

Since the beginning of time, man has had trouble following the rules. I don't know about you but it's still a challenge for me. You see a speed limit and sometimes you've got to see just how far over that you can go without being stopped. You see arrows in a car park and there's something about us that just wants to go the wrong way every now and then, just because we can.

You see, Satan knew and in the garden when he said to Eve “Oh come on, I know what the rules are, but you don't have to submit.” Our country is built on freedom and it is the most valuable thing we have, being able to choose, being able to side for ourselves. And be able to say that, “no man shall own any other person”. We stand on freedom and let freedom reign, And then we come together on Sunday and sing “Make me a servant Lord, and make me like you.”

One thing Christianity does, it challenges us to flow up stream from everything our society tells us about freedom and submission. There is a reason why we say, “Given our lives to him”. Committing ourselves to Jesus is committing ourselves to the master's plan to live the world his way. It's God's world and were determined to live in it, God's way.

This generation now is being brought up with choices, have this, have that, have it your way. So we have to try and explain to them, there is a matter here called “Submission to the Lord” that you must accept.

There are churches everywhere, where there are increasing tensions about things like worship style, what you will and won't do when the body assembles together. Maybe you could imagine where there are slight tensions over how things are going to be done inside and outside of a worship assembly.

Some want to say “Its part of the aspect of culture, or aspects of church growth” So many of our challenges come back to the same thing Adam and Eve dealt with in the garden, and that is “I'm happy, as long as you're doing it the way I like it.”

But when I'm called on, to submit as a husband or a father or a Christian man, there is something in me that says, “How can't I have it, always my way?” That's why I believe that Jesus demonstrated in his life a clear principle.

Turn your bibles to **John 5**. Jesus makes a statement that seems so strange given that he is the all-powerful Lord, one who was given all authority in heaven and earth. In a discussion with some of the Jews who were persecuting him Jesus said in **John 5:19**. “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

Jesus says, “I can do nothing by myself” How strange it is to hear that coming out of the Lord who is part of the making of heaven and earth. John tells us earlier in his gospel “Without him nothing that has been made, was made”.

The God who is able to speak to the dead and say, “Rise”. The God in flesh who was able to speak to the lame and say, “Walk” He says “People! I will be honest with you, I just can't do anything unless my dad says, “It's ok”, and whatever he does, that's what I'm going to be doing”. You look at the life of Jesus and you see from the beginning to the end, you see a pattern of submission of will, A pattern of a wilful choice to say, “Father it's yours”.

Paul writes about it in **Philippians**, when he said “It was something that he didn't think had to be hung on to, equality with God” He didn't considerate something that he had to grasp, but rather “Made himself nothing, choosing to take on the very nature of a servant.”

Paul uses that phrase for Christians over and over again. And the question is **do you have a master?** Everybody wants a saviour; all of us want to stand before God excepting our Saviour, but Jesus asks, “Do you have a master”?

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Romans 10:9+10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth, **“Jesus is Lord,”** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved”.

Paul says, “That the confession of faith is not simply that Jesus was God’s son, it’s not simply that Jesus died, and was buried and resurrected”. The confession that Paul says God wants to hear from your lips is not simply, “Oh Jesus, I believe in you” But the confession that **“Jesus, you are Lord,”** not just you’re God’s son and you’re wonderful but **your Lord,**

Because when I say the word, **“Lord”**, I’m not only defining who he is, it’s defining who I am. You can’t say **“Lord”** without saying **“I’m your servant, I’m your subject”**. You can’t call him **“The king”** without saying, **“I am one of your yours”**.

If he’s the Father who are we? The children. If he’s the king who are we? Were the subjects. If he’s the master who are we? OOOH slave, servant.

Those are terms we aren’t used to; I’m not even comfortable with that, somebody calling me a slave. Somewhere along the line our Christianity has squeezed a little bit of that out of the gospel. We like this freedom of choice stuff. We like to have it your way commercials, that’s why we buy our burgers there. We like that and when we see a rule we don’t like, we almost figure it’s our right to find a way a round it.

2 guys were walking their dogs, one had a collie, and the other had a cheewowa, They walked down the street to a new restaurant that they thought they might try out. But when they got there, there was a sign that said, **“No pets allowed.”** They looked at one another and thought we’ve walked all this way for nothing. One them said, **“No we haven’t”**, He reached into his pocket and got out a pair of sunglasses and put them on, And said to his friend, **“Watch this!”** He walked in with his collie and pretended to be blind, And the owner said, **“Come on in sir”**, read him the menu and served him his meal.

The other guy with the cheewowa thought, **“Well, that ought to work for me”**. So he put on his sunglasses and walked into the restaurant. The owner said, **“Hey, no pets allowed,” “Outside”**. The man said, **“Sir, this is my Seeing Eye dog”**. And the owner laughed and said, **“A cheewowa”** And the guy just said, **“They gave me a cheewowa!”**

I am one of those people who says to my wife Helen, **“It’s ok Helen, that line says, “it’s only if you have 8 items”, you hold 8 and I’ll hold 8 then we can go through”**. Helen says to me, **“That says cash only”** and I’ll say, **“Well, a cheque is like cash isn’t it?”** Surely we can go this way, but the sign says, **“Go that way”**

Isn’t it our nature to say, **“Please don’t tell me what to do”**. Could that be why we get upset in church when Jesus says, **“Don’t do that, do this, don’t touch that woman your not married to her, don’t get involved with that, that’s unethical, don’t you speak that way to him, that’s gossip”**.

We say, **“Hey Jesus, come on now, I come to this church by choice” “I choose to come here, aren’t you happy I’m here?”** And my Lord says, **“Let me make it plain”**. **“I’m the Lord and your not and if you don’t like it, there is the backdoor”**

So what happened to, Jesus meek and gentle? Is that the same Lord who said to the man, **“Let the dead bury the dead, you go and preach the gospel.”** Part of it is just that you and I are not used to the concept of slavery. The problem is, the bible is full of it.

The Israelites understood the bondage of slavery, God allowed that, He never said it was good or right but he allowed them to go under the Egyptian lash. In the New Testament, Christians walked down the streets side by side with slaves and when Paul stood up to begin a sermon and spoke of being a slave of Jesus Christ, it wasn’t a Medefor, it was a real life thing.

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Let me show you **2** principles about what it means to be a slave of Jesus Christ. Let’s go all the back to the understanding of a slave in the olden days. Let’s imagine that were in Jerusalem at the slave market.

(Volunteer.)

How do you become a slave? Well you could become a slave **1** of **3** ways. **1.** Your father was a slave and if his dad was a slave and he was born into that family, he was the owner’s property, the owner could sell him and do what ever he wants with him.

2. Maybe he was a thief who stole money and under Jewish or even Roman law, if you stole and could not pay back, then they can take you as a slave.

3. Maybe he was a murderer, but instead of killing him, they would decide to give him to the victim’s family and the family could take him or sell him or do what ever they liked.

So whatever reason, a slave has no rights what so ever, He was a piece of property, His masters owned him. And at the slave market they would auction them off. **(Auction slave off for shekels.)** Then someone would buy them for so many shekels and now the slave belongs to him. Imagine when the slave’s new master takes him home.

Who is going to supply a bed for the slave? (Master.) His master is going to supply a place for him to sleep. **In the morning where is the slave going to get food from? (Master.)** The slave doesn’t have any food with him, so his master has to feed him. The master has to feed and clothe and provide a place for his slave to sleep. The slave depended completely on the master for his life. He had nothing if the master did not provide it for him.

That meant that the slave didn’t worry because he simply depended on the master. **How about you?** You see, when we come to Jesus were supposed to stop worrying about things. Jesus said, **“Don’t worry, don’t worry”** We say, **“Well, what about this? What about that?”** You see the Christian slave said, **“Well, I’ll just trust my master”**.

When something good happens, what do we say? **“Thank you.”** we ought to say, **“Well, it is all down to my master”**. You see, when I belong to the Lord, I’m not worrying but I’m not taking the credit either. Because the master gives me life, I depend on my master for life, eternal life, day-to-day life; everything I have comes from the master.

Principle No 1. The master gives the servant life. **Principle No 2** is, No matter what the master said the slave had to do it. **(Press-ups and push-ups etc.)** The master has given you life and he also has the right to give you law. **What about a servant who refuses to obey? What about a servant who says, “You know I’m tired of you telling me what to do” “I’ve had it up to here with your laws!”**

There was a young man watching his favourite film on television one night and his dad came in and just turned the T.V off. There was only 10 minutes before the end and he just came in and said, **“What are you doing still up?” “Get to bed”** So the young man got up and said, **“Dad there’s only 10 minutes left!”** And the young man turned the T.V back on. His dad said, **“I said go to bed now”**, then turned the T.V back off. His dad said, **“Now”** The young man said, **“Fine, I can’t wait until I’m old enough to get out of here so that I can watch T.V for as late as I want to”**. His dad shrugged his shoulders and walked out of the room. The young man switched the T.V back on and finished watching his programme.

He switched the T.V back off and thought to himself, **“At last, I’m finally getting through to the old man”**. But when the young man went into his bedroom, he found his dad with a suitcase on the bed, starting to pack some socks. The young man said, **“What are you doing dad?”** His dad said, **“How many pairs of socks do you want with you?”** The young man said, **“I was just kidding, can’t you take a joke?”** He said, **“Dad, if you would just back off with some of you rules, I would be willing to stay”**. His dad said, **“As long as I put the bed underneath you that you sleep on, Put clothes on your back, as long as I put a roof over your head,**

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as long as I put food on the table, as long as you live in my house, you will obey my rules” The young man said, “That sounds fair, that’s reasonable.”

It’s funny how we can understand it that way, than we can with God. Who says to us, “I will give you life eternal, forever and everlasting, I will give you peace and joy and hope” But let me make it clear to you, if you want to live in my house, then you must follow my rules”. He says, “It’s very simple, I love you, I’ll give you grace when you stumble and fall”, And when I say, “10 sit ups and you can only do 5 and when I say, 20 push ups and you can barely do 3”, He says, “I understand but I will not change my rules”.

Turn the other cheek means turn the other cheek. Tell the truth means tell the truth. Be faithful means be faithful. Because on judgement day the only people that will walk through the pearly gates are those who respond to, “Enter ye in, you good and faithful what?” “Servant”.

There is a section in Deuteronomy, which describes a special rule. Deuteronomy 15:12-17, If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. But if your servant says to you, "I do not want to leave you," because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, then take an awl and push it through his ear lobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your maidservant.”

In Deuteronomy 15:12 it says, “That on occasion a Hebrew would end up purchasing a fellow Hebrew as a slave.” Deuteronomy 15:12, “If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free.”

Can you imagine for a moment that you are a Hebrew and you have served me for 6 years? And congratulations ????????, it’s your 7th year, you’ve served me and now you are free to go. However, **(Get the volunteer to read Deuteronomy 15:13), (Repeat.)**

If I was to give you £5 the Lord would say, “Is this supplying him liberally? **No**. Liberally is saying, “Here is a blank cheque, here is the keys to a brand new car for you which is parked outside and there is a holiday villa which is yours waiting in Hawaii”. You’ve just gone from being a slave with nothing, to having a charge account, a car, and a place to live. I have supplied you liberally now.

Now any slave is saying, “This is my lucky day”. Most slaves would say, “Thankyou very much” When the master says, “Ok, it’s all yours, you’re free to go”. As the slave begins to go, he turns, and says, “**I don’t want to go**”. Deuteronomy 15:16 says, When the servant says, “You know what master, I appreciate all of this but I’d rather stay, you take care of me, you give me life, I don’t have to worry, can I stay?” The scripture says, “If he says that, then you take him to the door post of your house”.

The reason you would go to the doorpost is because there is a strong piece of wood and then you take an awl, which is a metal object used to poke holes in leather. You would take his ear and you take a hammer and you would drive it through his ear, **piercing his ear**. And in that hole you would hang something from it, which probably had his master’s name on it. And “**For the rest of their life, they were your servant.**”

Now Christianity is not a matter of loosing your free will. It’s not a matter of grabbing Jesus and saying, “Your mine” It’s a matter of Jesus saying, “Your free, the worlds out there, go and do as you like”. And us coming and saying, ”Master, we would rather be a servant in the house of the Lord than go out and live a free man without God”.

Let me finish by saying this. As always we have had a hard time following the rules. Jesus says, “It just sheep and goats, sheep and shepherd”. But when the master says, “Come” the sheep that are his obey. Remember that the servant who obeys his master will go home with him to live forever.