**Slavery**

It is encouraging to study the life of William Wilberforce. Here was a man who grew in his faith and dedication to God, and took up the cause of freeing the slaves in England (1807), before America did so in the 1860’s.

Jesus clearly condemns the slave trade of the early Colonial America. Jesus’ messenger, Paul said, “…but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,” (1Timothy 1:9-10).

The original Greek word for “kidnappers” is translated by the ESV as “enslavers”, NRSV & NIV as “slave-traders”. So the whole colonial period is marred by this sin of kidnapping & slave-trading. But in my experience, those most offended or outraged by such moral corruption of slave-traders turn a blind eye to the killing of innocent babies, abortion. But, if you had your choice of being aborted or kidnapped, what would you choose? Surely we would choose the lesser of two evils. Why do people see the evil of one, but not the other?

There are other kinds of slavery. In ancient times a person would become so poor, that they would be forced into slavery, “Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.” (2Kings 4:1). This poor woman was rich in faith. She sought help from God, and God came to her rescue. She was delivered from falling into financial slavery and her two children into literal slavery. Credit can easily pull us into slavery today, even as in ancient times. So be careful. “The wicked borrows and does not pay back, But the righteous is gracious and gives.” (Psalms 37:21).

Jesus did not die on the cross to save us from financial slavery or literal slavery, but moral slavery - the worst kind. It is so easy to be pulled into things you know in your heart are wrong. “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:34-36). Will Jesus set you free from all moral corruption? Is this possible to become like an angel, a saint? You would have to be reborn, born again, completely made new. “Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”(John 3:5). Inside and out, a new creature (2Cor. 5:17), make me like Jesus. Disciple me into Christ. Convert my heart, mind and soul. Dan Peters