**Christianity and Slavery**

Hope Chapel Honolulu

Ephesians 5:15-6:9

5 Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, 6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

(Ephesians 6:5-8, ESV)

**Introduction**

Becoming aware of and able to speak the truth in love with regard to racial prejudice, reconciliation, relations and reparations has become increasingly relevant for Christians in the West and beyond. And while we can use the internet to learn more about the issues at hand, we do have to be careful about the veracity of the sources we use. In a similar way, we must be careful about the content and context of Bible passages which address slavery, for while they may be descriptive of what Bible figures have done or prescriptive of how believers should respond, the progressive revelation of the Bible moves from permissive to corrective and must be read and understood in that light.

**1. Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:15-33)**

a) The significance of submission “to one another out of reverence for Christ” (v.21).

b) Worship through the three most important human relationships: marriage, home and work.

**2. Instruction to fathers about child-raising and discipleship. (Ephesians 6:1-4)**

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a) Submission in the first commandment with a promise: “honor your father and mother.”

b) Wielding authority in resemblance and representation of God.

**3. Redeeming broken relationships, systems and worldviews. (Ephesians 6:5-9)**

a) How the history of slavery precedes the existence of Judaism and Christianity.

b) We are God’s image-bearers, living metaphors, irrespective of gender, race or socioeconomics.

**Conclusion**

It’s not just about history and what dead white men have done to people of color. Yes, slavery is a horrible example of the evils of so-called human civilization, such as which contributed not only the judgments of God in the past, but also is part of the reason why God’s coming wrath has been revealed and ultimately connected to why Christ died on the cross in our place. While we dare not lessen the pain and loss of those who are or have been enslaved nor their descendants, we must not lose sight of the Gospel fact that *every man, woman and child* now alive and who has ever lived is in desperate need of Christ’s reconciliation.

**For our prayerful study, discussion and application:**

1) What were you reminded of or learned anew about slavery from this presentation?

2) Read Ephesians 5:15-6:9 and talk about how submission in human relationships leads to worship of God.

3) What are the Word and Spirit of God saying to you about slavery?

**112920cdg@hch**