Sermon Notes for January 5, 2014

Christians in the Marketplace

I Peter 2:18-25

Introduction

Being a Christian in the marketplace isn’t easy.

- We serve a different master – Jesus.
- We have a different value system – based on the Word of God.
- We have a different goal – to honor God.

The marketplace is:

- Competitive.
- Unfair.
- Secular.

How can we live for Christ in the marketplace?

I. Be loyal to your employer. Verse 18

Our situation is different than Peter’s, but the principles taught here still apply.

Slavery in the New Testament was significantly different than the slavery we think about in America. Two primary differences were:

- There was the opportunity for freedom.
- It wasn’t racial.

It was the way the system worked and it wasn’t always cruel and unjust.

For the record, the New Testament does condemn slave traders – those who enslave others by force. I Timothy 1:10

The N.T. would say to us, be the best employee you can be.

- Be respectful.
- Be honest.
- Be hard-working.

Let your faith show in the way you work.

“I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among the men the greatest asset I possess, and the way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement. There is nothing else that so kills the ambitions of man as criticisms from his superiors. I never criticize anyone.
I believe in giving a man incentive to work. So I am anxious to praise, but loath to find fault. If I like anything I am hearty in my approbation and lavish in my praise.” Charles Schwab

II. Be willing to suffer for being a Christian. Verses 19-20

It is pleasing to God when you are faithful to him even when it is costly.
In those times that are difficult it is important to remember who we serve.

“It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:24

Our goal is to be a witness for Christ.

“Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.” Titus 2:9-10

III. In all things, follow Christ’s example. Verses 21-25

The word example means “pattern or template”.

We were called, not to suffering, but to follow Christ. We were called:

- Out of darkness into light. (2:9)
- To inherit a blessing. (3:9)
- To his eternal glory. (5:10)

But our calling means that we will experience trials and suffering in this life.
Look to Jesus and follow in his steps.

He uttered no threats. He didn’t retaliate. He trusted God.

This is the theological center of his letter. Christ died for our sins, the just for the unjust, so we could be healed.

Conclusion

How can we be a witness for Jesus at our work or school?
What are the challenges and temptations we face?
What would Jesus do?
Keep your eyes on Jesus and follow in his steps.