

Series: Ephesians
Title: Your Master is in Heaven
Text: Ephesians 6: 9
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Ephesians 6: 9: And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Paul is writing to believers. Both words translated “masters” are translated from the same word. “Masters” means one in authority; one who has power of making decisions over others. It is not the same word used in other places where Christ is called Master. Sometimes “Master” means “teacher”, or “rabbi or guide.” In our text, the word translated “master” is the same as when Christ is called “Lord.” As it applies to believers, in our day, it applies to an employer, or a boss, who is over employees or anyone who has authority over others who serve.

Every believer who is a master is to govern their servants justly, with equity, knowing that you have a Master which is above you, Christ Jesus your Lord.

So in order to understand the three important points given in verse 9, we will look at how Christ is Lord and Master over his people. Christ Jesus is the just and equitable Lord to his people; Christ the Master forebears threatening his servants; and Christ the Lord shows no respect of persons.

CHRIST THE MASTER FOREBEARS THREATENING

First, Christ the Lord forbears threatening, “ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening.” (Eph 6: 9) The word “forebear” means “loosen.” Earthly masters are not to rule their servants with hardness and harshness, with rigor, with hot temper, but with gentleness, kindness and moderation. It means to “loosen the yoke; make it light and easy, bearable.” Is that not what our Lord did for us?

When we were the servants of sin, we were under a heavy yoke: the bondage of Satan, sin and curse of the law. It is pictured in Pharaoh’s treatment of the children of Israel while they were in Egyptian bondage, “they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens...the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:...they made their lives bitter with hard bondage,...all their service, wherein they made them serve, [was] with rigour.” (Ex 1: 11, 13, 14) But Christ our Lord heard the cry of his people, “Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.” (Ex 3: 9) So Christ the Master came and delivered Israel from their heavy yoke.

Yet, we see something else concerning our sin. Even after he delivered Israel out of bondage, those who were not given a new heart used God’s law to oppress their fellow Israelites. “He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.” (Is 5: 7) Those redeemed from Egyptian bondage turned around and oppressed their own brethren with the same hard bondage!

Brethren, let us not be guilty of that. Some who have heard the gospel of Christ, who claim to be redeemed by his grace, turn around and yoke their brethren with the law of Moses. He is teaching us do not even do so in the workplace. Do not be children of grace in the Lord’s house then be Pharaohs’ taskmasters in the workplace!

From eternity, our covenant-keeping Master promised to deliver his people from the oppressive yoke of bondage. He declared through the prophet Isaiah how he would be Master over his church, “all thy children

[shall be] taught of the LORD; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee....This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” (Is 54: 13-14, 17) When the time was come, from his throne in glory, Christ our Lord said, “For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.” (Ps 12: 5)

Christ our Master came to “forbear threatening”—to loose and remove the rigorous yoke of bondage, the threatening of law of offended justice over us for our sin. He came to take the heavy yoke off his people forever by his one offering. Having accomplished the work our Master sends forth the gospel and by the Holy Spirit, gives each of his children a new heart, saying,

Matthew 11: 28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29: 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. 30: For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

By his power our Master, makes us willing to take the yoke of his gospel upon us and learn of him. Our Master teaches his servants, not by threatening but in meekness and lowliness of heart. Brethren, that is a just and equitable thing for earthly master’s to do for their servants. In meekness and lowliness of heart, teach them the gospel of our heavenly Master. Our Lord is above all. Yet, that is what our Lord did for us, his lowly servants.

Our Master revealed in us that he redeemed us from that heavy, binding yoke of the curse of the law. He delivered us by being made a curse for us on Calvary’s cursed tree. Now, we are justified freely by his blood. Brethren, it would be a good way to illustrate our heavenly Masters work for us, by taking the heavy burden off the servant and bear it for them sometimes.

Our heavenly Lord frees his servants from the heavy yoke of our sin-nature, taking over as Master of our new hearts. “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Cor 3: 17) Our Master frees his servants from the oppressive yoke of sin’s dominion, declaring in our hearts, “sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Rom 6: 14) And our Master continues to keep us under his light and easy yoke, continually strengthening us, continually reminding us through his gospel, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Gal 5: 1) As our Lord promised, we “find rest unto our souls. For his yoke is easy, and his burden is light.” He makes us his servants—the servants of Righteousness—but he did not bring us out of bondage to bring us back into bondage, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Rom 8: 15)

CHRIST THE MASTER IS JUST AND EQUITABLE

Christ our Master says to every earthly master, “ye masters, do the same things unto them.” (Eph 6: 9) In essence, he told the servants to give to your masters that which is just and equal. Now he says to masters, do the same to your servants, “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.” (Col 4: 1)

Has Christ given us that which is just and equal? Indeed he has! His commandments to us are not grievous, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 Jn 5: 3) “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.” (1 Jn 3: 23)

For every earthly master, it is just and equal to give a servant everything he needs to serve you. Christ our Lord has given us everything we need. He made us the righteousness of God in the LORD our Righteousness. We are sanctified in Christ who Sanctifieth, who is our Sanctification. We are redeemed by Christ our Redeemer, who himself is our Redemption.

Our heavenly Master has not laid any grievous burdens on us when it comes to loving our brethren. He has given us a command that is just and equal. By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we heed his simple exhortations of grace, like these he gives us in Ephesians:

Ephesians 5: 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Ephesians 5: 22: [Believing] Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5: 25: [Believing] Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Ephesians 6: 1: [Believing] Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Ephesians 6: 4: [Believing] fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6: 5: [Believing] Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Ephesians 6: 9: [Believing] masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven;...

Brethren, we have a good Master. He has freed us from the yoke of bondage. Now he gives us this light and easy yoke, saying, "Rest in me and love one another, as loving me your heavenly Husband, your heavenly Father, your heavenly Master." He says give your servants that which is just and equal and forbear the heavy yoke of bondage and threatening.

CHRIST OUR MASTER IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

Lastly, the apostle reminds us, "your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." (Eph 6: 9) One of the earliest translations reads—"knowing that your Master, both theirs and yours also"—your servant's Master and yours also—"is in heaven." This reminds us of the equality of servants and masters in the sight of our Lord Jesus.

Remember, our Lord did not choose his people because of anything in us. He chose us by his free and sovereign grace alone. Now, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free; but Christ is All and in all. Our heavenly Master showed us by his great work of redemption on our behalf that he hates robbery and oppression and all unrighteousness. So Christ takes notice of those who oppress and pervert judgment and justice in the earth, especially who do it to his people.

Ecclesiastes 5:8: If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

Christ does not judge as man judges. He will not condemn a man who is a servant simply because he is a servant; he will not acquit a man who is a master simply because he is master. It is not our person—face, place, or race—that Christ respects but obedience from the heart,

For example the first mention of “respect” is Abel. He obeyed God from the heart. That which makes a work a “good thing” before Christ, is his grace working in the heart making us the servant of Christ, to do the will of God from the heart as unto the Lord, your Master in heaven. He tells both servants and masters to do all “as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.” (Eph 6: 6) Whether a servant or master a “good thing” is good only by God’s grace. And “The same shall he receive of the Lord.” By God’s grace you will receive good from the Lord. Believer, when wealthy, powerful masters, rulers of this world, pervert your cause because of your lowly position, be sure Christ will not. Trust Christ to provide!

But if wrong is done it is of the flesh. And that man shall receive also, without respect of persons, “But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” (Col 3: 25) The rich, wealthy, dignified master who is unjust will not be overlooked by Christ because of his position in this life. If he be not Christ’s servant, Christ will not only give him the same in this life but also in the life to come without respect of his person.

James 5: 4: Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth...Be patient therefore brethren till the coming of the Lord.

Brethren, it is such a comfort to know we have a just Master who shall give each of his people that which his his righteousness demands be given to us freely! The Judge of the whole earth shall do right! He cannot be bribed or corrupted in any way. What a comfort!

Therefore, he reminds every believer in position or power that he is not exempt from chastening simply because he is a master. As you get that promotion and become masters at your work place, remember when it comes to treating servants justly and equally, do not look on their outward appearance—on relationships, beauty, rank, wealth, friendship and such. And when it comes to the just wage, the just treatment and the just cause of a servant, let the faithful earthly master give to him, with no respect of his person.

Job knew Christ was his only Righteousness to stand before God in the day of judgment. It made Job reverence his Master in heaven; it made Job to be like his Master. Listen,

Job 31: 11: For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. 12: For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase. 13: If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; 14: What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? 15: Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

So believer, do everything as unto your Master in heaven. “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” (Ja 2: 12-13) “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all *men*.” (1 Pet 2: 16-17)

Amen!