**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

 **Slaves & Masters ~ Under God’s Plan in a Fallen World**

 Ephesians 6:5-9

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

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**God’s Role for Pastors**

My view is that. . . it is the role of the Pastor in America that must make sure that people know the true history of our country. American history, what has happened here, how we got to where we are. . . is all of God’s business. Why? I firmly believe that America was founded to be that Light to the world proclaiming God’s truth. It is under God’s grace that He chose to work through flawed men and women to accomplish the founding and preservation of America. The vast majority of American Founders were Christian, except for a few that were Deists or Atheists. We see that it was Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin who proposed the Great Seal to be a depiction of God guiding the country with a *cloud by day* and a *fire by night* reminiscent of God leading His people during the Exodus from Egypt.

God calls for His spokespersons to address the entire society. The people called by God did not shy away from addressing government or public life. The prophets in the Old Testament and Jesus addressed government, religion and the culture at large. It was God’s called prophet Nathan who confronted King David about his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12). It was God’s called prophet Samuel who took King Saul to task for his disobedience to God (1 Samuel 13) and Jesus in Matthew 23 rebuking the theocratic leaders.

One of the biggest lies in America is for God’s spokespersons to be quiet about the world at large. This is not biblical and has led us to a time where we have seen the rule of law trampled by the godless ill hearts of men and women. The vast populace has not heard the truth from God’s Word because too many of those who report themselves to be God’s spokespersons have shrunk into a cowardness under the weight of humanistic cultural demands. Or their hearts have joined those enemies of God themselves. This is evident due to the condition of our society where there has obviously been a failing in the conveyance of truth about many things and, in many settings, willful deception. The real Church and its authentic pastors cannot depend on other groups to teach the truth. Therefore, we must teach the truth about all things.

**5 Slaves,**

 be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh,

with fear and trembling,

in the sincerity of your heart,

as to Christ;

 **6** not by way of eyeservice,

as men-pleasers,

but as slaves of Christ,

doing the will of God from the heart.

 **7** With good will render service,

as to the Lord, and not to men,

 **8** knowing that whatever good thing each one does,

this he will receive back from the Lord,

whether slave or free.

 **9 And masters,**

do the same things to them,

and give up threatening,

knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven,

and there is no partiality with Him.

This passage of Scripture addresses the relationships between *slaves* and *masters*. Some have twisted this text to foster the idea that Christianity/God endorses slavery. To be clear, God and His Word, the Bible, does/is not endorsing slavery.

**The issue here is the acknowledgment that slavery exists in this free-will-choice fallen world just like other sinful practices such as prostitution.**

 Why do I reference prostitution? When Rahab, the prostitute, assisted Joshua’s men from being discovered during the conquest of Jericho, God was not endorsing prostitution. In Hebrews 11:31, Rahab is noted as having faith that approved her to God; like all the rest of us sinners. . . we are saved by faith. The idea is that Rahab, after she assisted Joshua, stopped her practice. From neither of these two accounts has there ever been a charge that God was endorsing prostitution. In God’s providence, He reaches out to all people regardless of their practices or spiritual condition in their life situation. Slavery and prostitution are products of the Fall of man through which God works.

**Slavery in Our Time Why is Slavery still an issue?**

**Americans Need to Know Their Factual History of Slavery**

**Why Did Christian Statesmen Involve Themselves with Slavery?**

Unfortunately, there are politicians and others who have played the race-card of slavery to make themselves lifelong ringleaders of fear and hate-mongering targeting minority groups. Instead of addressing individual criminal actions. . . these politicians paint the whole country into a racist state and position themselves as savior.

In case someone does not know. . . It was under the leadership of Democrat President Johnson (1960’s) who expanded federal welfare and targeted minority women under the banner of the Great Society programs. This is when the government plantation was started in the twentieth century. President Johnson and his political party sought to secure votes from those they gave welfare. It worked. As long as you stayed on the government plantation, you received money. There was not any requirement to develop people to support themselves. The fatherless raised the fatherless for decades. God’s plan to be a civilized society is for fathers to raise children with their mothers. God never intended for government to be ‘daddy’. Without fathers, children grow-up government supervised in public housing or in prisons. And, in many cases, street gangs and their leadership have taken the role of raising children not to be products of civilized law-abiding citizens but to be criminals. America has the largest prison population in the world.

 I have said this before. . . the political legislators who target minority groups with government welfare are the owners of the government plantation who instruct welfare officers (Field Bosses -Crackers) to crack the whip of lifelong dependance instilling fear in the hearts of their victims. Again, the government plantation was created by paying single women to have babies, thus directing their vote to the politician who handed-out the most welfare. Without a father in the home, the government Field Bosses become the decision-makers who tell their slaves for whom to vote. These political party plantation owners spin all dissenting information as evil. . . thus fulfilling God’s word when good is called evil and evil is called good…

**Isaiah 5:20-23**

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!

22 Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink,

23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!

**Historical Slavery in America**

Americans are all too familiar with slavery and the Civil War (1861-1865). To be historically clear. . .slavery was and is an international state-sponsored business. It is disappointing that the “Christian” States of Europe practiced slavery in their efforts to colonialize new lands for hundreds of years. It is an obvious contradiction to profess a faith in God and buy and sell slaves. Many confessed their sin of slavery, and, over time, the European nations abolished state-sponsored slavery. We see slow transformation in the words of the song *Amazing Grace* resonate from the repentant heart of the English slaver trader, John Newton, in 1772 A.D.

America was not able to abolish slavery during its founding years as it was part of and an extension of the culture and economic fabric that had been laid by centuries of European state policies. When America broke from King George of England, the U.S. Constitution (ratified June 21, 1788) and the soon-to-follow Bill of Rights (ratified December 15, 1791) was passed. But the Constitution retained the management of the slave culture. There was a contradiction between the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. The federal Bill of Rights protected a person from the Federal government not the State governments. Later, Constitutional Amendments would address this issue. Concerning slaves, the Constitution of 1788 addressed their current system with these words:

Article I, Section 2, Clause 3, “[Three-Fifths Compromise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-Fifths_Compromise)” Three-fifths of each state's enslaved population (“other persons”) was to be [added to its free population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Census) for the purposes of [apportioning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apportionment_%28politics%29) seats in the [United States House of Representatives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives) and [direct taxes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_tax#U.S._constitutional_law_sense) among the states.

Article IV, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states:

[No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.]10

Soon after the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the new government took steps to transition their economy and culture away from the practice of slavery. Congress first regulated against the trade in the Slave Trade Act of 1794. The 1794 Act ended the legality of American ships participating in the trade. President George Washington signed the Act into law.

In 1808, by an Act of Congress and signed by President Thomas Jefferson, it became illegal to import slaves into America under federal law. Prior to that date, it was the State of Pennsylvania, who in 1780, and Massachusetts in 1783, had abolished slavery in their state.

Obviously, both President Washington and Jefferson grew-up in a cultural and economic industry of slavery. Both their families owned slaves. But it is evident, as both men matured and gained political power, they took steps to abolish the international slave trade in America.

In time, and years before the Civil War, many individual states passed laws to abolish or phase-out slavery. Here is an excerpt from an online article detailing some of the states abolishing slavery. This was a gradual process.

Between 1840 and 1850, the last slaves in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island either died or were emancipated, and, as a result, the only northern state where slavery continued to exist after 1850 was New Jersey, where it was limited to slaves born before 1805.  Technically, slavery had still not died out in New Jersey by the time of the Civil War.  The United States Census recorded 236 slaves in the Garden State in 1850, and 18 in 1860 (though by 1860, the 18 individuals were classified not as “slaves,” but as individuals “indentured for life”).

<https://law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2012/12/before-there-were-red-and-blue-states-there-were-free-states-and-slave-states/>

So, States operated on their own regarding legalizing or abolishing slavery prior to the enactment of new Constitutional Amendments.

Technically, it was not until the passage of the 13th Amendment (1865 abolishing slavery) and 14th Amendment (1868 tied the States to the Federal Bill of Rights) that slavery legally ended in all States by Federal Law.

 The record shows that “Christian” America during the early years of self-governance matured to abolish the participation in the international slave trade. The European colonies that became America had been too steeped in European practices including slavery. When they formed their new government, slaves were already a part of the existing culture and economy. It took decades to transition away from their inherited system. As history reveals. . . it took too long.

In my opinion, it is short-sighted and modern-day presumptuous for current observers to pass critical judgement upon the Founding Fathers of America regarding slavery with the convenience of over two centuries of this Republic being an experiment in a world of governments. Current observers obviously did not grow-up or live in European America 250 years ago. During that time, even white men were treated as vassals of King George of England.

Civil Rights for all have been a growing achievement throughout American History. Lest we not forget that every white man could not vote for the first three plus decades after the ratification of the Bill of Rights. It was only property owners who could vote. Women were not afforded voting rights until the 1920’s with the passage of the 19th Amendment. After-all, the 15th Amendment (1870) guaranteed black men the right to vote, but what about white women?

It needs to be said that there was a heavy price to be paid and was paid by America for the sin of slavery and the slow transition away from the international institution. The Civil War cost America more lives than any other war or wars to this date. Current studies account for 750,000 soldiers killed during the Civil War. Compare to the report from The National WWII Museum of 407,316 soldiers killed (WW I: 116,516 deaths). America paid a heavy price for the sin of slavery.

**Real Slavery Today**

**What is modern slavery and how prevalent is it?**

Online source

https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-still-have-slavery

Today, 167 countries still have some form of modern slavery, which affects an estimated 46 million people worldwide. Modern slavery can be difficult to detect and recognize in many cases. This is because slavery has moved underground in most countries and because the definition of slavery has expanded and evolved over the past several decades.

**For example, the U.S. Department of State defines modern slavery as**

"the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud or coercion."

**International Labor Office** (2017) describes modern slavery as not just laborers "owned" by other people, but also forced marriages, state-imposed forced labor, and victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

**Forms of modern slavery**

Forms of modern slavery include slavery by "ownership" ("chattel" slavery), government conscription (forced military service or government labor), forced prison labor, forced migrant labor, debt bondage (slavery until debts are paid), sexual slavery, forced marriage/child marriage, child labor, and forced begging. With the definition of modern slavery in mind, we can now move on to examining the statistics.

Top 10 Countries with the Highest Prevalence of Modern Slavery (by total number of slaves) - Global Slavery Index 2018:

 India - 7,989,000

 China - 3,864,000

 North Korea - 2,640,000

 Nigeria - 1,386,000

 Iran - 1,289,000

 Indonesia - 1,220,000

 Congo (Democratic Republic of) - 1,045,000

 Russia - 794,000

 Philippines - 784,000

 Afghanistan - 749,000

India has the highest number of slaves in the world. This is partly because India is one of the two most populous countries on Earth and partially because all forms of modern slavery exist in India, including forced child labor, forced marriage, commercial sexual exploitation, bonded labor, and forced recruitment into armed groups.

See rest of article and more online links.

https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-still-have-slavery

<https://theconversation.com/fact-check-how-many-people-are-enslaved-in-the-world-today-107078>

<https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/modern-slavery/>

With this many people in slavery today, we can see that God’s Word is relevant as He gives guidelines by which to live in the New Testament book of Ephesians.

**God’s Chosen People Slaves Too?**

**God’s will - is for all people to be free.**

God provides all of us instruction to make the best choices while living in a fallen creation. For the record, God’s chosen people, the Hebrews, were slaves in Egypt under Pharoah and in Babylon. During both of these captive-slave times, God had a plan for His chosen people to conduct their lives. God’s desire was for His chosen people to be free, but, due to their rebellion and sin and the sin and rebellion of other nations, the Hebrews were taken into captivity.

We need to remember that God created His creation with free-will-choice. Thus, allowing people to make their own life-choices as God did Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3). Therefore, slavery is a product of this fallen world, whereby people choose against God’s plan for relationships. Within this fallenness, God provides guidelines under which all are to live. Some prominent people in the Old Testament were slaves.

Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers (Genesis 37). However, Joseph, following God’s lead in his slave-status . . . rose to be one of the most powerful men in Egypt. As we read Ephesian 6: 5 – 8, think about Joseph and his relationship with God. Joseph could have been mad at God for the rest of his life for allowing his brothers to sell him into slavery. But, no, that was not the spiritual path Joseph chose.

Wow, with all this slavery on-going, we can see why God’s word is important. I have to bring-up one more kind of slavery to which people subject themselves in a capitalist society. That is Corporate-Slavery. I mean people who are slaves to their corporate career at the expense of their family. When your prospective employer brags how they have showers and workout rooms within their corporate offices, what they are telling you is that you are not going home too often. You do not have to worry about the rush hour traffic because your work day will not end at 5:00 P.M. Here is another challenge to parenting, that is being dad or mother. In some cases, the result is the same as the entitled welfare system. Removing the father from the home is the end result.

Paul calls himself a slave (bond-servant, Greek - δοῦλος doulos) of Jesus Christ in the first sentence of his letter to the Believers in Rome.

**Romans 1:1** Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

 This is consistent with Paul describing himself in Galatians 2:20.

 I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

 From this teaching, we see that we are going to be slaves to God or slaves to the world. Paul describes himself as a slave of Christ to illustrate the point of who is directing his life. Paul describes the attitude of both slave and master and their relationships to God as being equal.

but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

 **7** With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men,

 **8** knowing that whatever good thing each one does,

this he will receive back from the Lord,

whether slave or free.

 **9 And masters,**

do the same things to them, and give up threatening,

knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven,

and there is no partiality with Him. **AMEN**