Good Morning!

“It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.” Deuteronomy 15:16-17

Yesterday we talked about the attitude necessary for kingdom living. People sometimes become desolate and need to attach themselves to a master for the first six years of the seven year Hebrew cycle of years. The master is to treat them as brothers and sisters and not as less than equals. “When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat.” This is not just being gracious with your goods. It is also being gracious with your attitude towards them. “You shall give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you.” Throughout Deuteronomy, the LORD has promised blessings to the nation as they follow Him. Here is just another way to follow Him: to be generous as He is generous.

In the midst of this is an odd sort of statement about the servant who doesn’t want to go. Who would not want his or her freedom especially if you are going to be, “furnished liberally?” The relationship between the two must be more than just affection. This is not just friendship, because you can be good friends with neighbors. It is not just convenience of work, because you can hire yourself to work for nice people and not become their slave! This is going from being a 6-year-servant to becoming a permanent slave!

Legally, it is a role you cannot reverse. Physically, you wear the mark of a slave for the rest of your life. Socially, you have attached yourself to someone so closely that you identify as his.

In exodus through Deuteronomy, the LORD is planning for each person to have their own family and then their own inheritance of property and this will continue forever. To be a slave instead runs cross purposes to the LORD’s intent. Why is He allowing this here?

To move from free to slave of another man at your own insistence is to decide some important things. First, this man is worthy of being his servant. This master has a character that you can trust, not just now, but forever. You understand you will be safe in his care. He will prosper, and he will provide for you as you cannot provide for yourself. You want to be part of his prospering. You want to be known now and forever by his name.

I think that at this point you know where we are going with this one. This so pictures our relationship with the LORD above, that He allowed it in ancient Israel. Oh, and know that no free man or woman ever attached themselves to a master except they did it with joy. They entered into this relationship with anticipation of their future and they did it with joy.

We do not follow Deuteronomy with seven year cycles or Jubilee years or marking of salves with awls at the door post. We do learn from what the LORD has told us how He thinks, what is important to Him, and how we are to best follow Him.

In Christ our Master

Pastor EA