

## SLAVERY THAT'S GOOD

I know of no people in this country that would condone or sanction the slavery of other people. Yet, according to the word of God, there is a time in which slavery is good. There are two Greek words that are translated "servant" in our English New Testament. First, there is the word "diakonos" which is defined as one who renders service to another. It is the word used for the office of a deacon (I Tim. 3:8-13). It is also translated "minister" on occasion (Rom. 13:4). Now certainly no child of God could find fault in one being a servant to the Lord in doing the work of a Christian.

Yet, there is a second word that is often translated "servant" that we wish to consider. The Greek word is "doulos" and is defined as a slave. It is the word that the apostle Paul often used in reference to himself (Rom. 1:1) and is used a number of other times (Philemon 16; II Tim. 2:24). One of the major differences between a mere servant and a slave is that of ownership. The slave belongs to his or her master.

The apostle Paul wrote, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit" (I Cor. 6:19-20). In the next chapter we read, "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (slave). Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:22-23). It is not until we truly understand the price that was paid to purchase us that we begin to understand the concept of being a slave to the Lord. Paul told the Ephesian elders, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Peter wrote, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19).

It's not until we really realize the price that was paid for our souls and that we no longer belong to ourselves but to He who paid that price that we will understand what it means to be a servant (slave) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Then we will have entered into a slavery that is not only good, but wonderful.

*Robert*

## ARE YOU PECULIAR?

Often we think of one that is said to be peculiar as somewhat an oddball, being weird in some way. However, the dictionary defines the word "peculiar" as "standing apart from others; distinct and particular, exclusive, unique, belonging distinctively or primarily to one person, group, or kind" (American Heritage Dictionary).

The apostle Peter wrote to Christians scattered over Asia Minor and said, "*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...*" (1 Pet. 2:9). It is indeed true that as Christians we have to live in this world. It is indeed true that we can't help coming in contact with the sins of the world for in order to do so, "...then must ye needs to out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:10).

The answer to this problem is that though we must live in this world and be in contact with the sins of this world, we must not allow ourselves to become conformed to this world. The apostle Paul, the prolific penman of the book of Romans said, "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (Rom. 12:2). True and faithful Christians will stand out as an example of Christ-likeness.

Our minds eye needs to be locked on things eternal with the material things coming only secondarily. "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set you affection on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:1-2).

Trials, tribulations, temptations and persecutions will come! "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man...*" (1 Cor. 10:13). "*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution*". I heard an old preacher once say, "you can't stop the bird of temptation from landing on your head, but you don't have to let him make a nest there".

It may not be easy to live the faithful Christian life. That's why it's called the "strait" (difficult) way (Matt. 7:13), but it will be worth it all in the end (Rom. 8:18). Go ahead, be peculiar. Be one that stands apart, one that is distinctive, unique and one of the ones belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what God requires of you.

Robert