

Even now Lord you are my master

Message 10: [You are my anchor series](#).

D E Wasake, a slave of Christ Jesus

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Introduction to God's slaves

After I got saved in 2017 and shortly thereafter got baptized, the Lord Jesus called me into his service as a preacher of righteousness. He eventually gave me his oracles and on August 22 2022 while my wife and I were praying, I received the message: "You are my anchor" which was to be a series for me to open your heart to understand God's great love.

In those early days, in the beginning of my relationship with God, as I sat at the feet of the Master reading the Bible and being taught by the Holy Spirit as my teacher, I came upon an unusual situation in the Holy Scriptures. I knew that I had become a son of God but people who would have originally known Jesus intimately referred to themselves differently. These people were ones he had taught to say to God "Our Father in Heaven." These were Apostles who he called "friends" "brother." We have ones who like the Apostle Paul who gave us the revelation that "*We are seated in heavenly places with Christ*" (Ephesians 2: 5-6), these men all seemed to refer to themselves completely different in their relationship with God and Jesus – not as sons, not even as freedmen but as slaves. Can you imagine?

Paul the greatest apostle to the gentiles refers to himself, Philippians 1:1, as a servant of Christ. In the Greek, in which the New Testament was originally written, this word translated to "servant" is the word "duolos" and is actually closer translated as "a slave." "attendant" or "one who gives up their will for another." In Romans 1:1 again Paul refers to himself as a, "slave of Christ Jesus." In Titus 1:1, he calls himself "A slave of God."

Paul was not alone in using such references. James, the half-brother of our Lord; and the Head of the Church at Jerusalem does not say, "James, the brother of Jesus and Senior Bishop." He says in James 1:1: "James a slave of God and the Lord Jesus." Then Peter, to whom the Lord Jesus had said "upon this rock I will build my church," this Peter in 2 Peter 1:1, refers to himself as "Simon Peter a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ." Another brother of Jesus, Jude refers to himself in Jude 1 as "Jude a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." and then as a final example, the disciple who said confidently he was "the one whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23), in Revelation 1:1, he refers to himself as "his slave John."

Every one of them as you can see identifies himself as a slave of Christ - chosen, bought, owned, subjected, dependent, disciplined, rewarded, provided for, protected, and obedient. It was a very offensive message to the original hearers and even more so today, where some groups of people, like African Americans who were formerly enslaved. And yet this is the language chosen by the Holy Spirit.

As I prepared myself to preach this message, the Lord himself started showing me that the process or phases of understanding what it means to be a son of God, particularly one who then refers to himself as a slave, like these early apostles takes place in 3 phases of transition or mindset shifts if you like:

- Phase #1: Slavery.
- Phase #2: Friendship – as a bond servant.
- Phase #3: Sonship – as Jesus learnt while on earth.

These are the phases I will discuss in the message.

If I am to however be fully faithful to what the Holy Spirit wants me to pass on to you, at the end of this message two things should start to happen:

1. You will come to a new understanding of humbling yourself before the Great God Jehovah
2. You will fall in love with God even more than you might have in the past.

In the process of delivering this message, some of this “slave” language might offend you, for many of us do not want to think of ourselves using such terms and so if I called you a slave of Jesus, there is a high possibility some as I mentioned will get very offended at the message.

Others of you would try to prove to me that this is not true. You might say for example: Jesus said to call God “Our Father who art in Heaven (Matthew 6:9),” “We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8: 17)” “Who the Son sets free is free indeed (John 8: 36).” and “There is neither slave nor free in Christ (Gal 3: 28-29).

All this is true as I mentioned but the Lord wants me to open his oracles to you to show you that there is part of Christian life today that has skipped the vital understanding of just how much we are God’s slaves and to fully appreciate what we have in Christ, it is important to speak about it from the beginning, including our slavery.

As I said, I am deliberately using this slave language to illustrate what I have received from the Lord - a lesson in humility and a lesson in love.

#Phase 1: A slave.

To start to understand how we became sons of God, it is important to start to know first how you and I became slaves, it helps to go back to the beginning.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Genesis 1: 26-28.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, he made human beings like him – Royalty and thus we were his Royal sons or Crown Princes. Sons who had a Kingdom or a dominion – that dominion was the earth, just like God was King of Heaven. Thus, when He created Adam, his first-born son, Adam was a Royal Prince but unfortunately when Adam together with his wife Eve sinned, they gave up their dominion, and thus Satan took Adam’s dominion and became the prince of this world while Adam and his wife Eve became slaves of sin – and thus slaves of Satan, their new overlord or Master.

Now in slavery, once parents are sold into slavery, the children who are born to them, are likewise born into slavery and they remain slaves and their children and children after them, until they fully repay the debt they owe.

They can thus never become “freedmen” unless someone buys them.

To use the example of the cruel slavery of America, prior to this person becoming free, they often start their slavery journey as follows:

- **First**, as a field nigger – the lowest level of slavery. They would have become a slave either by being born into slavery or when their master purchased them from a slave trader or another slave owner.
- **Then**, this person, if they find favour with their master, perhaps on account of their intelligence, they might become a house servant – a slightly more privileged position, because they are no longer working in the hot sun in the plantation. Plus, in the house, the labour is easier, compared to being in the field. So, this person is privileged, albeit still a slave. Such a person could love their master so much, such that even when offered freedom, they might wish to stay with their master – perhaps becoming a bond servant, a slave who voluntarily remains with their master.

- **Finally**, if their Master is especially compassionate, then they could become a freedman. This takes place through a second legal transaction, when their Master processes their “freedom papers.” This process of freeing someone often involved going to a court to obtain a deed which would result in the slave’s freedom.

Having understood the system of slavery, we can thus see how when in the beginning Adam and Eve – having become slaves to sin, they produced children who were slaves and thus all humanity was in bondage or slavery.

That is why when the scriptures say we are born sinners, they really mean that by default, we are all born as slaves – just by virtue of being born of the seed of Adam and Eve, similar to children of slave parents also being slaves and owned by the same master as his property.

Then Jesus came along.

When Jesus came along, a legal transaction took place, akin to what would take place in a slave market.

Jesus paid the slave owner – Satan and took over ownership of us.

When Jesus paid the price or redeemed us as slaves, He paid the price of his blood, when he died on the cross so that we would be freed – but not freed to anything. Freed from the cruel ownership of Satan to become slaves of God.

It is why the scriptures then say:

Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? Romans 6: 16 (NIV).

Now the word used to describe slaves here is the Greek word: δοῦλος (*doulos*).

A person who is described as “duolos” is according to *Strongs* a Greek Lexicon equivalent to:

1. a slave, bondman, man of servile condition:
 1. a slave
 2. metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will
 3. devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests
2. a servant, attendant.

Examples of places in the Bible where *doulos* is used.

Doulos, occurs 127 times in the New Testament, and is the most common of all the words here that are translated as ‘servant.’ 120 of those times this word is translated ‘servant,’ 6 times as ‘bond,’ and once as ‘bondman’ (KJV).

Doulos has a much stronger meaning than just choosing to serve someone as a “servant.” For someone who “serves” could perhaps choose not to serve but if used as a slave, it really means that you are bound to your master. They are in ownership of you. A *doulos* is a slave, a slave to a *kyrios* (κύριος) which is a lord or master.

Here are some common verses where *duolos* is used. See if you can connect with the stronger “slave” language compared to the “servant” language:

*The disciple is not above his master, nor the *doulos* [or slave] above his lord. Matthew 10:24.*

This tells us that a disciple of Jesus is akin to a slave with his lord.

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your doulos [or slave]. Matthew 20: 27.

This tells us that the most important “Christian” is the one who is most like a slave. How much of a slave are you like in Christ?

“Suppose one of you has a slave [doulos] plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the slave [doulos] when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? Will he thank the slave [doulos] because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything, you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have only done our duty.’” Luke 17: 7-10 (NIV).

This verse is making it pretty clear to us that just like a slave would not get a pat on the back for doing what they are supposed to do, likewise we should not boast in our works of righteousness – we are supposed to do them anyway!

This strong language of slave and master is supposed to help you know that at salvation, there was a legal transaction akin to buying and selling slaves where Jesus exchanged your ownership from darkness to light and because this is a pretty serious contrast, when the bible says you are no longer “slaves to sin” but “slaves to righteousness” you should understand how serious it is because many Christians today do not understand what Jesus did for them, because they don’t fully appreciate the idea of slavery, as they think they were always free, even when they were in sin. Let us go back to the example of the slave trade.

Who would go up to a free man and say, “come follow me, you can be my slave!”

Why would one want to go from freedom to bondage?

But what if we were already slaves before we knew Christ, and not free at all? It is why thus using this strong language is important for it is presenting this radical difference that can help you see that it would be absurd for a former “field nigger” who has become freed to want to go back to slavery.

See how absurd then it is when a Christian walks in a life of sin? It is the same as going back to being a slave.

#Phase 2: A friend.

As I explained, once someone has been redeemed or bought back from Satan a cruel master, they do not become freedmen in the sense of they have no one they are accountable to. They instead become a slave of God, the Good Master. While in this Good Master’s house, there is a process of training in the New Master’s principles and rules. It is important to learn these rules.

In the days of African American slavery, once someone had their papers of being freed, they had to learn the language and culture and traits of freed people, lest someone grabs them and subjects them to slavery again!

Many freedmen often were enslaved again, even when they had papers because they acted like slaves and so slave traders captured them and took their papers away and so being free was not just a case of having the papers – one also had to look, think and talk like a freedman.

To learn to be free in mind, one often must spend time with the Master and eventually become his friend, so he can learn the principles that keep one from returning to slavery.

In the Old Testament we can most clearly see this level of an elevated servant – master relationship.

Two great men in the Old Testament who were “servants” or “slaves” were also called God’s friends.

These men were: Abraham and Moses.

As an example: when Moses was attacked by his siblings Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12:8), God rose to Moses' defence saying he speaks to him "face to face" - as a man speaks to a friend.

Abraham was known as the friend of God (Isaiah 41:8) and God revealed to him secrets – such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Friends to God as great as these men were, the underlying relationship in some ways still followed the "slave and master" relationship and for example about Moses, the New Testament says:

"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. Hebrews 3: 5-6 (NIV).

This confirms that even if Moses was God's friend, he was the equivalent of a slave who had become the friend of his master.

Abraham in another example complained to God that because he had no son, his servant Eliezer of Damascus would inherit everything (Genesis 15:2). This tells us that someone could be a slave and rise to a high level of inheriting their master's property if the master had no son.

There are even examples in the Old Testament where a slave does not leave their master, even when they could be free, because of love. This is what many call a "bond servant" and the Bible gives an example:

But the slave may declare, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I don't want to go free.' If he does this, his master must present him before God. Then his master must take him to the door or doorpost and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will serve his master for life. Exodus 21: 5-6 (NLT).

So, even in this amazing example of a slave loving their master, nevertheless, there is still a slave – master relationship for the scripture says, the slave will SERVE his master for life.

Jesus repeated these ideas when he had just called the disciples friends. He said:

You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15: 14.

Think about it, what kind of friendship is this where you "command" someone?

If I come up to you and say, "I want to be your friend." "Ah, I'd love to be your friend, Dickson." What If I then said: "Yeah, I just have one requirement. You can be my friend if you do exactly what I command you."

You would wonder, what kind of a friendship are you talking about here? I never heard of a friendship like that.

Well, that kind of a friendship must assume another prior relationship, right? I am in charge of you – that is, I am your master, and I command you and you obey me, you are a slave. But you are a slave who is also given the privilege of being a friend.

The word "master" is also important to understand in this slave/friend phase.

As an example, Jesus as Lord is kurios. Master is used here as a synonym to a lord or kurios, and the Greek word for Master is despotēs, from which we get the English word despot.

Now we use it as an adjective. We say somebody who is overbearing, totally in charge, dominating is despotic. That is exactly the word that is used. It means an absolute ruler, a sovereign ruler. Jesus is our only despot. He is our only master; extremely powerful words, extremely narrow words.

An example of use of this word "despotes" to describe our Lord Jesus is this:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master [despotes] who bought them-bringing swift destruction on themselves (2 Peter 2:1).

The verse says the “Master who bought them” – exactly as we have been revealing, they are bought from slavery – that is from being slaves to sin to following a new master where they become slaves of righteousness.

This understanding is important so that when our Lord offers the invitation to follow Him, He says this: “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.” He is meaning, as my slave, you are no longer in charge. Likewise, he says: “Take up your cross and” – What? – “follow Me.”

#Phase 3: Son.

We have so far seen the following in our mindset change journey to sonship: Phase 1, a slave and then Phase 2 a friend but akin to a bond servant. How then does the idea of phase 3 of the journey to understanding you are a child or son fit in?

As I mentioned, in the beginning, when God gave Adam dominion, Adam was not a slave, or as the African American former slave might say: “I aint your nigger.” He was a Prince, a Royal Son.

Thus, when Jesus clearly tells us to address God as “our father,” he is teaching us Kingdom mindset as he had come to restore the Kingdom of God on earth, from the enemy’s clutches.

This idea of redeeming sons meanwhile is also there in the Old Testament. When God sought to have the Israelites released from their slavery in Egypt, He gave instructions for Moses to speak to Pharaoh, King of Egypt as follows:

Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.” But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.’ ” Exodus 4: 22-23 (NIV).

So, from this story, we have a contrast and a picture of salvation:

- The Israelites were slaves in Egypt – akin to being slaves of sin under a cruel Master.
- God redeemed them or rescued them powerfully from the hand of Pharaoh, but they were originally his first-born son, before they fell into slavery.
- After redeeming them out of slavery of sin, with a picture of the Passover lamb to represent Jesus, He took them on a training journey on their way to the promised land, hence were in the wilderness for 40 years, being trained from the mindset of slavery to the mindset of sonship, but via the interim phase of becoming his friends, through Moses’ example.

If we are sons who have been redeemed by the King, why then as I mentioned at the start do the pastoral epistles still use slave language?

Paul referred to himself as a slave of Christ, James, the half-brother of Jesus as “James the slave.” “Peter the slave.” Then another brother of Jesus, Jude refers to himself as “Jude the slave.” and then the disciple who says confidently he is the one who Jesus loved, he says in Revelation 1:1, “John the slave.”

Every one of them identifies himself as a slave of Christ, meaning, chosen, bought, owned, subjected, dependent, disciplined, rewarded, provided for, protected, and obedient. It was a very offensive message.

How can you overcome this offensive language? How do you deal with this?

You cannot overcome this offensive language of considering yourself a slave on your own. The Holy Spirit must help you and that is why 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, *“No man calls Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit.”* Only the Holy

Spirit could help you overcome the natural resistance and pride that the sinner has in his heart where they think they are free, yet they are not.

Once the Holy Spirit helps you overcome the offensive language, he then uses the example of Jesus to help you understand how a “son” can still refer to themselves as a “slave.”

A son who refers to themselves as a slave is an attitude of humility or a mindset and to demonstrate this radically different mindset, we have the example of Jesus himself. This is how the Bible explains his humility as an attitude in Philippians 2:5-9 (NIV):

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

**Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,**

Philippians 2: 5-9 (NIV)

The word used for servant here, is the same word *duolos* which I introduced earlier. So Jesus as our Lord or *kurios* and our Master or despotes went ahead of us and gave us a pattern of how we should act.

He gave us this pattern when he went and took on the very form of a slave or *duolos* himself – DESPITE being equal to God.

This is why knowing who you are, as a son, a free person BUT deliberately taking on the mindset of a slave is the greatest way you can cultivate humility.

To make sure you and I do not miss this lesson, the Lord Jesus even gave us the example of washing his disciples’ feet, and after that he explained his actions. The Bible records it as follows:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. John 13: 12-16.

Jesus made it clear: “You call me “Teacher and Lord” and rightly so, for that is what I am. He was showing that a Lord or God can wash feet, like a slave.

Do you realize you cannot really wash someone’s feet unless you are kneeling? Unless you are taking a physical posture of a slave.

How do we apply this mindset of humility to our lives? We can apply these lessons as follows:

1. We should know we have been turned from slaves into adopted sons and we should celebrate knowing this. This is why we celebrate our salvation and honour the Lord with sacraments like Baptism and Communion.

2. YET as sons we should not abuse the privilege of our equality to God – that is as his heirs, and joint heirs with Christ. Abusing this privilege for example means walking in sin and rebellion, even when you know you have been saved from those same sins.
3. Like Christ, knowing that we are sons, OR having the assurance of being a son, unlike a slave who lives in fear, we should instead take on the form of slave – as a mindset of humility, yet still acting confidently.
4. It is the son who humbles themselves who is then given the elevated position of honour – just as Jesus who humbled himself and after doing so, he was elevated.

This revelation of being a slave, a bond servant or friend and then a son is thus not meant to cause you fear and returning to slave thinking – no, the scripture says this:

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15

Having understood the slavery picture, this scripture thus shows clearly that we are no longer to relate with God like the former relationship of being in cruel slavery where there was fear. Instead, when we are in Christ, we become bold and confident and that is why by the Holy Spirit of God, we are confident and so we say to God the Majestic King, Master, and Lord: “Abba” “Father.”

Conclusion and the Message from Jesus

In the offensive language of slavery used in this message, you can celebrate God even the more because knowing you are a former slave who has been adopted into the family, this is supposed to cause you to praise God who is abounding in grace and mercy and kindness.

This lesson about being a slave is also supposed to help you really understand the significance of Jesus dying on the cross.

Jesus basically died for slaves.

Would you die for your slave? For your housemaid? For the person you despise the most? In the Middle East for example many have domestic workers, often those of Filipino or African origins.

In the US you might have a gardener or similar “blue collar” helper and then you have the African Americans who often serve in low positions in the hospitality sectors.

Would you die for “the help”? If you would not, then you can try to start to understand the depth of God’s love.

He sent his son to die for slaves. Wouldn’t you respond to such love by considering yourself his slave just like the Apostles Peter, Paul, John and others did when they understood the truth?

When the bible thus presents this comparison of being a slave to sin and a slave to righteousness, it is also meant to help you see the ruthless or cruel nature of sin.

Anyone who is addicted to say pornography or alcohol knows that it is real slavery - it is not a “servant” relationship - “oh I can stop anytime...” No, once you understand the cruelty of slavery of sin, you can then understand the kindness of slavery to God.

So correct, Christians today are a friend of God for the bible says this, but when you acknowledge that you are first and foremost a former slave who has been given privileges, you will love the Lord – your Good Master with all your heart.

You will fear him, with holy fear, with all your heart.

You will serve him, even beyond what is asked of a “slave” or even what is asked of a “bond servant.”

This is when you will truly love the Lord, with all your heart and strength and soul and mind!

As for sons, earthly sons often love their earthly fathers the most when they do not have an “entitlement” mindset as many Christians do today, abusing their privilege as son.

This mindset of loving God without abusing privilege can best be appreciated once a Christian takes on a humility posture, having understood just how much they are privileged to have been turned from slavery to sonship!

I am Dickson wasake, a slave of the Lord Jesus - calling you to humble yourself under God’s mighty hand that you may accept his grace – his unmerited favour, accept his gift given to you where he no longer calls you slave but calls you son. What a gift we have from our great God, Abba! Father!

If you want to receive the Lord Jesus as your Master and thus turn from the cruel bondage of sin, to the freedom of being in God’s household, then pray this prayer to become a follower of Christ – a Christian:

"God of heaven, I confess that I am a sinner and have been one since birth, but I have heard that you can make me new, and you sent your son Jesus to die for me. He rose again and it is he who can give me his Holy Spirit. Please forgive me and welcome me into your Kingdom, teach me how to follow you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Lord Jesus, come – Maranatha!

References

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