Kingdom?

In the Kingdom of God, our titles mean nothing. There will be no deacons, priests, bishops, presidents, dictators, etc. As a matter of fact, many such who are called, but not chosen, will be at quite another tropical zone more fitted to their company. There will be but one High Priest, one King of Kings, and one Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls in Heaven – that is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Advocate and Intercessor – not some Pope sitting in opulence; not some tin-horned evangelist spouting out blasphemies; and not some pretended worker of miracles blaring out from the TV screen. ²⁵ *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* We all have wandered far from the path God ordained for us, but if we have not deserted altogether the way of righteousness, we may yet be near enough to hear the Voice of the Good Shepherd beckoning us home. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* (Matt 11:28-30)