

**Colossians**  
**“A Worthy Walk”**  
**III. Main Teaching: 1:15-4:6**

3:1-4:6 **Walking in the Wisdom of Christ**

3:22 – 4:1 Presence of Christ

**3:22-4:1**  
**“Grace Garments at work”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. 22-25 Set apart slaves**

**III. 4:1 Mastered master**

**I. Intro.**

The section that deals with the 3<sup>rd</sup> relationship in which the Christian will need to wear “Grace Clothes” (*the work place*) and is the largest of the three. Its length should not suggest “*greater importance*” but rather a more “*pressing need*”. Paul included this letter the letters to Ephesus as well to his fellow shepherd Philemon who had to be encouraged to do right by his runaway slave Onesimus. The geographical proximity to Colossi was a story these believers were very familiar with. **Saints the person God choses to use in a work is inevitably the person that knows how to work! Consider this truth:**

- **It was when Moses was at work tending his father-in-laws sheep that God appeared to him in the burning bush and called him to reach his people**
- **Elisha was plowing in the field when Elijah called him into ministry**
- **Peter and Andrew were fishing when Jesus called them to be fishers of men**

Saint’s waiting on the Lord doesn’t involve sitting and doing nothing instead as the above truths indicate it involves working!

## II. 22-25 Set apart slaves

During Paul's day slavery was an established institution with well over 60 million of them. Some wonder why the church didn't seek to destroy this horrid institution.

1. First, Christianity was at its infant stage and had no political or military power to change anything. Slavery was established on social order thus Paul taught that the Christian slave should secure their freedom if they could but never at the price of rebellion as they were first and foremost a slave to Christ.
2. Second, the purpose of the church is to spread the gospel which sets free all people from the tyranny of sin and death. Had the early church left their true calling for social action they would have been branded an antigovernment group and would have never been an instrument of change.
3. Third, Colossians was a part of a three letter set which included Ephesians and the little letter to Philemon which was written to encourage a church leader and slave owner "*Philemon*" to receive back his runaway slave Onesimus who had come to Paul escaping Philemon's treatment of him and had become a believer. Paul corrects both by encouraging Philemon and by sending Onesimus back with the letter.

The positive side of obedience is *single heartedness to the Lord which will produce sincere hearts in service!* Though the gospel didn't immediately destroy slavery it did gradually change the relationship between slaves and masters until society could no longer practice slavery at the same time treating each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. You cannot have a society of slaves and masters when all are brothers and sisters

under one benevolent Master in Christ! At the heart of every problem is a problem of the heart and only the Holy Spirit can change and control the heart.

Vs. 22-23 Paul divides this section as he has in the last two into mutually exclusive commandments. The church was the only place where both slaves and masters would be present at the same time on the same social level without racial and class distinctions.

- Like Paul's words two marriage and the family he says things both to slaves and masters that would have been revolutionary concepts to both. I will use a more contemporary terms like "*employees*" and "*bosses*".
  - Slaves must be "conscientious workers" in Christ more effect and more efficient slaves. **Telling people who had no choice to make a choice to be the best would have been unheard of.** *A relationship with Jesus never means an escape from hard work; it means an escape from the wrong attitude and motivation that often accompanies it.*
1. **Negatively:** The slave must not be content with just getting by when his overseer is watching. **He must not sweep things under the rug instead he needed to sweep under the rug!** There was a man in a foreign country that owned a factory that noticed that his workers would be busy earning their pay as long as he kept an eye on them. As soon as he stepped out they stop. He had been injured years earlier and had a glass eye so knowing they were superstitious he would put it on a stump in front of them. The plan worked wonderful until one day he came back to see the crew sitting and noticed that his glass eye had been placed under a hat by a worker who had snuck around behind the eye so it couldn't see him and hid the eye under the hat.

2. **Positively**: We are to work with “*sincerity of heart, fearing God and doing things heartily as to the Lord and not to men.*” The best witness a person can have at work is by being the hardest most positive worker on the job the company has. It shouldn't matter what the employer treats you like or passes over you for promotion because you aren't working for yourself or for them but for the Lord.
- Slaves are to remember who their true Master is and work only as unto Him who loved them so much that He sacrificed His life for their freedom!
  - Slaves could never possess property is promised an inheritance from God who is the weighed the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Vs. 24-25 The great encouragement of this is that the reward or lack thereof will be **supplied by Jesus at you promotion into His presence.** The Christian worker always needs to remind themselves that they work as “*unto the Lord*” and “*not unto men*” so that our motivation stays correct and won't lesson based upon how we are being treated by our earthly employer. It's easy to become discourage if we lose this perspective. I think it would be good for the employee to have on their desk (or somewhere handy) this phrase, “*Jesus, I'm working only for You today...thank You for reminding me of this and please give me the Holy Spirit's power and joy to do a great job for you today!*”

Paul says that there is a bonus tied to this realization that you are to work as “*unto the Lord*”. **When you work as unto the Lord your attitude is changed and the quantity and quality of your work is best you can expect to receive your bonus upon your promotion into His presence.** *Ah but listen up in verse 25 Paul says that you may be losing your bonus if you haven't been work as unto the Lord.* **There are going to be**

*people who work unto the Lord that never got promoted or compensated in this life time.* Perhaps they wondered, “*Man this just isn’t right, why I’ve worked unto the Lord and here I sit!*” Listen up saint and be encouraged because God has seen that you have been working unto Him and rest assured He isn’t going to miss the opportunity to give you that promotion and raise with interest. Maybe you’re thinking “*Well it sure would have been nice to have gotten it while on earth...!*” If He would have given it to you now:

- **It would only have been temporary and not the full amount.**
- **It would have been subject to taxes, added pressure and responsibility.**
- **It would also been vulnerable, to rust, rodent and robber.**
- **It wouldn’t have been able to be fully enjoyed, because you haven’t retired, you’re still working.**

**When He rewards you for your faithfulness of working unto Him He will be able to reward you without those limitations.** The reward Jesus gives now for our faithful service according to Jesus’ parable in Luke 19:12-27: ***Is a greater opportunity to demonstrate your love in still greater service.*** That’s why sometimes even though you are working as unto the Lord you don’t get that earthly promotion and pay raise as Jesus is giving you a greater opportunity to demonstrate His love and that doesn’t always equate with a pay raise and a promotion.

Ah but saint’s notice that in verse 25 Paul warns that the opposite is also true as those who do wrong of the job will be paid for what they have done, as there is no partiality. If the Christian employee isn’t working as unto the Lord and is instead just working with eyeservice or as a man-pleaser they may get promoted, get pay raises but the Lord has seen the truth and you will receive less of an opportunity to demonstrate His love here and now and less bonus in the future. Heaven is the great equalizer as with God there is no partiality.

### **III. 4:1 Mastered master**

Vs. 1 Now to Christian Employers Paul speaks to them about being generous and fair.

The reason is that they too are to realize that they have a Master in heaven. God is concerned with justice and fairness on the work place. It seems as though Paul is suggesting to, bless slaves financially so that they could eventually buy their freedom.

And looking out over history that is what happened as the Christian influence in the work place changed society creating the equality that God intended.

- To masters Paul says that they must not treat their slaves as mere objects, tools, things to be used and discarded. Employees are people just like they are.
- The master is also to remember that he too has a Master in Christ in heaven so he will have to answer unto his Master for how he treated God's servants! The master and the slave are equally both working for God.