

Matthew 6:24: No-one can serve two masters (Part 1)

**24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**

Last week we talked about how easily we depart from the path of light that God has marked out for us, going out into the darkness to chase our own \_\_\_\_\_. We chase after fireflies; other supposed light-bearers. And, if fireflies are the only light you’re willing to see, it’s going to look attractive to you. But compared to the brilliance of the sun, the firefly’s light is darkness. In the words of John the beloved, in 1<sup>st</sup> John 5b to 7 5 **God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**“No one can serve two masters;**

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the possibility of truly serving both God and worldly passions. Serving two bosses is difficult; serving two Masters is impossible. The key lies in the words *serve* and *master*.

### **To Serve**

The Greek for **Serve** is douleuo from doulos, slave, and it means to serve as a slave, to be in \_\_\_\_\_. It means to act or conduct oneself as one in total \_\_\_\_\_ to another. In the Roman empire from 10-40% of the population were slaves. The Bible concerns itself not with telling Christians to \_\_\_\_\_ and get out of slavery, about making sure that we are serving the right Master (see 1 Tim 6:12, Col 3:22-23 Eph 6:5-9 and 1 Peter 2:18-19. Why is God spending so much time telling slaves to \_\_\_\_\_ their Masters, and work diligently for them, as unto the Lord? Because many Christians were slaves. And the Romans had the idea that a slave was \_\_\_\_\_ in character, and was automatically untrustworthy. So by acting as Christians should, they surprised their masters by their \_\_\_\_\_ in behavior, and brought some of them to \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ. But these verses are there for a reason. God is using the reality of slavery in their society that all of them were familiar with to illustrate our proper \_\_\_\_\_ to the God we serve. We are completely His!

Romans 6:6-7 **6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for the one who has died is freed from sin.** God has trusted them with the mission of serving God in sometimes horrible circumstances, but they also knew that their hope was only in God in a way that we struggle with truly applying to our lives. Those who were still slaves knew that they did not want to be slaves to sin. And those who had been freed wanted no part of further slavery to sin. And they knew what it was to truly serve God from a deep yearning inside, from the Spirit, as in Romans 7:6 **6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.** They were much less likely to have idols in their lives, because they knew intimately what \_\_\_\_\_ felt like, and wanted no part of idolatry, once they realized that God offers them freedom to serve Him. **1 Thess 1:9 9 For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, Master**

We have such a difficult time getting this, because we, as modern Americans don’t understand what it’s like to have a Master. The word is kurios (2962) from kuros = might or power) The word is used over 7000 times in the Septuagint Greek OT and Greek NT. The main sense of kurios is that of a \_\_\_\_\_ one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power.

The master demands total \_\_\_\_\_ from his servants! God must be the undisputed, unchallenged master of our lives. Paul made this very clear to us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 **19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.** Our attitude is not supposed to be "What do I want to do with my life?" Instead, we should ask, "What does the Lord want me to do?" We have no time which is our own. We can't say "I will do what God wants me to do," only when the mood strikes us, and all the other times say "I'll do my own thing today." We need to understand that a Christian has no time off from being a Christian!

**for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.**

The master of our heart may be rightly defined as the chief \_\_\_\_\_ that reigns over it. We truly serve only that which we love supremely. A "man of the world" cannot truly be a Citizen of the Kingdom. He who gives his heart to the world robs God of it.

Probably the best illustration of how it feels for a Christian to struggle against his flesh and how miserable it is to try to serve to masters is given to us by Paul.

As Paul struggled to crucify the flesh, like David, he did us the great service of \_\_\_\_\_ it down. Paul discusses this internal conflict in Romans 7: 14-25. Don't you hear the \_\_\_\_\_ that he is in? Don't you hear the struggle against the flesh in his words? And it's the same \_\_\_\_\_ that we fight every day. Galatians 5:24 **And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** If you choose not to \_\_\_\_\_ against the flesh as a Christian, you're going to find that you start resenting God for the struggle that you're in. If you refuse to crucify the flesh, you're going to start despising Him for your lack of victory, and you'll find that you begin to refuse to give God His proper place as Lord of your life.

Our minds must be fixed only upon God, made possible by Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ work on the Cross, and enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit within us, obeying God only in service to Him. Our hearts must be given to the Lord, wholly or without reserve, and the eyes of our soul be fixed upon Him alone. And so, we see the reason why the spiritual blindness that we talked about last week is \_\_\_\_\_, unless our eyes are fixed steadfastly on God: our heart cannot be divided; if we attempt to love the things of the world as well as love God, he will certainly fail to love God because, as James tells us in 4:4 **4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says to no purpose, "He jealously desires the Spirit whom He has made to dwell in us"?** As it says in Psalm 123:1-2 **To You I have raised my eyes, You who are enthroned in the heavens! 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master.**

But, if we will submit to God, we will see \_\_\_\_\_. We will overcome, because you have the Holy Spirit within you. And, according to 1 John 4:4-6 **4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.** As Paul reminds us in Gal 5:16 **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** Walking in the Spirit will give us victory. And, it takes effort on our part to fight against the flesh and walk in the Spirit. God will always help us, but we have freewill and we must as James reminds us in 4:7-8 **7 Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God and He will come close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**