**Sermon Series *— Experiencing God*
Sermon #20: “Servants of Christ”
May 22, 2022**

Luke 17: 5-10
Ephesians 3:20-21

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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | I don’t know about you, but I have never liked this passage of scripture! First, it uses the image of master and slave. For 200 years, we have been trying to get out from under our despicable heritage of slavery where in that period of history America did allow people to own other people and make them do whatever they demanded. And as a follower of Christ, I shudder to think that being a Christian has a place for this type of relationship. Most Americans strive to grow up being in charge of their lives and avoid being in a relationship where they are always told what to do. Part of the American dream is to be free to do and live as you desire, not beholden to any other human being.So, when you run across this passage, Jesus give us the analogy of our Christian relationship with God pictured as a master to a slave.Why does this relationship not sit well with us in our modern times?I believe it is because of our history of slavery in part. But for most of us, it is the notion that in America we should be free from such a relationship whether in a family or in a job. Yes, jobs have managers and supervisors that instruct the workers on what they are to do. But it is our hope and belief that workers also have dignity in the work they do. It is hoped that workers get paid a fair wage, have basic rights and have a process to address grievances they may have against the supervisors if a problem arises. |
| 3 | So, these words from Luke go against the way we think of our relationship with God. After all, God loves us enough to send his son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. And through Jesus’ resurrection, our sins can be forgiven. Plus, we have an eternal home in heaven and now have the possibility of a love relationship with God. So, we figure, we must be pretty special to God for God to sacrifice so much for us. It certainly sounds like much more than a slave relationship to a master! So, what is Jesus trying to convey about our relationship to the God who saves us and loves us enough to want a personal love relationship with us?First, we must also remember that while God loves us “to the moon and back” as the saying goes, we must acknowledge that God is also our creator and judge. Being a Christian means receiving God’s grace and salvation, but it also means we promise to live by the example of Christ! A major part of that example is that we always seek to know God’s will for our lives and that we diligently seek to follow that will. |
| 4 | This brings us to Jesus. Note that Jesus always sought God’s will throughout his life – through study, through prayer, and through maintaining his love relationship with God. And it was from God that Jesus discovered how he was to live and accomplish his purpose of saving the world.To be successful, Jesus had to do exactly what God asked him to do. You might say Jesus didn’t have the vision of His work except by what God told him. And what a glorious relationship Jesus had with God. Because Jesus was obedient, even to the cross, God stood with him every step of the way – through the glorious times of healing and preaching to eager followers to the difficult times of experiencing betrayal and suffering and ultimately crucifixion. |
| 5 | So it is in this way of thinking we must read this text today. Being a servant of God means we want to know God’s will and we want to do it because we know God will be with us each step of the way.God is our Lord, our King, our Master. God is the creator, the one who controls all things and all people. God has placed his creation and its operations within the laws of his physics of which we understand to a great degree. God also gives his creation, especially humans, a gift of freedom to act and live as we choose.In this context, we have Jesus use the master-slave relationship to help us navigate within our freedom to serving God in the way God desires us to serve.The servant/slave. This person’s purpose is to do the master’s will. The servant doesn’t tell the master what to do. The servant doesn’t choose which tasks to perform for the master, nor does the servant suggest days or times when it would be convenient to serve the master. The servant’s function is to follow instructions.The master, on the other hand, gives directions. The master does not tell the servant to develop a vision that will guide the master. The master is the one with the vision. The servant’s task is to help fulfill the master’s purposes.So in the context we are to view ourselves as servants; God is the master. |
| 6 | The reality is we tend to try to reverse this! God’s revelation of Himself, His purpose, and His ways depend directly upon our obedience. God may not reveal today God’s intentions for the next 5 years, but God will tell us what our next step should be. As we respond to God’s revelation, God will accomplish what God desires and will be the One who receives the glory. Our fulfillment comes from serving the Master.Now, the world will encourage you to strive for positions of authority and power. God wants you to take the role of a servant. As God’s servant you should have no other agenda than to be obedient to whatever God tells you. God does not need you to dream great dreams for your life, your family, your business, or your church. God simply asks for our obedience. God has plans that would dwarf your plans in comparison (Ephesians 3:20-21).“*Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all you ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever! Amen*.” |
| 7 | So where does that leave us this morning? We are to be servants. But where do we find our master? It is not the political leader, nor the local leaders, nor even necessarily the church leader. Our master is God. So, it is crucial for us to get our directions straight from God. The way that happens is by developing our love relationship with God through Jesus Christ. And as we grow in that relationship and begin to hear God speak to us, then we will want to be obedient. That obedience will lead to serving. That service will be what God wants and we can be confident that God will supply all we need for our obedience to be successful.It all begins with Jesus’ salvation freely given to us and the love relationship we build with God.Amen |