

## I Timothy 6, Sermon #1

I Timothy 6 – the theme of I Timothy – sound doctrine for church conduct

Chapters 5 & 6 – special groups in the church

Chapter 5 – General treatment of one another (vs. 1-2). We are to treat each other like:

Family – vs. 1-2

Widows – vs. 3-16 – those in need

Elders – vs. 17-25

And now, in Chapter 6:1 – slaves – quick overview of Chapter 6 – three groups of people:

1. Vs. 1-2 – slaves

2. Vs. 3-8 – false teacher

3. Vs. 9-17 – those who want to be rich and those who are wealthy people

I have entitled today's sermon "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

I Timothy 6:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 6:1-8

Let us pray

You may be seated.

## Uncle Tom's Cabin

Vs. 1 and 2 – speak to the slaves in their work relationships regarding their masters

Vs. 2 – special category of slaves – those that have Christian masters

We are not slaves and we do not own slaves, so this teaching for us extends into our employee-employer relationships.

Whatever Paul says for a slave would have double weight for an employee—for someone who is working for a paycheck.

There is not a much more volatile subject than the subject of work relationships

70 percent of American workers do not like their jobs.

- The average worker is consumed with creature comforts, leisure, and materialism.
- He views his job as a necessary evil to finance his lifestyle.

Christians need to be reminded of their responsibilities as employees.

The church today needs to rediscover a Biblical theology of work.

In the garden, before the Fall, man was assigned work.

Work, therefore, is not a result of the curse, but God's creative design for the fulfillment of man.

Work did, however, become more painful and difficult after the Fall.

There are strong feelings between employees and employers:

- Many employees feel like they are being abused by their employers, and
- Employers feel like their employees do not appreciate their jobs.
- No loyalty to each other.

This problem was magnified in the Bible's day due to slavery

These verses do not refer to someone who is working for wages but for someone who is a slave.

Master – word is a strong word – despot (a tyrant) – absolute control, one whose word was binding upon that slave.

Over half of the Roman Empire were slaves.

- There were more slaves than citizens
- Including Jews
- They were used for work, pleasure, and for amusement
- Any Roman slave who ran away was to be crucified.

There was a famous Roman slave – Spartacus – raised an army 70,000 and went to war with the Roman army.

Eventually, Spartacus was defeated, and Spartacus was killed in 71 B.C. The rest, some 6,000 men, were crucified along the roadside.

Slavery was a volatile issue and when a man accepted Christ as Savior, if he was a slave or owner of slaves, he had a number of questions he needed to face Biblically.

Does the Bible oppose slavery?

- Does becoming a slave of Christ release him from slavery to man?
- Should a Christian master release slaves?

In this passage, the Bible speaks to those questions

Now, folks, this is not the only passage that deals with this.

There is extensive instruction about work relationships in the New Testament.

- **Ephesians 6:5-9**, “Servants [slaves], be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the [slaves] of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, Knowing that whatever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of

the Lord, whether he be bond [slave] or free [man]. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing [desert] threatening; knowing that you Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.” [Treat people as equal.]

- **Colossians 3:22-25**, “Servants [slaves], obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons.” [God shows no favorites.]
- **Colossians 4:1**, “Masters, give unto your [slaves] that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”
- **Titus 2:9-10**, “Exhort [slaves] to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again [contradicting, no talking back]: Not purloining [stealing], but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn [make attractive] the doctrine of God, our Savior, in all things.”
- **I Peter 2:18-20** (look at later)
- **Philemon** was written as Paul arbitrated a dispute between an escaped slave and his master.

In verse 1, we have the obligation of the slave to his master

- He is to consider his master worthy of all honor (respect) – 5:3, 5:17.

God is telling the slave not just to submit his external, outward appearances. He was to internally, mentally, with his attitudes – he was to count his master worthy of honor.

This could be a difficult thing to do especially if he had an unbelieving master – inconsiderate master.

Turn over to I Peter 2

People say – he is not worthy of my respect

★In the Scriptures, obedience never hinges on the worthiness of the one who is over you

I Peter 2:18-20: Slaves were to respect even the harsh or unreasonable slave owner.

Go back to I Timothy 6:1

Vs. 1 – count – not based on feelings, but based upon authority.

You do this so that the name of God and His doctrine (teachings) be not blasphemed  
(vs. 1) Do not injure the name of God

My conduct could cause God's name to be injured.

With this mindset of God's name, doctrine in mind

Any employee or slave is to subject himself willingly, with the right spirit to his employer

Well, what if I just can't stand my employer?

We have an option that a slave does not – change jobs.

God wants us to have the right spirit toward the person for whom we labor.

It is a terrible thing when we are around Christian people who bad mouth, demean, criticize, steal, or are lazy.

In verse 2 – out of this whole circle of work relations, God talks about a special situation where **both** slave and master are Christians

- How in the world could you have a situation like that?
- You mean it was possible for a man to be a Christian and to own another person who was a Christian?

I think for just a moment we better talk about slavery!

Exodus 21, Deuteronomy 15 – these two passages give the legislation that controlled slavery

- Slaves were acquired in several different ways.
- Many were prisoners of war.
- They could be purchased.
- Some people sold themselves into slavery; others were sold to pay debts.
- Slaves could be received as gifts or inherited.

Most of the abuses came from the evil hearts of men, not from the institution itself. Such abuses can be found in every system of employment

The Old Testament never forbade slavery (never promoted it either), but carefully guarded the rights of slaves.

Jewish slaves could not be held for more than six years (Ex. 21:2), unless they voluntarily chose to remain (Ex. 21:5-6).

Slaves who were abused by their masters were to be set free (Ex 21:26-27).

Their religious rights, such as enjoying the Sabbath rest, were also protected (Ex. 20:10).

Slaves also enjoyed civil rights.

The world has never seen slavery operate like the regulations of the Bible

Slavery was the way a person pulled himself out of personal bankruptcy

The Bible's slavery was a completely different kind of institution than what we saw in our country

In the New Testament – why didn't the Bible just outlaw slavery?

- That would have been social revolution

Christianity is not social revolution, but Christianity will transform society.

- Just let the Spirit of God go to work on the inner man and He will transform society.

Specialized situation – vs. 2 – look at the temptation that the Christian slave is going to have

Read verse 2 – don't let them think down (despise)/think little of their master because his master is a believer

How could that happen?

- The sinful heart takes every privilege and perverts it.
- Take advantage of the Christian master

If we work for a Christian employer, we are tempted to think less of him, not to give him the respect and serve him with the reverence we would if he were an unbeliever

★ People often presume upon Christian bosses, or owners

We trespass on his good graces – that's the temptation.

Envy the master's profits or goods.

Borrow things, tear them up, and not replace; saying he has plenty.

**Galatians 3:28**, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

We are equal. No we are not

- This verse does not rub out social distinction.
- This verse teaches that the man or woman, the free man or bondman – have equal access to God. Not equal at work. He is the boss. He is the owner. I am the employee.

Look at the alternative – vs. 2b, "rather"

Rather – They were to be even more of a slave for him. Why? Vs. 2c

This is a believer who is getting the benefit of his services.

Would this teaching be good news to a slave?

Would this teaching be popular?

One Bible teacher would say – you should revolt and stand up for your rights

One Bible teacher would say – you need to serve him more

Which one is most popular?

God realized that there will be teachers that will not tell them the truth and would prey on their sinful desires.

Vs. 3 – opposite, something else – healthy – sound word

Consent – wholeheartedly embrace God's Word

Characteristics are given of the false teacher – vs. 4

Vs. 4 - First, proud – you have to be proud to go against the Bible

Second, knowledge is zero – no clue to the truth

Third, fixation, occupied with – doting – sick about these things – he will not embrace healthy doctrine

He is a sick man – in what sense does his sickness show itself? In a preoccupation about questions, disputes – that is things that have no Biblical answer

Strife of words – word wars

How do you know someone who is not a healthy Bible teacher?

He is fixed on things that are questionable – no sound answer to them – always majoring on minor, minor subjects – battling in wars of words

This is a sick teacher

Notice the results of this man's teaching:

Five things – this is another way to mark a false teacher



Here's what comes from his teaching (vs. 4e):

#1 – envy – I don't want him to have what he has

#2 – strife – discord between people

#3 – railings – using words to wound people

#4 – evil surmising – always suspicioning his motives, questioning his motives

(Vs. 5) #5 – perverse disputings – constant frictions

These are the results of this kind of teaching

How do you know a false teacher?

What results in people's lives that sit under their ministry?

Now, you can imagine what would have happened in Rome if these teachers stirred up the slaves against their masters.

Look back in – 1:3 – *heterodidasco* – *heterodox* – crooked doctrine

Orthodox – straight doctrine

Keep the *heterodox* out of your pulpit, Timothy.

6:5e – suppose that gain

These teachers are supposing that Godliness includes personal profit and they are teaching that

They are teaching to these slaves that Godliness includes personal profit – Godliness is gain, gain is Godliness

What kind of profit (gain) are we talking about?

1. Emancipation
2. Acquisition

This teaching still goes on today:

If we are walking with God, we would never be sick

If we were Godly, we would not have those bills.

This teaching is greatly appealing to the flesh.

Listen, folks, when we are a servant of God, we are not thinking about our personal profit

We are to be focused on the honor that is due to the employer, our boss

Not thinking about personal benefits and rights

False teachers would say– you slave for nothing

It is despicable – when Christians stir up other Christians to insist on their rights

This is hard to resist in our country

- Christianity is not capitalism
- Christianity is much bigger than any political, economical, social, or national or racial boundary – much bigger

In fact, if Christianity was to be equated with a nation, or race, or social, or economic institution, then Christianity would be a limited religion

Christianity would be fenced within the boundaries of that nation or system

Christianity transcends all these things

Christianity is the kind of force that goes in and permeates every nation, every race, every economic system, and lives under submission to everyone of these things and yet transforms those things by transforming lives within them.

Folks, we can be Christians under capitalism, communism, socialism

Christianity is not a way to personal gain

I am going to serve why? – for the sake of God and His doctrine

How can we do that?

When we are not getting treated right, overlooked, not promoted, underpaid, no benefits

God answers that in verses 6-8

The thinking for the slave to embrace – Godliness with contentment is great gain

Contentment – independent of everything in life

A person who depends on material things will never be satisfied.

True contentment comes from Godliness. That's gain.

No one can take that away – take away our cars, home, raise, job

Consider this – vs. 7 – the absence of all earthly goods at the two momentous moments of our life – When we entered the world and when we leave the world, we will have the same condition in relation to earthly goods – nothing .

That means everything in life is just baggage – the more we have, the more burdens we have.

The gain is the independence of things – vs. 8

All we need is that which sustains our body to do the work of the Lord – we should be content

We can be happy with food and clothing

A Christian slave can endure anything for the sake of Christ and that was the theme of *Uncle Tom's Cabin!*

- Written by Harriet Beecher Stowe (best selling books of the 1800s).
- This book depicted the harsh reality of slavery while also showing that Christianity can overcome.
- When Abraham Lincoln met Stowe he said, “So this is the little lady who made this big war.”

Jesus Christ never reviled – He's our example.

He lived under the Roman rule (I Peter 2:18-23)

Let us stand for closing invitation – every eye closed

Thank God for being free, not abuse it.

Attitudes to our authorities

Help us to truly learn how to be independent of all earthly things.

We may not be free work, or slavery, but we can be free from sin through Jesus Christ.

Christians have a divinely commanded responsibility to live out their faith in the work place.

Having a proper attitude of submission and respect, and performing quality work, are necessary prerequisites to proclaiming a believable gospel.

(Gal. 6:10; Eph. 6:5-8; Col 3:22-25) From those passages we can summarize several principles of conduct for believers on the job.

- **First**, believers are to serve their employers obediently. They must dutifully, submissively respond to their employer's orders.
- **Second**, believers are to serve their employers completely. They are to carry out whatever tasks are assigned them, unless so doing would violate God's law (cf. Acts. 5:29).
- **Third**, believers are to serve their employers respectfully. They must honor those God has placed in authority over them.
- **Fourth**, believers are to serve their employers eagerly, in "sincerity" of heart. They should serve voluntarily, not grudgingly.
- **Fifth**, believers are to serve their employers excellently, "as to Christ" (Col. 3:22). They must do their jobs to the best of their ability.
- **Sixth**, believers are to serve their employers diligently, "not by way of eyeservice" (Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:22). They must not put on a show for the boss by working hard only when he is watching.
- **Seventh**, believers are to serve their employers humbly, not "as men-pleasers". They are not to show off to ingratiate themselves with others. Eighth, believers are to serve their employers spiritually, "doing the will of God from the heart". As already noted all work is sacred and performed ultimately for the glory of God.

Finally, believers are to serve their employers eschatologically, “knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance...For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality” (Col. 3:24-25). Paul closes by exhorting Timothy to **teach and preach these principles** (1 Cor. 7:21-22, 31b).

We know that along with Christ comes a great deal of personal blessing.

Attitudes to our authorities

Help us to truly learn how to be independent of all the earthly things