

Deuteronomy Chapter 15: 16-17

Reading: Chapter 15

Vv: 16-17

- There were different ways to become slaves in Bible days, slaves are different than hired servants:
 1. Through conquest, being captured by an enemy and being forced to be a slave which was until death.
 2. By being born into slavery, the son or daughter of a slave – which was for life, and like any other property could be bought or sold at the whim of the owner.
 3. A person could become a slave to pay off a debt, indentured servitude for a specific period of time or for a specific sum of money.
 4. A person could become a willing slave by their own choice.
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- A person who had become a slave because of economic reasons, because of a debt they owed could agree to be someone's slave to work off the debt.
 - Genesis 29: The patriarch Jacob wanted one of Laban's daughter's for his wife, Rachel to be specific. Jacob didn't have the dowry, the price of the bride to give to Laban, so he agreed to work for 7 years to secure his bride. This was a considerable price to pay.
 - Most often what would happen is that if someone owed a debt that they couldn't pay they would become an indentured servant for a set period of time to pay off the debt. Then when the time was up, or if the year of release arrived, they would be set free and the debt forgiven.
 - If while they were working for their master they at some time realized that they were better off in the home of their master, that the working conditions and treatment were pretty good – most probably because the master feared God – they might start to think that they were better off with their master than being off on their own.
 - They could decide on their own to remain with their master and become a “bond slave” a willing servant.
 - The servant would be brought before the judges to make known his desire, and then he would be taken to the door post of the house.
 - The door post would again remind them of the lamb that was slain, and whose blood covered the door post during the Passover, at that place they would have an awl driven through his ear, he would have an ear ring placed in his ear – symbolizing the commitment that he has made – and to be identified as a bond servant to the master's household for the remainder of his life.

- That ring also symbolized that this person was not just owned, but under the protection of their master, not just that he belonged to somebody, but that they belonged to the household – not by constraint, but out of love.
- Jesus is the ultimate example of a servant, of a bond servant:

Psalm 40:6-8 “⁶Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. ⁷Then said I, lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, ⁸I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

- Peter, Paul, James, and Jude – all start their letters off in the same way:

2 Peter 1:1 “Simon Peter, ¹a servant (doulos / bond servant) and an ²apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Romans 1:1 “Paul, a servant (doulos / bond servant) of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.”

Philippians 1:1 “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ...”

James 1:1 “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.”

Jude 1:1 “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:”

- James and Jude could both have said – “the ½ brother of our Lord Jesus” – but being a servant, a bond servant had more value!

Revelation 1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by His angel unto his servant (doulos / bond servant) John.”

- Each of these men identified themselves as “servants” of Jesus Christ, then as Apostles, prisoners, and disciples, and so forth.
- Each of these men had a common end in that they ended up as “servants” of the Lord.
- They each had a common beginning also in that they were each enemies of the Lord prior to becoming His servants, they each started out as non-believers.

1. Paul was part of the religious establishment, a Pharisee – who wreaked havoc in the church, persecuting believers.
 2. Timothy was a Greek, a ½ breed who later came to know Jesus through his mother.
 3. James & Jude were Jesus' ½ brothers who disbelieved and mocked Jesus.
- We all start out the same way, we're born into enmity with God:

Psalm 51:5 “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

- Some have said “I have always known God...” – this is a mistaken notion, it may seem like it, but this is not Biblical or true.

Jesus said:

Matthew 12:30 “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.”

- There is no middle ground or neutral territory, we are either with him or at enmity with Him.
- If we are going to switch sides it is a definite act of the will, a choice we make then act upon, it doesn't just happen by itself.

Romans 6:16-18 “¹⁶Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servant ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

- We were stuck in a bad situation, stranded in sin, and unable to get ourselves out – we were lost. This is when God intervenes on our behalf:

John 3:16 “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Romans 5:8 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Philippians 2:5-8 “⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

- Jesus became a bond servant not only to save us, but as an example to follow.

- There is a Messianic prophecy relating to Jesus that makes sense in light of this practice.

Isaiah 50:5-6 ⁵“The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. ⁶I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”

John 6:38 “For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”

- Jesus willingly went to the door post, to the cross; and allowed Himself to be pierced, pinned to the cross, submitting to the will of the Father, going to the cross for each of us. Jesus the ultimate bond servant!
- We have to get to that place where we realize that we’re stuck in a bad situation and unable to get ourselves out – that we too are lost – and yield to His will, His will is our salvation!

2 Peter 3:9 “... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Matthew 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

- We have to be willing to go to the door post, to the cross.

Mark 8:34 “Whomsoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Transition: change in mission.

Galatians 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

- We need to figure out who’s servant we’re going to be.
- When we love our master, when we love being in His presence, His commandments are not burdensome to us – we want so very much to please Him in everything that we do – that’s what it is to be a bondservant.

1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”

- It starts with a debt that we cannot pay.

Mark 8:37 “... what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- When we enter into a personal relationship and we end up being accepted into the household.

Psalm 32:1-2 “¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.”

Psalm 16:11 “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Psalm 27:4 “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.”