

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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SUBMISSION YIELDS GRACE

1 Peter 2:18-25

July 5, 2020

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You'll gain a lot more from the message if you'll get your Bible, turn to First Peter in the New Testament, and follow along with me.

Here are the three points to my message:

- We submit for the sake of the Lord.
- We submit for the sake of lost souls.
- We submit for the sake of our own spiritual growth.

INTRODUCTION: As we've studied the opening chapters of First Peter, we know that the Christians Peter was writing to were likely new converts who were also being persecuted to some degree. Many thought that following Christ would lead to earthly freedom. When immediate freedom was not granted to them on earth, these Christian slaves had questions.

As we'll read today, Peter's response to these issues was to submit. Thus far, in Chapter 2, we've discussed the freedom we have in our ultimate submission to Christ. Specifically, we've discussed submitting to the needs of the church by continuing to unconditionally love the body of Christ and, "for the Lord's sake," as the text says, submitting to all earthly governing authority by honoring all whom God has placed in these positions.

Today we are going to look at how these first-century Christians were called to submit to their earthly masters.

WE SUBMIT FOR THE SAKE OF THE LORD

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:18-25

Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For it is

commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

*²²“He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” ²⁵For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

EXPLANATION: I imagine the Christians Peter was writing to were asking a multitude of questions about their new position in Christ, while still suffering through this life on earth. All of these questions led to a question we often ask today, “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

RC Sproul Jr., a Christian writer and teacher said, “That only happened once, and He volunteered.”

Another writer says, “You could look at it this way: Only one time did a bad thing happen to a good person. That person was Christ. The bad thing that He suffered was the punishment that our sins deserved.” (Kristi Walker)

Be careful: this truth can be used in demeaning and dismissive ways, but in the case of 1 Peter, it is the exact opposite. In fact, this truth is quite incredible!

Let’s put it into perspective. We live in a country with rights bestowed upon every citizen. And as a citizen of this country, we are encouraged to stand up for our rights. We are encouraged to get involved in the political system. This was not the case in Peter’s day.

Yes, Peter was talking to the oppressed, but there were little to no opportunities for them to rebel and become free. It was a completely different world. Peter was not condoning slavery in any way.

Though he believed that the grace of God was better, his persistent message was not to roll over and be beaten by social injustice in the name of submission. Keep in mind, Peter was the disciple who cut off the ear of the servant of Caiaphas who was to arrest Jesus.

Notice Peter's response. First, he is addressing these Christians in a time of need and speaking about the specific injustices they are facing. Far from a "get over it," Peter explains their roles as new Christians, focusing on the new identity that they have in Christ.

Slaves, in reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your masters.

Second, he explains the only way that this submission is fruitful: *in reverent fear of God*. Without revering the Lord first and foremost, submission is futile.

We learn more about Christ's character when we strive to live like Christ.

We must understand that these Christians were expecting a Messiah that would overthrow and dominate the current Roman government. He didn't. When Jesus came to Earth, he was unassuming, and his "revenge" was not aggressive. He spoke in parables, he didn't wear royal robes, he rebuked the Pharisees, but he did not demolish them, AND he submitted to authority.

While he served no Earthly master, he exhibited righteous submission through honoring the powers that be. Through submission, Christ ultimately had the victory.

Look at the text:

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:23-24

²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

Peter is trying to relay this message to the persecuted Christians of his day. For the sake of the Lord, Christ submitted. Therefore, for the sake of the Lord, we too are to submit.

Not only do we submit for the sake of the Lord, but for the sake of others. Which brings me to our second point:

WE SUBMIT FOR THE SAKE OF LOST SOULS

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:20-22

Let's review Verses 20-22: *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

²² *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

EXPLANATION: These new believers may have been unclear what the purpose of the church was. They needed to learn how to share their newfound faith in Jesus.

We have to keep in mind that Peter's audience didn't have an out. They weren't able to resign, move to another place, or work an odd job in lieu of a career track. Their pastors weren't like today's pastors that had the option to go to a new congregation. That's just not the situation they were in. Peter was addressing how their newfound freedom would look in an earthly position that simply wasn't “free.”

Simply put, they had to work things out as a body of believers.

Peter asks these Christians to do the unexpected: *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?* Having consequence, even to the point of suffering, for something done wrong is understandable. It's expected of the world. Yet, he goes on to say that we are called to suffer for doing good: *But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

So, why? Why is it commendable to God that we suffer for his name's sake?

Because submission yields grace.

Verses 20-22 brings awareness to the Christian, new or seasoned, that suffering, injustice, and persecution are staples to a the Christian. Peter is telling them, and us, that the call to live like Christ is not an easy one, yet by following in his example, we stand as examples to those around us.

Though addressing a different crowd, Paul says this in Romans.

SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:18-21

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," ^d says the Lord. ²⁰On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

"You will heap burning coals on his head" was a phrase that meant you'll embarrass him.

You see, in submission, we are yielding God's grace that is available to anyone who turns to Him. Not just for the Lord's sake, but for the sake of the lost world around us, we are to endure.

Let's review:

We submit for the sake of the Lord. We submit for the sake of lost souls.

WE SUBMIT FOR THE SAKE OF OUR OWN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

We will discuss this more in next week's message about the role of submission in marriage, so I'll keep this brief, but Peter touches on it a bit in verse 19.

¹⁹For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.

I do not believe that Peter was saying that believers should just become door mats and let people run over them, but he did give Jesus as the perfect example. Jesus remained quiet...while...let's read verse 23 again, *he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.*

Warren Wiersbe says this, "Jesus proved that a person can be in the will of God, be greatly loved by God, and still suffer unjustly."

And even so, He entrusted Himself to the ultimate Judge: the Lord.

People, am I saying that Christ Himself needed spiritual growth? No. Yet, as the Son of God, in fellowship with Him, he submitted, suffered, and endured. And look, how many came to God through Christ?

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 7:20-24

Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

²¹Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. ²²For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.

Regardless of where we are in life, or where we were when Christ revealed Himself to us, we are to live and grow as the Lord's servants.

As we discussed last week, we must first recognize and rest in the fact that our ultimate submission is to God. In the earlier verses of Chapter 2, we discussed how that Christian submission yields true freedom. Now, we see that Christian submission yields grace: by living a life of submission, we honor the Lord, show Christ's example to the world, and grow in our own walk with Him.

No one can grow spiritually with an arrogant attitude. For God to use us we must be teachable and humble.

If you've not accepted Christ as your savior, and do now know the grace that is given to you, I encourage you to repent of your sin and believe that God raised Christ from the dead and to trust Him.

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Thanks to Jennifer Anderson for her editing assistance.

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