

LENEXA EDIFIER

“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

November 20, 2022

“Pierce My Ear”

by Jefferson David Tant

“If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free. When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed. You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today. It shall come about if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from you,’ because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant.” (Deuteronomy 15:12-17)

Through the years, there have been questions as to why God allowed slavery among the Israelites. In our time, the word “slave” has a very bad connotation, as we think of the eons of time that cruel slavery was practiced in many nations, and not only in the United States. But in a reading of the passage from Deuteronomy, it is evident that being a slave at that time was quite different from being a slave in recent history. The Biblical slave was well-treated, and only served a few years. One could sell himself into slavery to pay off debts and in time be set free.

In this article, I want to focus on the practice mentioned about the piercing of the slave’s ear. There would be a time when the slave was free to make his own choice. If he loved his master and his family, he could choose to remain a servant, and thus bind himself for the rest of his life. The sign of this commitment was the ritual of having his ear pierced. He would be taken to a doorpost and an awl driven through his ear lobe, which would become a permanent sign to all of the commitment the slave had made. **Exodus 21:6** mentions that the slave was to be brought before God for the piercing. Thus, the commitment is made not only to the slave’s master, but is also a commitment

before God.

Thus it continued to be long after this in Syria and Arabia, as Juvenal and Pelpontus Arbiter affirm; and it well represented the slave’s perpetual obligation to remain in his master’s house and to hear and obey his master’s commands. So, what’s the point of this centuries old story? Just this: God takes commitments seriously. When a Hebrew slave made a commitment, he was making a commitment for life, and was expected to honor that commitment which was made before his master and before God.

Is there a lesson for us today? Certainly so. When we are baptized into Christ, we are making a commitment, a lifetime commitment to be a faithful servant of our Creator and Savior. Just as the Hebrew slave was to be faithful, he was not to serve haphazardly or once-in-a-while. The slave was bought with a price, and needed to honor his commitment.

A Christian is also one who has been bought with a price. *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (I Corinthians 6:19-20)*

What was expected of the Hebrew slave? It would be obvious that he was to be obedient, that he loved his master, and that he had a good attitude and a willing heart.

And does our Master not expect the same of us? Too many who call themselves Christians are not wholly dedicated to the Master they serve, the one that bought them with his own blood that was shed on the cross.

Consider David’s counsel to his son Solomon, who is to take the throne: *“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.” (I Chronicles 28:9)*

I would suspect that if any one of us had the good fortune to be offered a reward of One Million dollars if we entered into an agreement to serve someone

faithfully for a period of time, we would make a serious commitment to fulfill our responsibilities. But what wealth can compare with the treasures of heaven and eternal life?

Why is it that so many who consider themselves to be Christians are coasting along in a lackadaisical way, hoping for heaven? Oh, they may not be leading lives of sin, but there is no devotion, no conviction, no whole-heartedness.

There is a word in the Bible that describes this attitude, this type of life. It is "lukewarm." *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."* (Revelation 3:14-16)

Consider the words of a beautiful song written by Jacob Davis:

Piece my ear, O Lord, my God. Take me to Your door this day.

*I will serve no other god. Lord, I'm here to stay.
For you have paid the price for me. With Your blood
You ransomed me.*

*I will serve You eternally. A free man I'll never be.
So pierce my ear, O Lord, my God. Take me to Your
door this day.*

*I will serve no other god. Lord, I'm here to stay. Lord,
I'm here to stay.*

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20)

It is good for us to do a self-examination from time to time to see if we are living up to the commitment we made the moment we were baptized into Christ and made a lifetime commitment

Convinced we are right, but.....

Mark W. White

There are many things we know with certainty (**Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3**) and the Lord does not intend for us to go through life unsure of what to truly believe. On the other hand, there is the possibility we feel certain about some things about which we could be wrong. It is not necessary to be unsure about everything, but it is also foolish to convince ourselves we are always right about everything. We want to be right, but we can be wrong. Humility and reality demands that we be

willing to listen to another viewpoint at times, and decide whether to reaffirm what we believe, or to make a change in belief where honesty leads us. It's hard to do.

But someone says, "Isn't this attitude unsettling? Why must I constantly reexamine my thinking and validate my convictions?" Because faith is a growth process. It is living, not dead. The apostle Peter said we should always be ready to make a defense of the hope that is in us, *"with gentleness and reverence"* (**1 Peter 3:15**). Our convictions will be challenged and we must know how to answer.

One of the most sobering passages in the Bible is found at the end of **Matthew 7**. Jesus pleaded with His disciples to *"Enter by the narrow gate,"* because *"many"* will miss it and *"go in"* the wide gate "by" the broad way to destruction (**7:13**). Jesus used that same word—"many" nine verses later to reveal what would happen at the judgment: *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* (**7:22-23**). These people, convinced they were right, marched right into eternity without the Lord! We must realize that we too could be in that crowd so convinced they were right, but just as wrong as could be! When Dr. Luke wrote his books, he depended on expert testimony from eyewitnesses and the Holy Spirit's guidance to word his position. He didn't just hope he was right on his own. *"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* (Proverbs 14:12)

~via Family News & Notes of Cy-Fair; Cypress, Texas.

Trying To Adapt The Church To Everybody

I was never an avid baseball fan, and living in Atlanta has done little to convert me. One 4th of July, however, I did agree to go with a group of Christian friends to a Braves game. From the time we arrived at the field, I knew this was going to be different. The field was covered with performing high school bands - an appeal to all who like music. And that was only the beginning. For those preferring opera, a Metropolitan Opera star sang the national anthem. For those more political in taste, the Attorney General of the United States led the

pledge to the flag. Lovers of money were tantalized by a \$500 door prize. Cartoon fans were entertained by a million dollar scoreboard featuring cartoon characters. Those living on the level of the flesh were treated to the sight of a young lady in short shorts running around the diamond sweeping off the bases between every inning. And to climax it all, there was a huge fireworks display. I don't remember what team the Braves were playing, much less who won, but that was a game I shall never forget. That was baseball for people who don't like baseball.

Far too many churches are trying to remodel the religion of Jesus Christ to make it a religion for people who don't like religion. For those desiring recreation, they offer recreation. For those desiring entertainment, there is entertainment. For those whose primary interest is secular education, they offer day care, kindergartens, schools and colleges. For those whose appetite is for food, they build church kitchens and dining rooms. The attempt is to be "the church for everybody."

Such carnal, temporal appeals were never authorized by the Lord. He intended that the church be a "called out," separated body of people. If the gospel is the only appeal, it will make that separation.

by Sewell Hall

They're "Too Conservative"

Greg Gwin

Someone who was about to move into a new community happened to mention that they were giving consideration to attending a particular congregation in that area. Certain brethren warned, "Don't go there, they're too conservative!" What is meant by such an accusation?

Is it so that the brethren at that congregation have begun to teach things that are not found in the Bible? Are they binding certain traditions that are not in the Word of God? Are they insisting that others follow their own personal opinions in areas where they cannot find specific scriptural authority? If so, those brethren aren't really "conservative" at all! They are not "*abiding in the doctrine of Christ*" (2 Jn. 9). In a sense, they are actually "liberal" in their approach because they have ceased to produce "book, chapter, and verse" for their practices. Let their errors be fully exposed, and let brethren be rightfully warned about attending such a congregation.

In reality, it is far more likely that the church that was described as "too conservative" is actually a

congregation that stresses strict adherence to Biblical authority. They probably insist that folks "do Bible things in Bible ways." There is most likely a strong emphasis on personal purity and morality. Constant reference is made to the Bible and its teachings, and members are encouraged to "*come out from among them, and be ye separate*" (2 Cor. 6:17). And while the positive, "feel good" aspects of Christianity are no doubt taught, the so-called "negative" themes – the warnings of the Scripture – are also included. False doctrines and false teachers are sometimes -- by necessity – called by name just as in the first century (1 Tim. 1:18-20). Such an approach is not popular in the world today. Therefore some dismiss a congregation like this with the charge that they are "too conservative." What we are saying is that this accusation most often comes from weak, compromising Christians who themselves refuse to take a stand for the truth.

It is really impossible to be "too conservative." The moment a church violates scriptural authority – by either failing to uphold and practice the truth, or by binding what God has not bound – they have become "liberal" in God's eyes. Instead of throwing out prejudicial 'labels', give the evidence that a congregation is violating scriptural authority (Col. 3:17) and be ready to prove your allegations. Otherwise, we suggest you keep your opinions to yourself! Think! #

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Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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- Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38
- Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10