

“Our Boss & Our Cross!”

I. INTRO:

A. **Prayer:** Belize Team; Zach/EEO/Ukraine team; Peru Team in the chute.

1. “As we study your Word, may it study us!”

B. **Aesops Fable:** *THE WIND and the Sun* were disputing which was the stronger.

Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and **the Sun** said: “I see a way to decide our dispute. Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger You begin.” So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and **the Wind** began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller. But the harder he blew the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last **the Wind** had to give up in despair. **Then the Sun** came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his cloak on. “Kindness Effects More than Severity.”

1. Usually your boss, or coach, or teacher’s leadership style will fit into one of these 2 categories: Motivation by *kindness* or by *severity*.

2. How do we as Christians respond to **severity**? How should we?

C. Peter was talking about “*beautiful conduct*” (Gk.) in vs.12.

1. Then Peter zooms in on a particular example of *beautiful conduct*, which is *submission* in vs.13.

II. OUR BOSS & OUR CROSS!

A. **SUBMITTING TO HARSH MASTERS!** (18-20)

B. (18) **Submit** to your masters, even the unreasonable ones(**harsh**)!

C. **Master/slave** different than we picture it today. It wasn’t *disgusting racism* of modern history; **nor** the deplorable underworld of *slave-trafficking* in our own days.

1. Nevertheless, slavery in the ancient world could still be miserable, even deadly, **especially if a master didn’t appreciate his slave’s faith in Christ.**

2. Slaves were considered a social class. Somewhere between 25-40% of the population of the day.

3. **Many ways to become a slave:** as a spoil of war; children of slaves automatically became property of their masters; you could sell yourself into slavery to fulfill debt or other obligations.

4. Slavery in the ancient world was based more on social, economic, & political issues, **than** on race or ethnicity.

5. **Their work** could be as menial as cleaning **or** as brutal as mining.
 - a) *Other slaves* were well educated & held responsible positions in their households.
 - b) There were prized cooks; teachers; even physicians(Luke).
 6. The treatment of slaves depended on the temperament of their masters or mistresses.
- D. **Harsh** = *σκολιοῖς* (where we get scoliosis, curvature of the spine) bent, crooked, severe, hard to deal w/. [LKGNT; pg.754]
1. **Can anyone relate to this task master?** (I better not see my staff raising their hands!)
 2. Not for the sake of just getting *stepped on, walked on, walked over*.
 - a) What's your attitude at work? Talk about your boss to the other employees? What does your boss think of you?
- E. The bible is clearly **against slavery**, & yet the apostle did not proceed to overturn a recognized social institution.
1. He taught **principles** which would gradually & effectually undermine it.
 - a) Principles of *love, submission, conscience*.
 - b) It's maintaining **integrity**, so that God's *new way of living* shines forth clearly.
- F. **With all fear** - not the fear of masters to whom they were subject, but fear of God.
1. You can "*fear your boss*" & yet not be pleasing to God. **But** if your fear God you will *respect & show faithfulness to duty* to your boss.
 2. **Rather than retaliating, do what is right!**
- G. **Key:** Our submission then is **not** contingent on the **attitude** or **behavior** of **our superiors**.
1. Great example is Daniel who is shipped off to Babylon & has submit to a pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar...**as far as he could**, w/o sinning against God.
- H. **Daniel ch.1 - New Home** (1,2)
1. The book of Daniel is more than stories about fiery furnaces, lion's dens, & fantastic dreams. **It's about seeing God for who He is**, the Sovereign ruler of ALL nations, & living for Him w/Integrity, & Faith! (Swindoll)
 2. Daniel **shows** Gods *Guidance, Intervention, & Power* in the affairs of man.
 3. Daniel(God is my Judge) is a man of Integrity! **A model of godliness for his people**.
 - a) Was deported to Babylon from Judah as a teenager; **handpicked** for governmental service; **his** ministry spanned the whole 70 years of the Babylonian captivity; **was** 1 of the 2 O.T. writers who wrote during the exile. [Ezekiel the other]

4. **Q:** Were the Jews to believe that while they were in **Neb's brutal hands** that they were **still in Gods?**...The book of Daniel affirms w/a resounding... **YES!**
 - a) He would walk w/them through "*the valley of the shadow of Discipline!*"
5. God moves people & events according to His divine purposes! (like your boss!)
 - a) Yet Daniel will prove that even as **a small minority** in a foreign land, they could still **Trust & Serve** the Lord w/**Integrity & Faith**, in a world of *compromise & fear...& so can we!*
 - (1) Some youth think, "*Oh, to get away from home*".
But often that "*unfettered freedom*" turns into a "*baggage of bondage*"!
 - (2) Daniel proved his Faith wasn't just cuz he lived at home w/mom & dad.
 - b) Wherever we are **deported to**; **or**, wherever we are **move to**; **or**, wherever we are relocated to *because of our job...Nothing should shake our faith!*

I. **New Knowledge** (3,4)

- J. They would be trained in Chaldean Philosophy & language.
 1. Chaldeans were the learned class of their day. They were educated in Science; Mathematical Astronomy; Astrology, Divination, & Rituals.
 2. **Q:** How do you protect your mind from Babylonian Brainwashing?
 - a) Keeping your **heart washed**, prevents **brain-wash!**
 - b) Prov.4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.**
 - c) "**If your heart is right with Him, His Hand will work for you!**"
 3. A believer ought to be able to learn any subject in our **colleges & universities** today, without being defiled.
 - a) **Q:** What can we do to insulate our **Christian Worldview?**
 - b) I'm praying about doing the 12 week study of **The Truth Project. An in depth Christian World Experience.** (Focus on the Family; Del Tacket; RCSroul; Ravi Zacharias)
 - (1) Veritology(What is Truth); Philosophy & Ethics; Anthropology(What is man?); Theology(Who is God?); Science (What is True?); History (Whose story?); Sociology (The Divine Imprint); Unio Mystica (Am I alone); The American Experiment (Foundation of religion & morality); Labor (Created to Create); Community & Involvement (God cares, Do I?).

K. **New Diet** (5,8)

- L. A crisis of conscience erupted when the 1st meal was served!
 1. **Maybe it was PORKchops? Blood Pudding? Meat offered to Idols?**
 2. **Delicacies:** "**Every temptation that comes to me is packaged as a good.**"

a) Sift all activities through *Gods filter*...The Bible!

M. **New Name** (7)

N. Daniel = *God is my judge* becomes...Beltshazzar *Bel protect his life* [Bel is a Babylonian god]

1. Most likely the Babylonians hoped this would help them forget their God & help in the *Babylonian Brainwashing*!
2. Calling you a **different name** shouldn't change who you are!
 - a) "*Shorty – 4 eyes & freckle face – brace face – twiggy – nerd*".
 - b) **Having a name like "Bell"?** [Bell Bran Potato chip; Taco Bell; Liberty Bell; Dumb Bell]
 - c) **Nothing should shake our faith!** - *Not a New Home; New Knowledge; New Diet; nor a New Name!* *Nothing should separate us from the Love of Christ!*
 - d) **We need to Confront our Culture with Convictions!**

O. Turn **Tragedy** into **Triumph** by accepting your situation courageously, & put yourself in the hands of a loving God who **makes no mistakes!**

P. (19,20) **Suffering is sometimes deserved** - Christians do foolish things which involve them in trouble. **Suffering is sometimes undeserved** - and when we endure it we are **commended** or *accepted*; its a mark of *grace!* (thats our word in Greek, χάρις)

III. **JESUS, OUR ROLE MODEL! (21-25)**

A. **Outline:** *Who He Is - What He Did - Why He Did It.*

B. **WHO HE IS!** (21,22)

C. He is our sinless Savior, Jesus Christ!

D. **Example** - The word is used in *2 Maccabees 2:28* of the **outlines** of a sketch which the artist fills in w/details.¹

1. Jesus has laid out **life** to us as a giant *Paint by Numbers*, just fill in the blanks!
 - a) Like, here's the boundaries; now be creative *inside* of them. [every cross is different]

E. **Example** was also used as the model for handwriting to be copied by the school boy.²

1. Like **ABCDEF**: [written from the top of the line to the bottom of the line]
 - a) My *drafting teacher* in college was so meticulous when it came to block letters!
2. A model, or conduct for imitation.

F. **Follow** – To follow after, to follow upon, to follow closely.

1. He didn't say "**turn**" that way; He said "**Follow me!**"!

¹ Linguistic Key to the Greek N.T.: pg.755

² ibid

- G. **Steps** – Footprints! “To follow a man’s footprints is to *move* in the direction he is going!”
1. We’re **Followers of Christ** cuz we’re going somewhere & following Someone.
 2. We’ve all walked in someone else’s footprints at the beach before.
 3. Those footprints might have been **larger** or **smaller** than your feet; the stride might have been **longer** or **shorter**; you could tell if they were in a **hurry** or **strolling**; **wandering** or in a **straight line** to get somewhere.
 4. When Jesus says “*follow Me*” His steps are the **perfect stride**, always the **ideal pace**, **never wandering**, & always in a **purposeful direction**.
- H. **Wait, am I called to this?** - yeppers(21).
1. Our existence as Christians involve the idea of **suffering...period!**
 2. **2 Things: Follow your Master; & find your peace amidst affliction.**
- I. **What was His example?** Oh, even *unto death!*
1. **Why was Jesus willing, w/o protest, to submit to the full penalty due to the worst of sinners?**
 - a) 2 Cor.5:21 **For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**
- J. **WHAT HE DID!** (23,24a) [*Who He Is!*]
- K. He died on Calvary’s cross!
- L. (24) **Bore our sins** - endured its penalty.
- M. **On the tree** - to the extreme limit of shameful crucifixion.
- N. **Q: What is the Cross of Christ & why was it so important?**
1. **A:** It is the revealed truth of **God’s judgment on sin**.
 2. It is **not** a martyrdom. It was **not** “done to Jesus”. He came to die. The Cross was His purpose in coming.
 3. **The incarnation** of Christ would have no meaning w/o **the Cross**; **Christmas** would have no meaning w/o **Good Friday**.
 4. The Cross is not a cross of **man**, **but** the Cross of **God**.
 - a) The Cross is **the gate** through which any & every individual can *enter into oneness* w/God.
 - b) But it is not a gate we pass *right through*; it is one where we *abide in the life that is found there* (i.e. in the cross; in taking it up).
 5. The reason the Cross is so **easy to obtain** is **that** it **cost God so much!**

6. The Cross was the **intersection** where God & sinful man merged w/a tremendous collision, & where the way to life was opened.

a) But all the **cost & pain** of the collision was *absorbed* by the heart of God.

O. **WHY HE DID IT!** (24b-25) [*Who He Is! - What He Did!*]

P. That his wounds might heal ours! (2:24b)

Q. Healed *spiritually!* (Peter's commentary on Isaiah 53:5, not physically, but spiritually)

1. Context: **But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned - every one - to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

R. That we might turn to the Shepherd (2:25)

S. **As** a **Shepherd** He **feeds** us;

As an **Overseer** (ἐπίσκοπος = watcher/protector; Bishop) He **keeps watch** His people.

T. Rebecca Pippert, *Out of the Salt Shaker*, "Jesus gives us permission to be human. Yet we struggle to believe that God intends for us to be fully human...we're afraid that being made of flesh & blood meets with divine disapproval. The fact that we love to laugh, take a walk w/a friend, sip tea, & read a good book for the sheer pleasure of it is probably regarded from on high, we fear, w/a cosmic frown. **We forget that it was God's idea, not ours, to make us human. How do we discover what it means to be authentically human? We look to Jesus.**" [He is Irresistible!]

U. **Alternate Ending :) In the French revolution there was a young man condemned to the guillotine & shut up in one of the prisons. He was greatly loved by many, but there was one who loved him more than all put together. It was **his own father**. When the lists were called, the father, whose name was exactly as his son's, answered. And the father rode in the gloomy tumbrel out to the place of execution. His head rolled beneath the ax instead of his son's, a victim to mighty love. See here an image of the love of Christ to sinners.**