

## Titus (Week 25)

Continuing on to Titus 2:1-11

We saw last time that when we strive to be Godly, to be an example, we will have persecution, that we will be slandered and reviled for our Godliness, your Christ-like behavior! *Mat 5:10-16*

Last time we took a look at the history of slavery to get a better idea of the concept in that time period.

- History of Slavery (non-biblical)
  - Slavery has existed before written records, and was a massively widespread practice.
  - According to secular history, its **origins** can be linked to the first **agricultural revolution** (about 10,000BC); it created surpluses and the need for large workforces. It also derived from **Conquest, Debt** and **Crime**.
  - In the **Classical World** (approx. 800bc to 500ad), more than a third of ancient Athens and Rome were enslaved, with diverse origins.
  - In Africa & Asia: Internal and external slave trades existed, with large populations enslaved across the Sahara, Red Sea and Indian Ocean.
  - The English word "slave" comes from "Slav," referring to Eastern Europeans enslaved in medieval times.
  - So, slavery was very widespread and commonplace, and was a part of everyday life in the past. As a matter of fact, limits and abolishment laws didn't even begin to surface until 1315 in France, then other countries followed suit gradually in the centuries to follow.
- Types of slavery in the bible
  - The **Old Testament** describes two main types of servitude: **debt-slavery**, where **Israelites** worked off **debts**, or were sold by family for a limited time, often **six years**, with rules for humane treatment and release. *Deu 15:12-18*
  - **chattel slavery**, defined as enslavement in which the slave is seen as a commodity, or property.
  - **New Testament Slavery** was a pervasive institution in the Roman empire, and early Christians operated within it, unable to overturn the system immediately. The writers of the NT lived in this Greco-Roman society. Over 1/3 to 1/2 of the population were slaves. There were primarily two types of these slaves: **domestic** slaves and **public** slaves.  
A **domestic slave** was a person who worked for a master, typically in a home setting. *Luk 7:1-10*  
A **public slave** was a person who worked as a civil servant for the state. For example, a public slave would provide free labor as a security officer, doctor, educator, accountant, etc. The majority of the people became slaves from being a **prisoner of war**. The slavery in this culture was **not based** on race or ethnicity. Anyone could become a slave, there was no partiality.
  - We saw that slavery laws were deeply ingrained into Roman society. 1Co 7:20-21

*Tit 2:9-11* Let's look at the word for **bondslave** here.

The Greek word in our passage here is: **doulos**

It means: a slave (**literally** or **figuratively**, **involuntarily** or **voluntarily**; frequently therefore in a qualified sense of subjection or subserviency): - a **bonded** (man), **servant**. Doulos is derived from the verb: **deō**:

A primary verb; meaning **to bind** (in various applications, **literally** or **figuratively**): - bind, be in bonds, to knit, tie, or wind. At its root, when the English translation says “bond” slave, it simply means “bound” or “tied to”.

Let’s look at some examples of the use: *1Co 9:16-23, Tit 1:1, Rom 6:20-22, Tit 2:9-11*

What does Paul command in this situation? He gives us a list:

- Subject themselves in everything
- Be well-pleasing
- Not argumentative
- Not pilfering
- Showing all good faith

How do they NOT adorn the doctrine of God? By doing the exact opposite:

- By being disobedient
- By being displeasing, unpleasant, disagreeable, offensive.
- By being quarrelsome, pugnacious, antagonistic.
- By pilfering, stealing, or looting.
- By not being faithful, trustworthy or respectful to their masters, or not reflecting their faith and Godliness in their servitude.

*Tit 2:9-11* “All men” here refer to literally everyone. One of the points Paul is making here is that even the slave “masters” can be members of the body of Christ, the brethren. Phm 1:1-24.

**Onesimus** was Philemon’s slave who possibly **stole** from Philemon and then ran away. This type of behavior could be grounds for execution, or if captured and returned to his master, could be branded with a red-hot iron on his forehead with the letter “F” for fugitive, as per Roman custom.

In this particular case, Onesimus was a Christian slave, and Philemon was a wealthy Christian master living in Colossae. Onesimus returns home to Philemon after running away, with a letter from Paul, urging Philemon to receive him **not as a slave**, but as a **beloved brother** in Christ, transforming their relationship and illustrating Christian forgiveness and reconciliation, instead of severe punishment.

So, by Roman law, Onesimus had to go back to Philemon. Remember the concern of Onesimus and Paul of severe punishment for stealing and running away, which could be either branding with a hot iron, or even death by execution. But Paul appeals to him for **forgiveness** and **reconciliation**. Paul is also being Christ-like here, offering **redemption** of the debt owed by Onesimus by repaying it himself. But also notice that Paul reminds Philemon of the debt he owes to Paul for his very salvation.