

Sunday, October 25, 2020 am

TEACHINGS OF JESUS (23)
Sermon on the Mount (22)
Who are you serving?
Matthew 6:24

As we continue our study of the sermon on the mount, we are in the midst of examining 3 principles associated with the choice of direction we are taking in life. We have talked where our treasure is – this would our **goal and values**, whether our spiritual eyes are good or bad – this would be our **environment** – what we bring into our hearts, and today we want to talk about who is our master – this is your **commitment** - the foundation of our righteousness.

I. Masters and servants.

- a. The word for **master** here, is often translated Lord. The word is defined as one who rules or exercises authority over others – a ruler, master or lord.
Of course, Jesus is described as our Lord and was often called Lord by His followers.
During the Roman empire, similar to part of America’s dark history, slavery was very common. And slaves in many cases were not recognized as human, but rather as property. This is one of the things that makes slavery so terrible and wrong.
But an observation to be made is that a slave had no freedom. He did whatever his master said – period. To reject the master came with consequences.
But the word could also apply to a ruler with authority (sometime complete authority), such as a king or other sovereign ruler.
- b. The word for **serve**, is the verb form of a slave or servant under a master as described above. Thus it describes the actions of one who is bound to his master.
- c. Some observations about what Jesus is saying in this illustration.
 - i. He is not dealing with the ethics of slavery. This is a parable that makes a simple point – you cannot serve 2 Lords or masters at the same time.
 - ii. It is a spiritual application – keep that in mind as we examine this entire sermon. Jesus is dealing with our relationship with God – how to please Him as you serve Him.
Righteousness that is pleasing to Him.
 - iii. Jesus is using the term to note that this is one with complete authority and who is expected to be obeyed.
 - iv. He also describes this as a choice – you pick who will be your master.
- d. The point that Jesus is making has to do with total commitment.
If you are going to serve God, He HAS to be your Master. Nothing less is acceptable.
That means with every decision you make – you consider that He is your Lord.
Matthew 16:24, “If anyone desires to come after Me, Let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.
Luke 14:26-33 speaks of the cost of being His disciple. Jesus notes that he who loves God or mother more than Me...
2 Timothy 2:3-4 describes a soldier. This is a good illustration – as understanding that soldier is that first. He has other obligations in his life, but being a soldier IS first. Ask a reservist who is called up to duty.

II. Why can you not serve two masters?

- a. It has to do with your loyalty. The idea of loyalty is you are faithful to someone no matter what. Nothing will cause you to be swayed from that. You will sacrifice, even your very life, for the cause. Jesus gave an illustration of this in John 10:11-13. The hireling is doing what he does “for the money” or something else that is self-serving. The loyal one will devote and even give himself for the cause. If you want to understand loyalty – look at Jesus in doing the will of His Father AND what He did for us – 1 Peter 2:21-23, etc.
- b. ***Either he will hate the one and love the other*** – this shows the deep-down motivation. The word for hate is a word that can mean to completely despise something/someone OR to love something with less vigor. I believe it is the latter, though one who serves 2 masters may truly despise one over the other. This describes how one deep down feels about those he is serving. One commentator noted to not read too much into the strength of these words, as in Semitic (Jewish) thought, it basically means he would choose over the other (cf. Romans 9:13 – *Jacob I have loved, But Esau I have hated*). Or possibly he would honor one over the other. And that is emphasized in the next phrase:
- c. ***Jesus said you would be loyal to one and despise the other.*** This describes your response to your choice. You are serving competing interests, but there is no real loyalty to the master that is respected the least. Therefore, when face with a conflicting choice – the one “loved” is always chosen. And further, there is a matter of joy associated with your service. You gladly serve the one you love – even to the point of sacrifice, BUT the one you “hate” it is a misery serving him.
- d. He further illustrates this by noting, ***You cannot serve God and mammon.*** The word “mammon” is a word that means wealth or riches. We might describe it as STUFF, the things of this world. 1 John 2:15-16 tells us to not love the things of this world. Jesus is saying point blank that serving God and serving this world are so opposed to one another that it is IMPOSSIBLE to serve both. Romans 16:18, those who are such. Titus 3:3 – we were once foolish... serving various lusts and pleasures... Let go back to that love – hate analogy. If you are trying to serve BOTH equally – the outcome will be misery. You will not be happy because of divided interests. It is like the one who goes to God in prayer without true faith. He is doubting and tossed to and fro – he is miserable (James 1:5-8)

III. Who is your master?

- a. Romans 6:1-4 – Paul reminds these brethren that in becoming Christians, they put to death that old man of sin. NOW, they are a creature and old things have passed away (2 Corinthians 5:17). Paul would then make another observation – Romans 6:15-23 where He addresses being slaves of righteousness - means servants of God.
- b. We only have 2 choices – Jesus said, *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.* (Luke 11:23). The Bible is continually filled with the message of two paths. Jesus will revisit this at the end of the sermon on the mount by speaking of 2 paths (Matthew 7:13-14). Joshua 24:15 – “choose this day whom you will serve...”
- c. Is God your master?
 - i. Colossians 3:23-24 – *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*
1 Thessalonians 1:9 – *you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*
 - ii. **If God is your Master**, you will ALWAYS choose Him when faced with a choice between Him and some worldly pursuit.

- iii. If God is your Master, you will respect His word and its boundaries in everything you do. Matthew 28:27-28 – you will “do all things commanded.”
- iv. If God is your Master, you will sacrifice and suffer in His defense when necessary. Cf. Philippians 3:7-8 – *what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ...*
- v. If God is your Master, you will seek to Imitate Him in your actions, words, attitudes and characteristics which you possess. 1 Corinthians 11:1 (Ephesians 5:1 – Be imitators of God, as dear children).
- vi. Paul summarized it this way – Galatians 2:20.
- d. Is Satan your master?
 - i. You choose him over serving God. And the thing to understand about this is that IF you reject God you are making Satan your master.
 - ii. If you are driven by the pursuit of money, Satan is your master. The word is chocked out by the cares of this world (Luke 8:14). Be reminded that covetousness is idolatry – Colossians 3:5, Ephesians 5:5.
 - iii. If you let this world sway your spiritual convictions, Satan is your master – 1 John 5:19 – the world lies under his sway.
 - iv. If you reject the scriptures, or twist them to fit your own desires, Satan is your master. 2 Peter 3:16.
 - v. If you reject the gospel, Satan is your master.
 - vi. If you return back to the world, Satan is AGAIN your master. 2 Peter 2:20-22.
- e. NOTE: This is NOT a “both/and” option. It is a straightforward, “either/or”. There is NO middle ground. Remember who owns the fence. EVERY TIME you reject God, you are choosing to serve Satan.

You can see the seriousness of this sermon that Jesus preached, and the power it portrayed. The verses we have studied in these past few lessons are at the foundation of our faith and standing with God. They stand and fall together. If God is your Master, you will be laying up for yourself treasure in heaven and thus you will be bringing into your soul the light of His word. If you are pursuing the things of this world, and filling your soul with the darkness thereof, Satan is your master. Friends, your eternity is at stake. So, WHO is your master? Think about it.