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Slave

2 Timothy 2:24, *And the slave of the Lord must not quarrel, but be kind toward everyone, skilful in teaching, tolerant*

- Unwavering obedience
- Gentle listener
- Patience
- Enduring Evil

In our modern-day life we are scared to use the word slave!

Unwavering obedience

John 15:14-15, *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

Jesus, at the very core and centre of all His teaching was that He is not your friend or a buddy, He is Lord.

Jesus said that both to those who believed in Him and those who did not. He is absolute sovereign Master, and He never hesitated to declare it to friends and enemies.

All who follow Jesus truly have yielded completely to His lordship.

Jesus is Lord, Kurios.

Kurios is used 747 times in the New Testament.

Just to break that down in a little smaller bite, in the book of Acts it's used 92 times.

The word *sōtēr*, saviour, is used twice. Kurios means one who has power, one who has absolute authority, one who has total right to command. The word for that is *kurios*.

The other word, which is a synonym, is *despotēs*, from which we get the English word "despot."

If we were able to come down to the finest point where these words may have a nuance of difference, we would say, as some lexicographers do, that *kurios* is sovereign Lord, which speaks of the fact that He is at the pinnacle, He is at the top.

Despotēs speaks of absolute Lord, which simply emphasizes that He is over everything and there is no other Lord.

Both words are extremely powerful words.

Both words are part of the vocabulary of slavery.

Both words are essential to the world of slavery.

Jude1:4, *For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Both words there used as synonyms.

“our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ; our only Despotēs and Kurios.”

To say Jesus is Lord is to say He is the sovereign ruler and the absolute ruler.

It is not to identify Him as deity in particular and it is certainly not limited to that. It is to acknowledge Him as absolute sovereign Ruler, Master with absolute dominion.

In the culture, to say someone is lord or ***despotēs*** means he owns slaves.

You are not the lord of no one.

You are not the absolute ruler of no one.

You are not the sovereign ruler over people who have an option.

You are not the absolute ruler over people who have an option.

Any denial of that aspect of the lordship of Jesus Christ is heresy.

The church, including all pastors, elders, deacons, and people is an assembly of those who by the power of the Holy Spirit, have confessed Jesus as Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:3, *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*

Romans 10:9, *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

That's what a church is.

Our life is not defined by our own will, wants, desires, ambitions self-conceived purposes, dreams, and hopes.

As true Christians, our lives are defined as subjected to, under the total power and control of our Lord.

That is why Jesus could say repeatedly in His invitations to follow Him, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.”

It’s over.

You give up all control. “*Take up your cross*” – that is you give up so much it could cost you even your life.

“*And you follow Me.*” That’s absolute lordship.

How has the Christendom changed so drastically?

Today people are taking a trip to heaven and having a chat with Jesus?

How are People giving so many stories about having walk with Jesus?

These are strong and bold words.

But let us make the obvious connection.

There is no such thing as a kurios without a doulos.

There is no such thing as a master without a slave.

You are not the master of nobody.

This is all part of slave language. One word axiomatically, self-evidently implies the other.

If Jesus is Lord, He has slaves.

If Jesus is Lord, then those who call Him Lord necessarily are His slaves.

He makes the obvious comment in the form of a question.

Luke 6:46, *“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”*

That is the basic understanding of the relationship between ***kurios and doulos***.

It was most defining, simple, world-dominating idea. The numbers go as stretching out into the tens of millions of slaves living in the world of that time around the Mediterranean.

They knew exactly what a **kurios/doulos** relationship was; everybody knew.

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord,’ and do not what I say?”

This is ridiculous.

If I am Lord, then you are a slave.

Christians are slaves.

The word ***doulos*** is used 130-plus times in the New Testament!

If you add **sundoulos**, slaves together with, and some verb forms, it gets up to 150 times.

1 Corinthians, 7:22-23, *For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.*

Christ's **doulos** or **douloi**, plural.

Doulos means one thing: slave. It's all it ever means.

Means nothing else.

It's not ambiguous.

It means a person owned.

It means a person with no rights, no freedom, no standing.

A slave

- could not own property,
- could not give testimony in a court of law as a witness in a case,
- could not seek reparations from a civil court of law,
- because he had no rights.
- no autonomy
- no freedom.

There are six other Greek words used in the New Testament that can be translated “servant,” six other words. Doulos is not one of those words.

The meaning of **doulos** is so unequivocal and self-contained that it is superfluous to give examples or trace its history.

“It is distinct from servant and defines someone who does not do what he does as a matter of choice but is subject totally to an alien will. He is under obligation and total dependence on his kurios.”

Unfortunately, though the word doulos always means this, and it appears 150 times in some form, 130 times as doulos in the New Testament, it is rarely ever translated “slave.”

The only time typically your English Bible – whatever version you have – will translate it slave is when it’s referring to an actual literal slave, or when it’s referring to an inanimate object like being a slave of righteousness.

When it’s used to refer to a person related to Christ, they will not translate it slave, they be evasive.

You will find the word “servant” and the sort of non-existent hybrid word “bondservant,” for which there is not Greek equivalent.

Why?

Only one of them always translated *doulos* as slave, only one, and it happened to be a somewhat obscure translation.

The **New Holman Christian Standard Bible** to be faithful to the translation of the word *doulos*. It's unequivocal in its meaning; all scholars agree.

Slavery, the word *doulos*, plain and simple, indicates that you are owned. No freedom, under the total control of an alien will. Absolute, unqualified submission to the commands of a higher authority.

Matthew 6:24, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

How many bosses do you have?

If you are talking about serving someone – if you're a waiter, you will serve however many tables are there and how many people are sitting at the table. That doesn't make any sense.

But if you translate it right, "No man can be a slave to two masters," then it makes sense, because you can't be absolutely, totally, owned by two people, only by one.

Here is the difference.

- A servant works for someone,
- A slave is owned by someone.

If you are evangelizing someone and you say to them, “I come to you in the name of Jesus Christ to tell you that He is commanding you to bow your knee to Him, confess Him as Lord, deny yourself, and become His slave.”

That is biblical evangelism.

This is what it means to follow Christ.

That’s why Jesus said, “Count the cost.”

Luke 14:25-33, *Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. ²⁸For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— ²⁹lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? ³¹Or what king, going to make war against another*

king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Think about it like a man going to build a tower.

Think about it like a man going to go to war.

Make sure that you can make the required sacrifice, because self-denial is very difficult, and self-love is very dominate.

But once you understand this concept, the whole New Testament opens up like a flower.

Then suddenly when you read, “You are not your own and bought with a price.”

Your body is not your own, your mind is not your own.

You belong to Christ!

2 Peter 2:1, *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

Any denial of the lordship of Christ is a damning thing.

Any denial of slavery on my part is a horrendous misunderstanding of what Christ asks of the sinner.

You were bought.

Acts 20:28, *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

1 Peter 1:18, *“You were bought, redeemed, not by gold or silver or precious stones, but by the blood of Christ.”*

Put yourself in the position of the early church.

They were going to go out and evangelize.

What they were up against?

They were going to preach Christ crucified, Messiah is God. Messiah as God is killed by the Jews using the Romans as the executioner. This is a very hard message for any Jew to believe, that the religious elite, studious, versed in Scripture would prompt the execution of the incarnate God and Messiah.

That’s why Paul says that this message, this preaching of the cross is to the Jews a stumbling block.

1 Corinthians 1:23, *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,*

So, you are trying to convince Jews that God died, that the Messiah died on a cross, ludicrous – killed by Gentiles.

Then you are trying to convince the Gentiles that a crucified Jew is the God of the universe and for them that is foolishness.

On top of that, you are telling both that they need to become slaves of this God!

Submit their entire lives to an alien will. Give up all their freedoms, ambitions, dreams, desires, and totally deny themselves and follow Him even to the death.

This is unimaginable in this culture.

The Bible doesn't commend slavery,
The Bible doesn't condemn slavery.
The Bible simply borrows the metaphor.

The Bible doesn't damn the institution of slavery, but it does say, 'Owners ought to treat their slaves right. Slaves ought to be faithful to their owners.'

For some people that was the best of all worlds, better than being a day labourer, especially if you had a kind master.

Jesus didn't come to abolish slavery. If He did, He failed.

The apostles didn't come to abolish slavery. If they did, they failed too, because it's still around in the world.

Jesus just borrowed the metaphor because it's so perfect. In fact, when the gospel began to move out into the world, the apostles understood it.

Peter preached it on the Day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:18, *And on My menservants and on My slaves I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*

Even on My slaves. This is God referring to His people as slaves.

Acts 4:28-29, *to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. ²⁹Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your slaves that with all boldness they may speak Your word,*

Earlier, Peter referred to the Old Testament text where God's people were called slaves there. Now Peter refers to himself as a slave. They got it, and they lived in a world of slaves that they understood it very, very well.

A slave was like a tool. You could kill your slave if you wanted to, and there were no reprisals in the course.

This crucified man is asking you to become His slave is beyond absurdity. Everybody who is free wanted to stay free. Most people who were slaves wanted to be free.

Acts 16:16-17, *Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*

She follows after Paul. This is just the kind of PR person you don't need. **douloi**.

Even the demons knew that those who belonged to Kurios, Jesus, were douloi.

They knew it from the Old Testament, Peter knew it about himself, even the demons knew it.

Of course, Paul shut her up, because that would just confuse people to have Satan supporting them.

This is how it goes.

Colossians 4:12, *Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ, greets you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Peter knew he was a doulos.

The demons know those who belong to Christ are douloi.

Paul knows Epaphras is a doulos.

2 Timothy 2:24, *And the slave of the Lord must not quarrel, but be kind toward everyone, skilful in teaching, tolerant.*

That's how we are described.

That's how we are defined.

1 Peter 2:16, *as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as slaves of God.*

Act as free men. Do not use your freedom as a covering for evil. You have been given freedom in Christ, freedom from sin, freedom to do what is right.

Again, the general statement of Peter, he recognizes he is a slave, the demons recognize those who belong to the Lord are slaves, Paul recognizes that Epaphras is a slave. Here Peter identifies all believers as slaves of God.

Revelation 1:1, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His slaves—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,*

What you have here is the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show to His slaves!

His slaves then, His slaves now, His slaves into the future, His slaves until He comes.

We are His slaves.

They were His slaves in the Old Testament.

They were His slaves in the New Testament.

They were His slaves in the book of Acts.

They were His slaves in the epistles.

They are His slaves in the book of Revelation on to the end.

We are all slaves because that is what ***kurios*** means.

Revelation 7:3, *saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the slaves of our God on their foreheads.”*

We have the 144,000 of Jews during the time of the tribulation, they are going to evangelize to the Jewish nation, and probably far beyond that, but they are slaves.

They were slaves in the Old Testament, they were slaves in the gospels, they were slaves in the Epistles, slaves in the present, slaves in the time of the tribulation.

Revelation 10:7, *but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.*

Preachers are slaves. It's not servants, it's slaves.

- Servant's work, take their money, and go home.
- Slaves are owned.

- Servants work for whoever they choose to,
- slaves are bought and work only for their master.

Revelation 19:2, *For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His slaves shed by her."*

Revelation 19:5, *Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His slaves and those who fear Him, both small and great!"*

You are going to be a slave when you get to heaven.

You are going to be a perfect slave when you get to heaven.

But you are going to be a slave.

Revelation 22:3, *And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His slaves shall serve Him.*

You are going to be a slave in heaven.

Revelation 22:6, *Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.*

You never stop being a slave, and He never stops being Lord. That's why you can identify yourself like this.

Romans 1:1, *"Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 1:1, *"Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus."*

James 1:1, *"James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Peter 1:1, *"Simon Peter, a slave."*

Jude 1:1, *"Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ."*

Revelation 1:1, *"John, a slave."*

Like when a master went into the slave market and chose a slave?

Yes!

You were bought like when the master paid the price for the slave,

- ✓ you were owned,
- ✓ you were subjected,
- ✓ you were dependent,
- ✓ you were disciplined,
- ✓ you were called to account,
- ✓ you were evaluated,
- ✓ you were also protected,
- ✓ you were provided for, and
- ✓ you are rewarded.

That's all-slave talk.

Changes the whole paradigm of one's relationship to Jesus Christ. The gospel is a call to slavery, and you just must decide whether you would rather be a slave to Jesus Christ or the devil.

John 15:10, "Keep My commandments."

John 15:12, "This is My commandment."

John 15:14, "You do what I command."

All commanding, and that's slave talk.

John 15:17, "This I command you."

The fundamental issue in slavery is obedience, submission.

John 15:14-15, *You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.*

I call you friends.

Paul asked Philemon to do when Onesimus went back, to embrace him as a friend and brother.

Philemon 1:15-18, *For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever, ¹⁶no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. ¹⁷If then you count me as a partner, receive him as you would me. ¹⁸But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account.*

You don't owe the slave any information.

But among the slaves there would be slaves who became aware of to the master's intentions and motivation. They got on the inside, they got to know his heart, and they needed to know why he did what he did. The master needed to tell somebody that, and there were slaves that became friends.

The distinction was you were a friend when you knew why he was doing what he was doing.

Why?

for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Caesar an illustration.

Caesar was the lord over everybody, but there were people in the life of Caesar who were close to him, who were confidants of him, who necessarily had to have a fuller explanation for the things that were in the heart of their leader in order for them to do their job well.

There were men who were drawn to intimate affection and friendship because they held things in common, because they were attracted to each other's wisdom. Caesar was always Caesar, but there were among those over whom he had absolute authority, those who also knew his intimate motives. This is just magnificent.

Obedience does not make you Jesus' friend, obedience proves you are His friend, because you can't be obedient unless you know His intentions. We are slaves, no question.

But we are slaves who have become the most intimate friends because He's told us everything.

1 Corinthians 2:16, *For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?” But we have the mind of Christ.*

You have the mind of Christ.

I know how He thinks.

I know what He wants me to do, but I know why He wants me to do it.

I know.

Ask me what His motives are, I will tell you. All have been revealed.

The lordship controversy with its silly notions of Christ as Saviour and not Lord, with the silly kind of “come to Christ now and consecrate later” idea I think would have been a far less acceptable, far less influential.

Consider what this truth would mean for the prosperity gospel: It disappears in a cloud of smoke.

Or the market-driven philosophy that appeals to people at the level of their fallenness and promises to give them what they lust for in their unredeemed condition,

Or the “your best life now.”

Or the postmodern concept of truth, which means you get to define it the way you want.

Or the Jesus that's your personal Jesus. They are just absolutely obliterated by the **kurios doulos** relationship.

- ✓ He is Master!
- ✓ I am His slave.

But I am not just a slave, I am a friend, and He is a perfect Master.

- ✓ Perfectly wise,
- ✓ Perfectly compassionate,
- ✓ Perfectly kind,
- ✓ Endlessly generous.
- ✓ But He is my Master.
- ✓ He alone provides all I need.
- ✓ He is my only protector.

In the spiritual realm I only have one protector.
My Lord is my protector.

I have only one provider.
My God supplies all my needs.

Christ is my protector in that no one can lay any charge to the elect, and it is Christ that justifies.

He is my Great High Priest who intercedes for me.
His is my discipliner.

Every branch He prunes and purges.
Every son He scourges.

He is my rewarder. One day I will become a joint heir with Christ and I will take my place seated with Him on His throne. I can deal with a Master like this.

Philippians 2:3-11, *Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. ⁴Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, ⁶who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. ⁷Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, ⁸He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even to death on a cross. ⁹For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth— ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Every knee should bow of those who are in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and every tongue to confess that Jesus Christ is “Lord.”

Are you confused?

I thought we were sons.

We are sons.

We are also branches.

We are also a bride.

But you don't mix all the metaphors.

Slavery's talking about one thing!

Luke 17:7-11, *"Which one of you having a slave tending sheep or ploughing will say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? ⁸Instead, will he not tell him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, get ready, and serve me while I eat and drink; later you can eat and drink'? ⁹Does he thank that slave because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰In the same way, when you have done all that you were commanded, you should say, 'We are good-for-nothing slaves; we've only done our duty.'"*

