

## *Work Unto the Lord*

Colossians 3:22-4:1

### Sermon Outline

#### What do “Slaves” and “Masters” Mean?

Roman slavery was not exactly the same as American slavery  
These categories are descriptive not prescriptive (1 Peter 2:18-21)

*Luther talked about “Stations.” God has us in stations – a situation/calling for a season of life. Sometimes those stations aren’t just/decent. But God is just/decent and he has purposes for it.*

*“Colossians 3 here isn’t prescribing slavery. But it speaks to those in slavery.”*

#### What is prescriptive goes beyond cultural norms

#### How Should Work be Done?

1. Obediently (3:22) *...obey in everything those who are your earthly masters...*
2. Honorably (3:22) *...not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart...*
3. Diligently (3:23) *Whatever you do, work heartily... (lit. with Soul)*
4. Worshipfully (3:23b, 24b)
  - 3:17 *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
  - 3:22 *...fearing the Lord.*
  - 3:23 *...work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men...*
  - 3:24 *You are serving the Lord Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

[This] renders every task of intrinsic value and integrates every vocation with a Christian’s spiritual life. It makes every job consequential by making it the arena for glorifying and obeying God and expressing one’s love (through service) to his neighbor.

- William Tyndale

God is in the barn and he is in the chapel. The worship between them might be different, but it is still worship.

-John Cotton

5. Expectantly (3:24-25) *...knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward...*

## 6. Respectfully, even Lovingly (4:1)

*ref. 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest commandment: love your neighbor as yourself.*

Work is a celebration of the material world as the expression of God's creativity. We are most like our Creator when we create, manage, subdue, beautify, etc..

- Dorothy Sayers

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### Discussion 1: Stations

Recall Ryan's reference to Luther's use of the concept of our having "stations" in life.

- *We often distinguish the sacred from the secular. Discuss the error/dangers.*

[We are called to bring glory to God by our excellence in whatever station we find ourselves. "Full time ministry" (vocational ministry) is not a separate category...

2 Peter 1 describes the source (v.3), the call to personal effort (v.5), to excellence (v.5)... and the promises associated with "these qualities": effectiveness/fruitfulness and assurance of salvation.]

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**2 Peter 1:3-8** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and **excellence**,<sup>4</sup> by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.<sup>5</sup> For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with **virtue**, and **virtue** with knowledge,<sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,<sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.<sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

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*\*excellence/virtue - aretē, was used by Greek writers to describe the sum of all desirable character qualities.*

- *Take some time to acknowledge and encourage those around you bringing glory to God in their particular stations in life.*

[Make sure God is the one getting the glory! You may mention folks outside your group, but focus as much as possible on what God is doing among you...]

- *Take some time for self-examination and repentance with respect to your individual impatience/complaining (lack of gratitude) with your station in life.*

[Leaders--lead out in repentance. It is appropriate to share past struggles and bitterness as well.]

**Discussion 2: Work--Idolizing or Giving Up/Ignoring--Two Sins of the Heart**

Each of us tend toward one of these more than the other. This is not a time to “compare notes” and wonder at the strangeness of the folks on the other side... ***Your sin is the one you need to focus on.***

- ***Confess and repent of your idolatry.***

[Do you find your identity in your work? Is it the first thing you think of in the morning and the last thing you think of at night? Are your priorities all structured around your career? ...]

- ***Confess and repent of your laziness and/or ingratitude and/or pride.***

[Do you feel you are “too good” for your current station in life? Have you just given up on excellence? Are you bitter over someone else’s position or promotion? ...]

- ***One another: Are you aware of the sin of a brother or sister in your group that they appear blind to or unrepentant? --Lovingly confront it. (not necessarily in front of the whole group--use wisdom!)***

[Leaders--encourage folks to come through you and give oversight to this.]

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