

LABOR RELATIONS

TEXT: EPHESIANS 6:5-9

Introduction:

1. In our text tonight, the apostle Paul speaks to servants and masters (6:5, 9).
2. You will notice he has more to say to servants (employees) than he does to masters (employers).
3. God has more to say to workers than to bosses because there are a lot more workers than there are bosses.
4. This is an important passage of Scripture. If we had more Christian workers and Christian bosses, we would not have as much strife on the job, and we would not need labor unions.
5. Many people are concerned that labor unions, especially public employee unions, are bankrupting America. Even our very liberal, pro-union Democrat governor is having problems with the unions. The teacher's union is threatening him with a lawsuit if he carries out his threat to make budget cuts.
6. If people would follow Biblical principles there would not be any problems with labor unions.
7. The word "servant" means we are to serve those we are working for. If someone is giving you a paycheck, than you are to serve him.
8. Today, many people think the world owes them a living. But this is contrary to what the Bible teaches (6:5-7).
9. Soldiers asked John the Baptist, "And what shall we do?" John answered them: "Be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14).
10. This applies to all workers, not just soldiers.
11. We are not to serve "with eye-service" (6:6), i.e. we are not to just "look busy" when the boss is around. We are not to "butter up" the boss.
12. If a Christian is a bricklayer than he ought to lay bricks "with fear and trembling, in singleness of (your) heart, as unto Christ" (6:5).
13. If he is a lawyer, or a clerk or a salesman (etc.), he ought to work with singleness of heart, "as unto Christ" (6:5).
14. According to the Bible, there is no difference between the sacred and the secular. All work should be done "as unto Christ."
15. "To the Christian every bush is a burning bush, and all ground is holy ground" – Bob Jones Sr.

I. CHRISTIAN SERVICE

1. The great Baptist missionary, William Cary, was a shoemaker when God called him to India. He said: “My business is serving the Lord, and I make shoes to pay expenses.”
2. This is what Paul means by “doing the will of God from the heart” (6:6). Notice “heart” (6:5, 6) – we have to make sure our heart is in our work.
3. Notice “as unto Christ” (6:5), “as the servants of Christ” (6:6), “as to the Lord” (6:7), “the same shall he receive of the Lord” (6:8), “knowing that your Master also is in heaven” (6:9).
4. Keeping this in mind – that we are working for the Lord, He is watching us, etc. – should affect our attitude and our performance.
5. This is what the Bible means by the lordship of Christ. The wife submits to her husband “as unto the Lord” (5:22); the husband loves his wife “as Christ also loved the church” (5:25); children obey their parents “in the Lord” (6:1); and parents raise their children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (6:4).
6. Servants are to be obedient “as unto Christ” (6:5); and masters treat their servants properly, “knowing that your Master also is in heaven” (6:9). Christ is Lord of all.
7. When a Christian is in proper submission to God, he should have no problem submitting to those over him.
8. We need to keep in mind that with the Lord payday isn’t always on Friday. We shall “receive of the Lord” (6:8) when we leave this world, at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. Col. 3:24).
9. God is keeping all the records (cf. Col. 3:25).
10. Back when Paul wrote this epistle, many Christians were slaves. Almost half of the people in the Roman Empire were slaves. The reference to “whether he be bond or free” (6:8) indicates the relationship between a slave and his master.
11. That is the context. But the application is for all relationships between employees and their employers.

II. GOD’S INSTRUCTIONS FOR MASTERS (6:9).

1. Even the most powerful executive has a “CEO” over him and that is God (6:9), and “neither is there respect of persons with Him” (6:9).
2. Colossians 4:1 says, “Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

3. It is a blessing to work for a saved man who runs his business on Biblical principles.
4. We see a good illustration of this in Paul's epistle to Philemon (Phil. 10-21).

CONCLUSION:

1. Consider what this world would be like if everyone followed these instructions: no corrupt unions, no strikes, no walk-outs, etc.
2. There would be no lazy workers stealing from the boss and no greedy bosses taking advantage of his workers.
3. The Bible has the answer for all of life's problems. Christian workers should be the best workers on the job, and Christian bosses should be a pleasure to work for (cf. Matt. 20:25-28).