

Intro: Valentine's Day! Oh, the glorious boon to chocolatiers and greeting card makers! That one day in the year when we must serve somebody. 😊 That's really what love is, isn't it? Isn't it buying gifts and reciting cheesy poetry that somebody else has written to the one whom you adore? And it's our duty on this day. It is our duty to express the romantic feelings that we have suppressed for the other 364 days. If you don't think it's your duty, then try NOT getting candy, gifts, or cards this day and see how you or your love respond. 😊 Aaahhh, I thought so.

But love is not merely a duty to the true lover. It is his delight! He delights to give, yes, gifts of value and of beauty to the object of his love. But even more so, love means to serve the one whom he loves. Love is the "other-centeredness" of the heart and desires. Yes! Love is servanthood, the giving not merely of valuable gifts, but of even more valuable reputation, comfort, and time. The true lover sacrifices his rights and his comfort to build up, edify, exalt, and honor his beloved. He serves her with joy and gratitude, not bitterness or complaining. That is why true lovers are so hard to find in our society today. For, we are instructed in our society to be self-lovers, self-centered, and individuals who have rights to be protected and defended.

But to love is to serve, not to be served, and nobody should know this better than Christians. For this is true love, the love that Jesus Christ poured out to His Father and upon us when He came to serve, to die and give His life as a ransom for the many. It was the Father's love to pour out His Spirit within us to cause us to walk in His ways and bring Him glory with joy! The Father benefited us by sanctifying us. And this holiness, procured by the blood of Christ and applied by the Spirit is the rock-solid evidence of the depth of the love of God. You see, God didn't merely send the temporal sweets of comfort or of ease that would have ultimately added to the girth of our self-centered malaise. He didn't send us cute cards to open with hand-scored hearts and doilies. He scored his heart. He spilled the Son's blood. It was the tomb He opened to give us access to Himself. No, He served us in what we really needed. He sent a Savior to redeem us and make us slaves. Yes, slaves of Christ Jesus...holy slaves of Christ Jesus.

The glory of Christ is Paul's admonition and theme of his letter to the Philippians. It is his delight to glory in Christ and his joy to be enslaved to Him. "The Glory of Christ is My Joy!" This is the loving proclamation of a true lover, the genuine cry of the heart set free to be enslaved. You see, this delight and joy for the glory of Christ begins with a simple title that Paul applies to both himself and Timothy: Slaves.

1. Salutations from the Servants

- a. Paul – the apostle
 - i. Paul does not mention his apostleship in this letter to the Philippians
 1. Most likely because they knew him well
 2. Nobody was questioning his authority as an apostle of Christ (like they were in other cities)
 - ii. Though Timothy is mentioned in the salutation, Paul writes in the first person singular for most of the letter
- b. Timothy – an elder from Ephesus and mentee of Paul (Acts 16) on his missionary journey to Philippi
 - i. Timothy must have visited Paul in Rome when this letter was written
 - ii. He is also included in the letter to the Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, and 2 Corinthians
 1. Usually called "brother" in distinction to Paul's "apostle"
 2. Here, in Philippians, they are equally introduced as "servants"
- c. They want to be known here as "servants of Christ Jesus"

2. Christians Belong to Another

- a. Slaves of Jesus Christ
- b. slaves belong to another
 - i. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23
 - ii. Acts 20:28
- c. Slaves are bound to a purpose/duty
 - i. called as an apostle (Romans 1:1)
 - ii. called to please God (Gal 1:10)
 - iii. Epaphras is given the purpose of laboring for the maturity of the saints through prayer (Col 4:12)
- d. Slaves are stewards, not owners

- i. Joseph and Potiphar – Genesis 39
- ii. The gospel of the grace of God in Jesus does not belong to us and we cannot do with it as we wish – 1 Pet 4:10
 - 1. We are to serve others
 - 2. We are to reveal the mystery of the gospel
- e. Slaves do not expect to be served, but to serve
 - i. Luke 17:3-10
 - ii. Forgiveness is serving each other, to be unforgiving is to expect to be served by another
 - 1. Servanthood forgives quickly, to serve
 - 2. Bitterness holds on unforgiveness, expecting to be served
 - 3. Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45 – the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for the many
- f. Slaves rejoice in their Master's success
 - i. Matt 25:20-30
 - 1. The one who took the talents of the Master and rejoiced to see them grow are called "good and faithful"
 - 2. The one who buried the talents is called "lazy and evil".
 - 3. The successful slave "entered into the joy of his master"
 - ii. Faithful slaves rejoice in their Master's success and delight themselves in work for his glory
- g. Slaves give complete allegiance
 - i. by using this word, Paul and Timothy have given by clear example the necessity of humility before God to the Philippians
 - ii. In a wealthy city, proud of its Roman citizenship and the privileges that came with it, to be a servant would have been unthinkable low
 - iii. But to come to Christ, if one comes at all, is to come humbly and without "rights" but only with bended knee and bowed hearts

3. Our Problems With Slavery

- a. we think of American slavery
 - i. imposed according to race
 - ii. dehumanizing and barbaric
 - iii. brutal and vicious
 - iv. completely self-serving on part of the master
- b. our culture is competitive, not cooperation
 - i. we are built up on the conception of individual liberty
 - 1. We are compelled to stand out, to be different
 - 2. In an effort to do so, we all end up a lot alike
 - ii. Even in the church we have become individualized for our own purposes
 - 1. "I like the teaching, but not the music" and visa versa
 - 2. What Bob Deffinbaugh calls "drive-in" worship, where our individual needs are met:
 - a. Certain age (nursery, children, youth, college, 20-30, parents of high-schoolers, baby-boomers, seniors, etc.)
 - b. Certain interests
 - c. Certain conditions in life (married, single, widowed, divorced)
 - d. These are not bad, in and of themselves, but when they become divorced from true corporate worship of Jesus Christ then they have become self serving ("What God means *for me*")
 - 3. Look at how many different Bibles you can find online that are fit for "individualized" needs:
 - a. Kids Application Bible
 - b. African-American Devotional Bible
 - c. Marine's Military Bible
 - d. New Believer's Bible for Evangelism

- e. Praise and Worship Study Bible
 - f. Self-Help Bible
 - g. Sportsman's Bible in Realtree camo
 - h. Bride's Bible
 - i. *Becoming* "Biblezine" – formatted like a women's magazine
 - j. Jewish New Testament
 - k. The Teacher's Bible
 - l. Teen Study Bible
 - m. Extreme Teen Bible
 - n. Living the Spirit Filled Life Bible
 - o. Living the Spirit Filled Life Revised Genuine Bible
 - p. The Forgiving Heart Bible
 - q. Prophecy Study Bible
 - r. Woman, Thou Art Loosed Bible
4. Again, not that these are bad, in and of themselves, but when we have to have everything tailored to fit our needs, to fit our specific situation in life, and we lose sight of Christ when the sermon or teaching does not fit our felt need at that moment.
- a. In short, a lot of Christianity has become about us when Christianity is really all about Christ
 - b. This is the attitude of the servant, "to live is Christ"
- iii. Servanthood is opposed to individualism, so it makes us cringe
- 1. It denies us our rights to seek our own good
 - 2. Yes, it does
- c. seems opposed to freedom
- i. Our slavery to Christ is NOT like our slavery to sin
 - 1. Sin = bondage for our destruction
 - 2. Christ = mastery for our joy
 - ii. think of marriage
 - 1. limitations/boundaries
 - a. not free to marry another
 - b. not free to move out or abandon spouse
 - c. not free for sexual relationships or encounters with others
 - 2. duties and freedoms
 - 3. quote from Smithsonian Magazine, February 2010
 - a. "[in marriage] there are boundaries and limitations, but an infinite universe of satisfactions within them" –
 - iii. Relationships have boundaries
 - 1. There is no "absolute freedom"
 - a. There are laws within nature
 - b. These are shadows of the spiritual laws within the eternal order
 - 2. We are all bound up by our limitations, whether imposed or inherent
 - a. I cannot fly under my own power
 - b. I cannot hold my breath for 30 minutes underwater
 - c. Neither can I love completely or consistently
 - i. I am limited by my finite nature, the sinfulness of my flesh
 - ii. "sin which dwells within me" (Rom 7:17,20)
 - iii. "not I, but the grace of God with me" (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 3:5)
 - iv. We freely and joyfully choose this slavery to Christ
 - 1. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit leads us to seek Christ as Lord and Master (1 Cor 6:19-20; John 3:1-21, particularly v21; 14:17-21; Acts 2:33-36; Rom 7:6ff;)

2. This slavery is actually tied up to our sonship, which is more than mere slavishness (Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:6)
- v. The question isn't whether or not we will be slaves, it is merely *to whom* will we be slaves
 1. Rom 1:25 – “they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever”

4. Thankfully we are enslaved to Jesus!

- a. He gave His life for you!
- b. What we have not the power to do, Christ does!!
- c. Philippians 2:13 “for it is God who works in you to will and to work according to His good pleasure”
 - i. That's powerful promise!!
 - ii. When you are reeling over your failure to believe, or your failure to will or work, remember this and rest from self-condemnation or Satan's accusing thoughts!
- d. Jesus Christ = the LORD God
 - i. Paul uses the familiar phrase “servant of the LORD” which is used of the prophets of old to refer to their calling before God (Judges 2:8; Psalm 78:70; Daniel 9:6; Amos 3:7)
 - ii. This shows his belief that Jesus is YHWH of the Old Testament
 1. Christianity is not a new religion, but the fulfillment and continuation of God's redemptive history throughout the OT.
 2. When we serve Jesus, we serve the same God whom Moses, Joshua, Daniel, Ezekiel, and David served.

5. Christians are Holy Slaves

- a. *Hagios* means “holy one”
 - i. Distinct for a particular purpose
 1. Consecrated to be in God's presence under God's rule for God's glory
 2. Chosen, if you will, *for* the Lord
 - ii. Used substantively mostly of impersonal things, although a few times of people and often of God's name
 1. Temple and Tabernacle are holy (Lev 16:20,33; 1 Ch 29:3; Ps 5:7)
 2. The altar is holy (Ex 29:37;
 3. The ground is holy (Ex 3:5)
 - iii. Used adjectively of predominantly persons
 1. God's character (Ps 22:3; 99:9; Is 6:3; Rev 4:8)
 2. Angels (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Rev 14:10)
 3. Humans (Ezra 8:28; Ps 16:3; 34:9; Rom 1:7)
 - iv. The basic idea refers to the quality possessed by things or persons that could approach a divinity.
 1. Used in the NT of John the Baptist (Mark 6:20)
 2. prophets (Luke 1:70; 2 Pet 3:2)
 3. apostles (Eph 3:5)
 4. children (1 Cor 7:14)
 - v. When this term is used of persons, it does not connote an *inherent* or *intrinsic* holiness or uniqueness, for the word is also used of pagan cult prostitutes, whether they are male or female.
 1. Though this letter is addressed to “saints” Paul makes it a point to show that they should live as holy ones, not live in sin. They were instructed to be holy, because God has called them holy.

2. So, in the NT, all believers are saints, not that they can possess or claim divinity, but that they have appropriated Jesus Christ's work of His holiness into their lives by faith.
- b. In Christ - have his righteousness, blameless
 - i. not inherent, but imputed (1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:3-7)
 - ii. union with Christ (our life for His, His life for ours...grace)
 1. Keep an eye out for these phrases: "in Him" or "through Him" or "by Him" or "in Christ" etc.
 2. It is our union with Jesus Christ, not some gifting of our own or an inherent position of power that makes us holy ones
 - iii. all believers in Jesus are equally blameless, righteous
 1. There is no distinction between more holy ones and less holy ones in Christ
 2. Eph 2:3-10
 3. Though there may be those walking in holiness to greater or lesser degrees according to the gospel
 - c. Access to the Father through the Son
 - i. given ability to enter His presence
 1. seated in the heavens with Christ (Col 3:1-4; Eph 2:6)
 2. We can enter within the veil (Heb 6:19-20)
 3. We can draw near to God b/c of Christ (James 4:8; Heb 10:22)
 - a. As sons of God ! (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15)
 - b. This slavery is that of sons, not merely of hired servants!
 - ii. set apart to be in His presence
 - iii. only through the Son
 1. Heb 10:19ff
 2. Heb 7:19
 3. we are saints "in Christ Jesus" alone
 - d. This slavery is unlike any earthly slavery, for our Master is unlike any other Master

Conclusion:

Jesus is worthy of our lives! He, the Cross-bearer, is the joy of our hearts and His honor and success is our delight. Jesus, the lover of my soul, the sanctifier of my spirit, the procurer of my redemption. I belong to Him! I am my Beloved's and He is mine. My soul aches to adore Him in ways worthy of the greatness of His grace. I am a son because of His sacrifice. I am a man of hope because of His risen life. I have glory because He emptied Himself for me. Oh, to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus drives me to my knees with words of grateful joy: "I am your servant. Your glory is my joy!" Surely, to live is Christ.