

Are You A Slave of Christ?

Colossians 4:7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our

(1) beloved brother and

(2) faithful servant and

(3) fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

Faithful servant. *pistos diakonos* we have studied the importance of being faithful. Now, let's look at the all-important *servant*. The King James translates this *minister*, but it really refers to servant, one who does the work.

There are at least five different ways in which the word "minister" of *diakonos* is used in Scripture.

I. First, it is used in a political connotation. Rom. 13:3-4 where our word is used to describe those in political authority. Actually, those who administer in Washington are our *servants*. They are not our rulers, they are servants, and their job is to fulfill their job to us as per our constitution. But, of course, over the decades they have re-interpreted/ignored our constitution.

Romans 13:3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil...

This, of course, is the Divine purpose of establishing political or national authority. But the evil soul of mankind, of course, has

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changed this over time, throughout history. But, by God's design, one of the purposes of having authoritative 'servants' is so that the criminal will fear that government and its law enforcement agencies.

Romans 13:3 ...Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

Romans 13:4 for it is a minister (*diakonos*) of God (God's design for Divine institution of nationalism) to you for good. (So that you can live your life for Christ) But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword (capital punishment) for nothing; (he has the sword for a purpose) for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

The sword is used here to show that God set up capital punishment. Has there been some who were executed who were innocent? Yes, of course: Apostle Paul was decapitated by the sword and Jesus Christ was given capital punishment by crucifixion. But there are many who have gotten away with murder. And even though Jesus Christ suffered wrongfully, He is still in support of capital punishment. Here from the Word of God, we see that God recognizes that man has an Inherited Sin Nature and capital punishment is designed to control crime. And if you do something

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against the law of the land...you should fear those in authority. So, our word *servant* has a political connotation. It refers to those who are in authority in government, whether it is local or national or in between. They, as servants, have the responsibility to protect the law-abiding citizens and maintain an environment of freedom: Provide and Protect freedom and property and the life of its citizens. We have to have authority in life. But those in authority by God's design are servants of God. The husband over the wife, parents over children, employer over employee and government over the citizens. There is a need of authority in every segment of society. The purpose of authority is to be our servant. The husband is the servant of his wife, parents are servants of their children etc.

- II. The second use of our word *diakonos* has to do with a spiritual realm rather than a temporal realm: the universal ministry of every believer. You are a *diakonos*. This means that every believer in Jesus Christ as Savior is in full time Christian service. You are a Royal Ambassador.

2 Corinthians 3:6 who (God) also made us adequate as servants (ministers) of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (The 'letter' refers to the Mosaic Law which kills; while the Holy Spirit gives life under the principle of grace.)

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2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since we have this ministry,...

People, please understand that you have this ministry of being a servant to God from the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, through all eternity.

2 Corinthians 4:1 ...as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

Please know that knowing that you are in full time ministry is a source of great encouragement and removes despondency. Don't let anyone try to take it away from you because you failed somewhere along the way in life. God has a purpose for your life. Get up in the power of the Holy Spirit and move on in the plan of God. And immediately after the Resurrection of Jesus, this is what He told Peter after Peter had denied Him three times. *I love you Peter, don't be despondent, you are my servant—feed my sheep (John 21:15-17).*

III. The third use is in Church Administration. Here the Greek word *diakonos* is simply transliterated *deacon*. You will recall that in Colossians 4:7 our word is translated *faithful servant* but look at

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus (if you have believed in Jesus Christ you are a Saint) who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

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This is our word diakonos. While we are all servants. We are not all deacons. This refers to administrative ministry in the church, but still carries the idea of a servant of God. A deacon is a servant of God in serving the church. Deacon is an honorable word for the administration of the affairs of the church. Over the years some have given it a bad connotation. Deacons, a board of deacons do not run the pastor. They help the pastor so he can study and teach. They do not tell him what to teach or how or how long or how often. Boards of deacons or boards of elders have set themselves up as those who run the church and the pastor. Actually, they serve the church by serving the pastor. The pastor decides when and how often and how long he will teach. And the deacons make sure that everything is taken care of so that the pastor can fulfill his responsibility. Now look at Phil. 1:1

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

Paul and Timothy, bond servants of Christ. This is not entirely accurate. The word *bond servants* is not our word but is *doulos*. Paul considered himself a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. Note three categories of servants listed in Phil. 1:1:

Bond-slaves. Paul uses this word to designate himself and Timothy as the pastors—teachers, policy makers; then he uses the reference.

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Saints. Referring to all the members of this assembly who are also *servants of the Lord* and then

Deacons. Those who serve in the church administration.

IV. Then we have a fourth use or designation of the use of the word *diakonos*. It is used to refer to the pastor-teacher describing him as the servant of the Lord by serving the people.

1 Corinthians 3:5 What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? (Simple rhetorical questions to make a point) **Servants (*diakonos*) through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.**

So here we know that this word was used to describe or refer to the pastor-teacher who serves the Lord by serving the congregation the by teaching the Word of God.

Ephesians 3:7 (also uses this word to refer to the pastor-teacher): **of which I was made a minister, (*diakonos*) according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power.**

No pastor should ever forget that he was made a servant by the grace of God. He does not earn nor deserve this great privilege and responsibility.

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Other passages that use *diakonos* to refer to the pastor-teacher: Colossians 1:7 and 23; 1 Thessalonians 3:2; 1 Timothy 1:12 and Hebrews 6:10.

- V. The fifth use of this word is negative. It is used to refer to the ministers or servants of Satan. Remember that Satan is the father of religion and as such he has ministers, servants of religion, who in the preaching of human good, seek to advance the rule of Satan here on earth through religion. Such men are false apostles, (who people follow) disguising themselves as the apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore, it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. These include the ones who use philosophy and psychology and empty deception, teaching the traditions of men and cause some of the true servants of the Lord to follow them instead of following Christ.

So, we have five uses of this beautiful word: *diakonos*:

1. Political
2. Universal believers
3. Church administration as deacons
4. The pastoral use and
5. Servants of Satan.

Now in Colossians 4:7

1. First, and very important, is that ‘servant’ is directed toward God. Tychicus is a faithful servant to God, not to Paul. God requires faithfulness from all believers. God does not require success, some

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type of earthly greatness, He requires faithfulness. God gives His 'well done' to the good and faithful servant.

God is not impressed with human celebrityship. God is not impressed with popularity. God is impressed and rewards faithfulness. Faithfulness in the study of His Word. God does not require that you be 'great' in man's eyes but God simply requires faithfulness, consistency throughout your life.

2. To be sure you got it: Since God requires faithfulness from every member of the body of Christ, He requires it much more so from the pastor-teacher or minister.
3. God does not ask the pastor-teacher to be sensational, or spectacular. He requires that he be faithful to his mission of study and teaching the Word of God. And you need to know that, here, at Spring Valley Bible Church. When the time comes to search for a new pastor-teacher, you need to know what to look for, not spectacular but one who knows how to study and teach the Word of God; faithful to His Word. He must study and teach.

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Question: Look at verse 7. Why is this in the Eternal Word of God. This will be answered, in part, in verses 8-9. But please remember, this is the first century of the Church Age. There was no telephone, no e-mail, no daily postal system. Next, think about the Bible, the 66 books that make

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up our Bible. What is the Bible? The Bible is God letting us know His plan; letting us know circumstances throughout history. The point is that it is important to know how each other is doing in his/her Christian life. If or when anything happens in your life, good or bad, I would like to know about it. Why? Not because I am nosey but so that I can rejoice with you or encourage you and so that I can be in prayer for you and with you. This is one of the impacts of Spiritual love—to care about one another, and to desire to know about one another.

Colossians 4:8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know *about* our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

For I have sent him to you. For your advantage. This verb ‘to send’ tells us a number of things. First, Paul understands the importance of keeping others informed. Next, it shows us more about Paul. He understands people. Tychicus is one of Paul’s two great trouble shooters, the other one being Titus. There is trouble going on in the Lycas valley with the strong infiltration of Gnosticism, which has caused a dangerous and discouraging situation. Many of the believers in the Lycas valley are being influenced by this human, demonic teaching that is in contrast with the Word of God. Therefore, Paul sends Tychicus. What I like about this verb is the *indicative mood*, which reminds us of the historical reality of the dangers and Paul’s response.

For this very purpose, Paul has a purpose for what he does in the ministry. Question: for what purpose?

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1. To give a missionary report on Paul's situation.
2. To send them a teacher who is strong in the truth, who will inform them and who will warn them of the dangers they face.
3. This would be a nice place to insert what we are seeing in Ezekiel on Wednesday nights. In chapter 3, God says to Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 3:17 Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me.

Ezekiel 3:18 When I say to the wicked, (Israelites living in unrighteousness) dying (spiritually) you will die physically, and you do not warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man will die in his iniquity but his blood I will require at your hand

In other words, people, if the messenger of God, today this is the pastor-teacher or even Evangelist, does not warn the people of their sins in idolatry, homosexuality, lesbianism, and many other iniquities such as drugs, pornography, adultery and fornication, that pastor is guilty of murder before God. And Paul knows this. And so he sends this faithful Tychicus to warn them and encourage them.

I have sent him to you. For your spiritual advantage.

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for this very purpose that you may know. Every pastor-teacher should know the all-importance of the people knowing the truth of the Word of God. This is an *Aorist Active Subjunctive* of the Greek verb *ginosko*. The *aorist tense* is a dramatic use of the *aorist* in that it gathers all that is involved in their learning into one action. In other words, it gathers the fact that he will be communicating Biblical information that is vital to the current battle they are in, Biblical information that will increase their spiritual growth. Now, the *active voice* reminds them that they are the producers of the action, not Tychicus. They are the ones who must know these truths. And oh, the *subjunctive mood*, while it is part of the purpose clause, it also is a warning, maybe they will come to know and maybe not—it is up to each one of them. First, to be present when he teaches and then to listen with a spiritual ear, that is filled with the Holy Spirit and then believe and live the truth they learn.

Many believers do not even know Bible doctrine. Yet, some know it but do not believe it. And there are those who know it, believe it, but do not live it.

In Ezekiel and throughout the entire Word of God is the beckoning ‘he who has an ear, let him hear.’ Everyone has an ear, so what is this saying? This means to hear with spiritual ear—alert ear, an ear whose soul is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Here we learn about our God.

He has set up the whole system in grace for knowing.

He has provided us what we are to know, His Word.

Then He has provided us with ears to hear and a brain to understand.

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Then He has provided teachers to teach.

And most important, He has supplied every believer with the Holy Spirit of truth who is the real teacher of biblical truth.

Colossians 4:8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know *about* our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts;

I have sent him to you. for your spiritual advantage

For this very purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; The Greek word is *parakaleo*. You will recall that the word for the Holy Spirit is *parakletos* or *paraclete*. The root word that we have here means to come to the aid of someone or come to the side of someone, to comfort or to encourage or exhort. The context generally determines which meaning is pertinent, here, to encourage. The teaching of God's word encourages those who are listening and growing. Tychicus will give a missionary report and he will teach them pertinent doctrines that they need in the current spiritual battle they are in.

Encourage your hearts. This means the total person. Not just your emotions. Many people want their emotions stimulated when under attack. They want to be told everything is alright. Well, the context here says that they will hear pertinent teaching. Like that they are being seduced by false teaching (2:4; 2:8; 2:16; 2:18; 2:20-23). As the mind under the influence of the Holy Spirit starts thinking and believing the

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truth, the whole person calms down and the Holy Spirit can then pour in His fruit like peace.

Now we are introduced to a very touchy subject today in America, slavery. Tychicus is a free man as a Roman citizen but he is going to travel with a slave named Onesimus.

Colossians 4:9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

What a beautiful verse in the Word of God.

And with him. With him as a friend and beloved brother.

Who is this Onesimus? He is a slave! Whoever named him, gave him a name which meant *useful, profitable, or even helpful*. He was probably named by the owner of his mother and saw a profit when this young boy was born. He was a slave of Philemon. He gave Philemon a lot of trouble. But, he believed in Jesus Christ as his Savior through Paul's teaching in Rome. He will voluntarily return to Philemon with a letter from Paul.

This introduces the whole issue of slavery.

From Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_slavery):

The history of slavery spans many cultures, nationalities, and religions from ancient times to the present day. However the social, economic, and legal positions of slaves

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have differed vastly in different systems of slavery in different times and places.

Slavery occurs relatively rarely among hunters because it develops under conditions of social stratification. Slavery operated in the very first civilizations (such as Sumer in Mesopotamia, which dates back as far as 3500 BCE). Slavery features in the Mesopotamian Code of Hammurabi (c. 1860 BCE), which refers to it as an established institution. Slavery became common within much of Europe during the Dark Ages and it continued into the Middle Ages. The Byzantine–Ottoman wars (1265–1479) and the Ottoman wars in Europe (14th to 20th centuries) resulted in the capture of large numbers of Christian slaves. The Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese, British, Arabs and a number of West African kingdoms played a prominent role in the Atlantic slave trade, especially after 1600. David P. Forsythe wrote: "The fact remained that at the beginning of the nineteenth century an estimated three-quarters of all people alive were trapped in bondage against their will either in some form of slavery or serfdom." The Republic of Ragusa became the first European country to ban the slave trade – in 1416. In modern times Denmark-Norway abolished the trade in 1802.

Although slavery is no longer legal anywhere in the world (with the exception of penal labour) human trafficking remains an international problem and an estimated 25-40

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million people were enslaved as of 2013, the majority in Asia. During the 1983–2005 Second Sudanese Civil War people were taken into slavery. Evidence emerged in the late 1990s of systematic child-slavery and -trafficking on cacao plantations in West Africa. Slavery continues into the 21st century. Although Mauritania criminalized slavery in August 2007, an estimated up to 600,000 men, women and children, or 20% of the population of Mauritania, are currently enslaved, many of them used as bonded labor. Slavery in 21st-century Islamism continues, and Islamist quasi-states such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram have abducted and enslaved women and children (often to serve as sex slaves).

Rome in some respects was the greatest nation or empire in history. Rome lasted for some 1000 years as an historical entity. Look at America barely 300 years and is falling apart morally. Philosophically Rome was very simple. When they had enemies, they destroyed them or enslaved them. They were a strong people. They were not a physically large people, the average Roman soldier was 5'4" to 5'6" and real tall soldier was 5'9". They were a very hardy and strong people. Rome started out as a great agricultural society. As embedded in the soil they developed a great love and respect for the soil—their land; and freedom.

They had about 300 years of history before slavery was introduced. At the time of the Punic wars, when they defeated Carthage, they had no slavery. But during the Punic wars they captured large numbers of people. On one occasion after a battle, 32,000 men, women and children

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had been taken and were sold for profit on the slave markets. (The Punic Wars were a series of three wars fought between Rome and Carthage from 264 BC to 146 BC). As a result Rome began to practice slavery.

Now the question for us is what does the Bible have to say about slavery? What does the Bible have to say about a number of social problems? We will cover this in the next lesson but let's end this one with the true understanding that every Christian is a slave of Christ! He purchased us with His spiritual and physical death on the cross. We became His when we believed on Him as our Savior. But, and here is the irony, every Christian has the freedom to serve Christ or not.

Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Many Christians prefer to go back to the slavery of the Law.

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love (Spiritual Love) serve one another.