

Message Notes

Turning the World Upside-down

Scripture Passages

(taken from the English Standard Version)

Introduction: *An Old Letter*

Today's Message:
Turning the World Upside-down
Colossians 3:22-4:1

1. Slaves
 - a. First Century Slaves
 - i. Manumission
 - ii. Obey
 - iii. Obey Always
 - iv. Obey Jesus
 - v. Obey Jesus Always
2. Masters
3. The Elephant
 - a. Safety?
 - b. Paul

Gospel Application - *Who is your motivation for your employee/ employer relationships?*

Colossians 3:22-4:1

²²Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. ¹Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Colossians 3:1-4

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Philemon 1:8-21

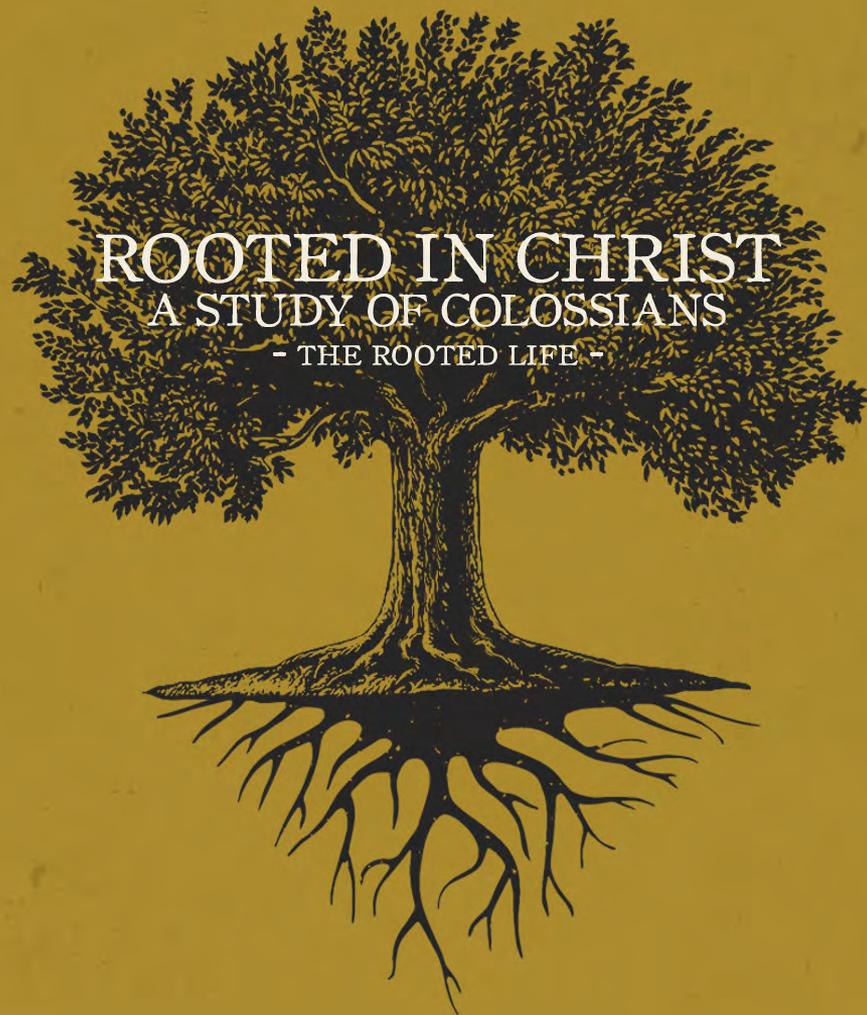
⁸Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you — I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus — ¹⁰I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹(Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) ¹²I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. ¹⁵For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother — especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it — to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²²At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you.



You told me you had been angry with a freedman of yours, and now he's come to see me! He threw himself at my feet and clung on to me as though I were you. He wept a lot, he asked for a lot, though he kept quiet about a lot too. To sum it up, he made me believe that he was genuinely sorry. I think he is a changed character, because he really does feel that he did wrong.

Yes, I know you are angry; and I know, too, that you have a right to be angry. But mercy earns most praise when anger is fully justified. Once you loved this fellow, and I hope you will love him again; for the moment, it's enough if you let yourself be placated. You can always be angry again if he deserves it, and you'll have all the more reason if you've been placated now. He's young, he's in tears, and you have a kind heart – make all that count. Don't torture him, and don't torture yourself either; anger is always torture for a soft heart like yours.

I am afraid it will look as though I'm putting pressure on you, not simply making a request, if I join my prayers to his. But I'm going to do it anyway, and all the more fully and thoroughly because I've given him a sharp and severe talking-to, and I've warned him clearly that I won't make such a request again. (This was because he needed a good fright, and I said it to him rather than to you, because it's just possible that I shall make another request, and receive it too – always supposing it's an appropriate thing for me to ask and for you to grant. Yours Sincerely, Pliny.



ROOTED IN CHRIST
A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS
- THE ROOTED LIFE -

Colossians 3:1-4

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

“
In Christ, you are.
Seek him, you must.

If Yoda wrote the book of Colossians



Today's Message:

The Rooted Life:

Turning the World Upside-down

Colossians 3:22-4:1

Rooted Life

Turning the World Upside-down

Colossians 3:22-4:1

22 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Rooted Life

Turning the World Upside-down

Colossians 3:22-4:1

4:1 Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Rooted Life

1. Slaves

Colossians 3:22-4:1

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Rooted Life

1. *Slaves*

A. First Century Slavery

Slavery in the first century was for the most part quite different from the agricultural slavery of colonial America... the sort of slavery that Onesimus experienced, the lot of a household slave, was often quite comfortable and even offered some advantages. This is why the poor often gave up their children into slavery in hope that it would provide them a better life. Sometimes people voluntarily became slaves to pay off their debts. Many slaves were highly skilled – accountants, teachers, physicians. They had great freedom and movement.

~ John B. Polhill, Paul and His Letters,(Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holdman Publishers) 1999, 348-49.



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Rooted Life

1. *Slaves*

A. *First Century Slavery*

i. *Manumission*

i. Manumission

“Manumission, from manumit, is the act of a slave owner freeing his or her slaves. Different approaches developed, each specific to the time and place of a society’s slave system.”

Still, slaves were another person's property. They had no legal rights of their own, could not enter into a legal marriage, could not own their own property. The desire of most slaves was to be free...

~ John B. Polhill, Paul and His Letters,(Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holdman Publishers) 1999, 349.

Rooted Life

1. *Slaves*

A. *First Century Slavery*

ii. *Obey*

Rooted Life

ii. Obey

Colossians 3:22-4:1

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Rooted Life

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A. *First Century Slavery*

iii. *Obey Always*

Rooted Life

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Rooted Life

1. Slaves

A. First Century Slavery

iv. Obey Jesus

Rooted Life

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Rooted Life

iv. Obey Jesus

Colossians 1:11-12

11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Rooted Life

iv. Obey Jesus

Roman Law

Slaves are not allowed to inherit anything from their masters

Rooted Life

iv. Obey Jesus

Colossians 3:22-4:1

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Rooted Life

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A. *First Century Slavery*

v. *Obey Jesus Always*

Rooted Life

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Rooted Life

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Rooted Life

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Colossians 3:22-4:1

4:1 Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Rooted Life

3. *The Elephant*

Rooted Life

3. *The Elephant*

Why not just tell masters to free their slaves?

Rooted Life

3. *The Elephant*

a. safety?

Paul called for emancipation nowhere in the epistle, or anywhere for that matter. That should come as no surprise. The whole economy of the Roman Empire was established on slavery. Abolition of slavery would have meant total economic chaos, and any group advocating it would have been considered countercultural and dangerous.

~ John B. Polhill, Paul and His Letters, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holdman Publishers) 1999, 348.

Again this early Christian adaptation of the household code assumes the hierarchical structure of the master/slave relationship and has a view of justice that does not attempt to change the social structures...but to ameliorate and transform conditions within them.

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Rooted Life

Pliny vs. Paul

Rooted Life

Pliny vs. Paul

Philemon 1:8-21

8 Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, 9 yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you - I, Paul, an old man now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus - 10 appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. 11 (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me). 12 I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart.

Rooted Life

Pliny vs. Paul

Philemon 1:8-21

13 I would have been glad to keep him here with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own accord. 15 For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother – especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

Rooted Life

Pliny vs. Paul

Philemon 1:8-21

17 So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. 18 If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it – to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. 20 Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

For Paul, much as he valued freedom, the mutual reconciliation of those who belonged to the Messiah mattered more than anything else. For Philemon to have responded angrily to Paul's letter by giving Onesimus freedom but declaring that he never wanted to set eyes on him again would have meant defeat for Paul. Reconciliation was what mattered. That is why Paul wrote the letter.

~ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress) 2013.

Gospel Application

Gospel Application

Who is your motivation for your employee/employer relationships?

Gospel Application

Who is your motivation for your employee/employer relationships?

Who do you need to seek for reconciliation?