

THE LAST WEEK OF THE LORD JESUS ON EARTH
IVλ. Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching (cont.)

Jesus Proclaims Truth (Part 22^b) First Watch c. 7:50 P.M. Wednesday, 12th Nisán (April 1), A.D. 33. Lesson: **The Parable of the Faithful, Prudent, and the Evil Bondslaves** (cont.) (Mt. 24:45-51; Lk. 12:42-48).

Introduction: Having examined the Lessons that The Lord Jesus taught in The Temple to the multitude and His disciples during the day on Wednesday, we then considered:

I. His exit from The Temple (c. 6:30 P.M.) and

II. His prophetic teaching on the journey up to and upon The Mount of Olives (c. 6:30 P.M.).

A-F. The Lord Jesus answered the disciples three questions concerning when and what signs His disciples were to look for to indicate the Time of His Return To Earth to set up His Kingdom. He then told The Parable of The Fig Tree followed by a description of the Conditions on Earth which shall prevail before The Son of the (Hu)Man Returns to Earth. The fourth Prevailing Behavior Reveals Laxity of Stewardship (c. 6:40-7:30 P.M.). All that we have and are was purchased by The Lord Jesus Christ by His paying the debt of Sin for us on the cross of Calvary, which every human owed. Therefore our bodies, souls, and spirits and every possession of ours was purchased by Him to use as He intends. But He will not force anyone to surrender it. It must be voluntarily surrendered to Him.

G. The Parable of the Faithful, Prudent, and the Evil Bondslaves c. 7:50 P.M. (Mt. 24:45-51).

In this parable The Lord Jesus proceeded from instructing His disciples concerning His Return or Coming-Presence as Son of The (Hu)Man (Mt. 24:27,30,39; Mk. 13:26; Lk. 21:27) for His Disciples to His Return in relationship to them as Lord and Master over His bondslave-servants (Mt. 24:45; Mk. 13:34). But in order for us to better understand the full significance of this parable and properly apply it to us in the twenty-first century, a brief lexical analysis concerning the word translated as 'servant' was considered. In the older translations 'servant' is the translation of six Greek nouns, each with its own meaning. However to simply use the word 'servant' for these meanings, without supplying the type of servant that is indicated in the original manuscripts thus giving the complete significance of the different types of service performed by each, leaves too much latitude for application to the reader and leads to a corruption of The Truth intended by The Holy Spirit and the writer. This is one reason that The God chose the Greek language to communicate His Truth to mankind. The most often used noun is *δοῦλος* (dóulohs) meaning 'bondslave,' yet has been translated 'bond' and only in contrast to 'free' six times and 'bondman' only once, while translated 'servant' 112 times in the Authorized Version. It was noted that the Greek noun in this parable is *δοῦλος* (dóulohs) yet translated 'servant.'

To properly understand the significance and apply the principle of this parable, it is absolutely necessary to reflect on the use and function of slavery in the the history and culture of Israel and the usage of the term in The New Testament and not by slavery in the culture of America or Rome expressed in American History or Roman History. Although slavery was permitted by The God in Israel, it was greatly restricted under the Old Testament Law (Lev. 25:35-55), specified by Moses on Mt. Sinai. This Law given by

Moses permitted Israelites to have both male and female Gentile bondslaves forever (Lev. 25:46), but permitted Israelites to serve Israelites only as hired servants but not for more than fifty years or less except by a relative repaying the debt that was incurred. Bondslavery was governed by certain restrictions because Israelites are The God's bondslaves purchased by redemption out of Egypt (Lev. 25:42,55 cf. Ex. 6:6,7). Therefore if an Israelite, who has fallen into poverty and becomes servant to another Israelite, must not be compelled to serve as a bondsman, but as an hired servant (Lev. 25:39-42).

At the time that The **LORD** God gave The Ten Commandments to Moses for Israel on the third month after The Exodus, He also gave a list of 27 judgments (Ex. 21:1-23:33), the first of which concerned the limitation of length of service of an Hebrew servant, bought out of necessity, who came into service by himself. After he served six years, he, must be released in the seventh year and could go out by himself. But if he acquired a wife and children during those years, they must remain behind to serve the Hebrew master.

But if he desired to remain, he must publicly say I love my master, my wife, and my children and will not go free. Then before the judges stand before the door or door post, and have his master bore a hole his ear with an awl, but he did not wear an earring. The hole in his one ear, indicated that he was a loving, voluntary bondsman with his ear attentive to hear and do all his master's will and bidding forever and therefore depended upon his master for all his and his family's physical, material, and subsistence needs. Then, with his body marked, he would be identified to serve his master forever as a bondsman to an earthly master (Ex. 21:6). This would serve to confine him to the locality of his master.

Thus by this it can be seen that the Scriptural meaning of pierced ears is that the one whose ears are pierced is a bondsman to a human but not to the One true God. Earrings in pierced ears in the Scriptural sense indicate idolatry or bondage to sin and false gods. However, pierced ears that do not have earrings, but scars indicate that though that person was once a bondsman to sin, but now through an understanding of the true relationship to The God, that person is a bondsman to The Lord Jesus Christ with ears open to hear His voice and himself or herself ready to obey Him and do His will as indicated throughout Scripture.

In all Scripture this is the only marking on the body of His children that The God ordered **and permits** (Lev. 19:19a, 27, 28, 37). This judgment does not pertain to one who is not redeemed and regenerated. What one puts on his or her own body and what one does with that body is very important because the body may be defiled without knowing it. The God created the human body to glorify Him, The Almighty God. He made us in His image and likeness. Satan has attempted and succeeded in corrupting the human concept of how to honor The God and how to honor and preserve everything which The God created good and beautiful. Consequently, since this concept has been corrupted, all creation has been corrupted through Sin. Some have corrupted, defiled, marred, or disguised their bodies so that The God's likeness is changed or corrupted and can no longer be seen. Paul exhorted the Corinthian saints to glorify The God both in body and in spirit (1 Cor. 6:19:20).

“¹⁹Or, you& are aware, are you& not? The body of yours& is a ⁰Holy Place[^{of The Temple}] of ⁰Holy Spirit Who ^{lis} in you&, Whom you& continually have from ⁰God; and, You& continually are not belonging to yourselves, ²⁰for you& are redeemed[bought in a slave marketplace] with a highly respected precious price. Accordingly glorify[^{exalt with majestic radiance}] The God in the body of yours& and in the spirit of yours&, whichever& are The God’s!” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20 APT).

Another reason for keeping the body pure, clean, and unmarked is that upon redemption and regeneration, the body becomes the personal property of The Godhead, i.e. The Father **and** The Son **and** The Holy Spirit. As well the body becomes The Holy Place of The Temple of, or constant dwelling-place of The Holy Spirit. To defile the body physically or morally is to grieve The Holy Spirit who abides within the regenerated person. When The Holy Spirit is grieved, The whole Godhead is grieved, The Father and The Son as well as The Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).

“³⁰And stop grieving The Holy ⁰Spirit of The God by-means-of-Whom& you-became-sealed[^{as-a-guarantee cf. 1:13,14}]” (Eph. 4:30).

My experience of grieving The Holy Spirit is as follows. The immediate result of His being grieved is that He pricks the heart so that one realizes that the action was displeasing to The Godhead. If there is not immediate repentance and confession, He withdraws and becomes quiet and waits for your reaction to His silence. After waiting for a short while without response, He provides unpleasant experiences that accumulate until repentance and confession transpire.

The above should serve as a background of bondslavery in Bible times and restrictions which Scripture placed upon it and enable us to understand how The God views it. He plainly indicated that every human is a bondslave, either to Satan and Sin or to The True God, His Son, and Righteousness voluntarily. And such condition is Eternal unless a human decides and voluntarily chooses to cease being controlled by Satan and Sin and exchanges the old master to become a bondslave to The only True God and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ to serve Him faithfully for ever. This Truth that every human is a bondslave to either Satan, Sin, and unrighteous disobedience to The God, or to The True God, His Son, and Righteousness voluntarily unto complete obedience (Rom. 6:13-22).

“¹³In fact stop[^{present negative imperative}] habitually offering[^{lit., lit.: to stand alongside, to present}] the members of-yours& as-weapons[^{war implements}] of-unrighteousness for-the [^{dative of advantage}] Sin! But-on-the-contrary [aorist imperative]offer-yourselves-at-once as-sacrifices to-The God, as ones-Absolutely-Living&+ out-of ⁰dead-ones and the members of-yours& as-weapons[^{war implements}] of-Righteousness for-The[^{dative of advantage}] God! ¹⁴For ⁰Sin shall not-exercise-lordship over-you&. For &you-are not under-¹the-rule-of ⁰law, but-on-the-contrary under-¹the-rule-of ⁰grace. ¹⁵What then? Should we-habitually-sin, because we-are not under-¹the-rule-of ⁰law, but[^{on the contrary}] under-¹the-rule-of ⁰grace? May-it- never -be! ¹⁶&You-are-aware, are-you& not? That to-whom you-yield yourselves bondslaves unto obedience, &you-are bondslaves to-whom &you-are-habitually-obeying, either[^{restrictive, one of two; this first naturally}] to-Sin unto death, or to-obedience unto Righteousness? ¹⁷But gratitude ^{be} to-The

God! Because &you- were-persistently ⁰bondslaves to-the Sin, but &you-obeyed out-of ⁰heart in-regard-to which-type-of-doctrine &you-were-delivered. ¹⁸Then since-ones-being-freed-from-bondage away-from the Sin, &you-became-enslaved to-The Righteousness. ¹⁹I-speak^[say] humanly because-of-the chronic-infirmity of-the flesh of-yours&. For even-as ^[constant aorist 2]&you-offered^[t.t., lit.: to-stand-alongside, to-present] as-sacrifices your& /members as-bondslaves to-the uncleanness and to-the lawlessness, unto the lawlessness, in-this-way now^[t.t., lit.: to-stand-alongside, to-present] offer-at-once as-sacrifices the members-of-yours& as-bondslaves to-The Righteousness, unto sanctification^[separated-unto-a-holy-relationship-with-The-God]. ²⁰For when &you-continually-were ⁰bondslaves to-the Sin, &you-continually-were ones-free-from-bondage to-The Righteousness. ²¹Therefore what fruit &were-you-customarily-having at-that-time by-means-of which-things now &you-are-being-utterly-ashamed? For the end of-those-things, death! ²²But even-now, since-being-freed-ones-from-bondage away-from the Sin but enslaved-ones to-The God, &you-are-customarily-having the-fruit of-yours& unto sanctification^[separated unto a holy relationship with The God]? (Rom. 6:13-22 APT).

Thus Paul distinctly made it clear to The saints at Rome and everywhere else that we can only serve Sin, Satan, and Unrighteousness unto disobedience, **or** The God, The Lord Jesus Christ, and Righteousness in total obedience, one or the other and **not** sometimes one and some times the other. Jesus made it very clear that humans can serve only one master (Mt. 6:24).

Now consider The Parable of the Faithful, Prudent, and the Evil Bondslaves which The Lord Jesus told to His disciples at the close of that Wednesday evening before being crucified on Friday.

1. The Faithful Prudent Bondslave (Mt. 24:45-47).

a. His Appraisal: Faithful and Prudent.

(1) Faithful.

There are two aspects of faithfulness:

- (A) True and consistent in affection, allegiance, and loyalty to the one to whom he or she is bound by means of love, thankfulness, respect, and high esteem;
- (B) Stable and thorough in performance of duty.

(2) Prudent.

There are three aspects of being prudent:

- (A) Circumspect in action;
- (B) Practically frugal;
- (C) Economically discreet.

b. His Approval for His Position as steward.

The bondslave must first prove that he exercises these qualities before receiving the higher appointment by his master. This bondslave has labored before his master's careful observance for years and has proven to be obedient, faithful, loyal, and qualified to be a steward. He had gained his master's trust and approval and was promoted to steward.

Have we, you and I been faithful in stewardship for some time and proved worthy of greater trust and so qualified for promotion to a higher level of service and trust by The Lord Jesus Christ?

(3) His Appointment to His Position.

Before his master departed on a trip he appointed his

bondslaves to their various positions and to this one to be the steward of his possessions, including the other bondslaves, having trained in many areas of responsibility at the direction of his master. But now as steward he is in full charge over all, to see that his master's business in his master's absence is carried on as his master did before his departure. He is responsible to see that all the household-servants and bondslaves receive their nourishment in due-time and not suffer because of his negligence or slack in his stewardship and duty. He persists in fulfilling his trust and loyalty in stewardship true to the end even in the delay of his master's return. Are you and I as faithful of seeing that The Lord's missionary bondslaves receive their portion of sustenance and nourishment in due time true to the end? When The Lord Jesus Christ returns in the air to take us to Heaven will we be counted as faithful and prudent bondslaves?

2. The Evil Bondslave (Mt. 24:48-51).
 - a. The Lord Jesus mentioned three areas of failure by The Evil Bondslave:
 - (A) He Discredited his Master in his Heart (Mt. 24:48). He began to say in his heart, 'My lord is delaying to come.' Then he reversed his direction and went directly in the opposite direction, disregarding his responsibilities.
 - (B) He Denied his Appointed Duty.
 - (C) He Began Beating his Fellow Bondslaves and Reveling with the Drunken (Mt. 28:49).
 - b. His Ultimate Surprise (Mt. 24:50,51).
 - (A) When he least expected it, his lord arrived (Mt. 24:50).
 - (B) His punishment was three-fold (Mt. 24:51):
 - (1) He was cut in pieces while still alive;
 - (2) He was condemned to the same eternal punishment with the hypocrites;
 - (3) He spends Eternity in The Lake of Fire joining in the loud weeping and the gnashing of teeth in eternal anguish.

There were just two alternatives to the bondslaves in this parable which The Lord Jesus Christ used to illustrate and inform His disciples of the two alternatives for humans who claim to be serving Him as Master. All who claim Him to be their Master fit into one of these alternatives. Ultimately they shall prove in their lives to be either faithful and prudent bondslaves or alternatively evil bondslaves in reality to be judged as evil and sentenced to the Lake of Fire with all other hypocrites. It must be one or the other! To which category do you and I belong in reality?

It is deeply desired that not anyone reading or listening to this lesson will find it to be a reality for him or her to be treated by The Lord Jesus Christ as the evil bondslave and hypocrites were treated because of failure to heed The Truth, but proceeded on the wrong path of life to Eternity.

Conclusion: Today we studied The Parable of the Faithful, Prudent, and the Evil Bondslaves. We took time to review an abbreviated understanding of the background of bondslavery in Bible times and the restrictions which Scripture placed upon it in order to enable us to understand how The God views bondslavery. The first reason noted for not marking the body or piercing the human body is the fact that in Scripture the only

exception to prohibiting the marking of the human body is the voluntary Israelite bondsman who loves his master, his wife, and his children, who allows his master to bore a hole in his ear as a sign of his total commitment as a bondsman. We also noted that in addition to that, another reason for keeping the body pure, clean, and unmarked is that upon redemption and regeneration, the body becomes the personal property of The Godhead, i.e. The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit, and as well the body becomes The Holy Place of The Temple of, or constant dwelling-place of The Holy Spirit. How holily will you keep your body so as not to grieve The Holy Spirit?

Then we examined the parable and the two options that every human has to go into Eternity, either to continue as bondsman to Satan and Sin with evil bondsmen and hypocrites or with The God, His Son and prudent bondsmen. The choice is yours to make as to who shall be your master!

Application: Beginning today which shall be your master from now on, The God, The Lord Jesus Christ, and Righteousness in total obedience, or Satan, Sin, and unrighteousness in disobedience?

Dr. Fred Wittman

For next week: **Read and meditate upon: Jesus' Final Day of Public Teaching** (First Watch of Night c. 8:10 P.M.): **The Parable of The Ten Virgins (Look up and read: (Mt. 25:1-13).**