

- ✚ The last time we were together we considered this whole issue of Jesus referring to us as slaves. First of all, if you have a problem with His terminology, you are headed for problems with your final audit. He's the King and He can refer to us however He chooses, and our best response is "Yes Sir!" But this isn't just any slave, particularly, this is a bond-slave: a slave who had the option of going free but who loved His master more than he loved his freedom and preferred to stay in his master's service for the rest of his life. We saw that this is the only way to live an obedient life as a believer, a bond-slave to Christ, anything short of this is disobedience. This is because the definition of a bond-slave is the same definition that Jesus gives for a disciple. A disciple isn't someone who just comes to church, believes in Jesus or reads his or her Bible, a disciple is: **Luke 9:23**. Salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you your life. Jesus places several "ifs" or conditions in front of actual discipleship. We looked at two of those conditions last time:
- 1) The condition of "Desire": do you really want to be a disciple? "If anyone wants..." Until you desire to be a disciple, you won't be one.
 - 2) The second condition of discipleship is "Denial". Self-denial of your dreams, goals, ambitions, and plans, put it away or be willing to do so. I deny myself because I'm not my own, I've been bought out and belong to another: **1st Corinthians 6:19-20**. You either live for yourself or live for the Savior, there is no third alternative.
- ✚ This understanding of ownership is one thing that is underscored in Jesus' parable. The King's ownership was universal. The ones that served Him well; submitted themselves to the King's business and to His ownership. Gladly, they were happily rewarded for being His bond-slaves. The one who didn't serve; didn't submit to the King's ownership or do the King's business, was he free to go? Could he opt in or out of the kingdom and King's rule and ownership of his life? No. For the ones who didn't want to have Him as their King, did that change anything in the long run? No. The King's ownership is absolute and universal, and the sooner you and I get with that program, the better off we will be.
-

1. The third condition of being a disciple/bond-slave is Death, Luke 9:23.

- ✓ "Let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." Called to take up the very thing that will take your life. Not something you have to do; it is something you choose to do; in fact, you will have to choose again and again and again. It is your own cross because you can't make decisions for me, and I can't make decisions for you; we have to decide for ourselves and take it up ourselves.
- ✓ The original cross is not the cross we are called to bare because of the grace of God. The reason why God chose a cross for Jesus to die on when there were so many other ways to die was because it was and remains the cruelest form of torture and death ever invented. That cross is a message about many things: God's great love and grace; God's great hatred of sin; what eternal punishment in Hell would have been like. When Jesus picks the imagery of the cross, He picks one that would turn the most people away. This was to rule out the groupies and those less than serious. It was intended to cause us to swallow hard at what it takes to be a disciple. Are you willing to lose your closest friends? Are you willing to be alienated from your family? live on the other side of the world from those you love. Are you willing to lose your reputation? Are you willing to lose your life? If you aren't, then you aren't carrying the cross of true discipleship. All of these things came true for the first disciples. Cross bearing means you're willing to pay any price for Christ's sake.

2. We have romanticized the cross.

- ✓ We've somehow gotten the idea that it's some sort of difficulty like an illness or putting up with some obnoxious relative. In Jesus' day, everyone knew that a person with a cross was saying goodbye to everything and everyone and that they weren't coming back. It's a death, a death to our rights of self-fulfillment, self-promotion, and self-centeredness. It is self-sacrifice. Jesus lays claim to our ambitions, money, minds, work, our say over our lives in general. The one with the cross on his back was headed in only one direction (no return), HE has **no further plans of his own**.
-

3. Bond-slave is the best interpretation.

- ✓ "Bond-slave" is preferred over "Bondservant" if only because of how we perceive the two. We interpret this as bondservant simply because it is not as offensive, **Romans 1:1**. The problem with "servant" is that we tend to interpret it as some job that we can quit at any time. Whereas, "slave" is not something that we can leave. Once we have opted in, there can be no opting out of it. Slavery implies ownership. Similarly, Jesus refers to the servants in this parable as slaves, we have to get this notion through our heads, **He owns us**. Here are the words of someone who understands how this works: **Luke 1:38**. Notice the words of these faithful bond-slaves in our parable in **Luke 19:16-18**.

"Your mina." the humility of that statement is imperative to grasp. It is all His! That mina represents all that He has given us in this life: our time, money, talents, abilities, opportunities. It is all His. When you do His business with His stuff, the profit is all His, you can take no credit. He's the one that provided the conditions and opportunities, He's the one that gave you the ability, He's the one that gave you favor to prosper. The bond-slave prayer: "Lord, what would you have me do with my life? Where would you have me go and what would you have me be, to do Your business."
