



SERIES: Philippians (May / June)

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Monday, May 3, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 1:1-5

TITLE: Slaves of Christ

Is it a compliment or an insult to be called a slave? Is it something we should support and promote, or is it something archaic and should be silenced? That's what we want to talk about today, as we begin our two-month study of Philippians.

Here we are in a new season of Win the Day. We took two months to pursue spiritual fitness by focusing on essential Christian doctrine. Now we continue spiritual fitness by digging into a rich letter from the Apostle Paul to the Philippian church. Here's how his letter begins:

“This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and deacons.

² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

³ Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. ⁴ Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, ⁵ for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now.” (Philippians 1: 1-5, NLT)

Paul's letter to the Philippian church wasn't to correct or rebuke them, but to thank and encourage them. This is Paul's most personal letter. Some think the Philippian church was his favorite, partly due to the assistance he continually received from them. But notice how Paul introduces himself and Timothy: he calls themselves “slaves of Christ Jesus.” Paul would refer to himself this way in Romans, Philemon, and Titus. James, Peter, and Jude would also refer to themselves as slaves of Christ.

The Greek word is *doulos*. It was a bond-servant—someone who willingly sold themselves into the service of another. This is a key characteristic of a disciple of Christ. We are all slaves of King Jesus. Much like today, humility wasn't a cherished value. Power, arrogance, and prestige were the values of the day in Paul's time. Roman culture saw no value in humility. Boasting in slavery was foolishness. But for the Christian, our dependence upon Christ is a virtue – not a vice.

There's no doubt that the slavery experienced for thousands of years was tragic and horrific. And yet, we know that being a slave to Christ is a worthy call.

So here's my challenge for you today: ask yourself if you're a slave to Christ, or living as a runaway? Christ bought you with a price. He chose you, and you responded in faith. Our free gift of salvation is not a free pass to live for yourself; it's a passport to a life of fulfillment living for our King.

If you've been living as a runaway, come back to Jesus. Jesus' salvation frees us and puts us on a path that is life to the fullest. Yes, it is according to His behest, but there is nothing better.

So today, let's live like slaves of Jesus. There is no better way to live.