

1 Peter 2:11-25

Introduction

- Despite temporal circumstances, we have the wonderful & eternal blessing of salvation
- We are called to honorable living before unbelievers (2:11-3:7) and before other believers (3:8-12) while practicing humility and submission--to government, to masters (on the job) & in the home
- While living in a hostile world, we have a holy obligation to witness to Christ and the gospel

1 Peter 2:11-12 Live so as to Give Glory to God

- v11 The Christian's true home is in heaven; he/she must always have that thought guide them
 - *Foreigners, exiles*--ones who are only temporarily resident in a place; their home is elsewhere
 - Used for the patriarchs (especially Abraham) & the Israelites in Egypt as in **Genesis 23:4**
 - **Genesis 23:4** I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.
 - As "strangers" in the world, Christians cannot accept the world's ways & standards
 - *Fleshly lusts*--abuse of God-given appetites by making them self-centered rather than for God's glory
 - Human nature apart from God, without the standards, the help, the grace & the influence of Christ
 - Fleshly desires & sins include all that is characteristic of fallen human nature
 - **Genesis 6:5** The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
 - **Galatians 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - *War against the soul*--world, flesh & Devil will wage spiritual warfare against every believer
 - Our Savior has already won the war, but we still have to fight the battles
 - Expect to be maligned for what you do for Christ; return the malice with love and prayer
- ⇒ As bad as things get, God is always in control!
- v12 *Conduct. .honorable*--Christians will face onslaughts of slanderous charges as did the early church
 - Anti-Semitism was widespread, often as a reaction to Jewish view of Gentiles ("fuel for fires of hell")
 - Christians were accused of many evils:
 - Cannibalism, due to perverted words of communion ("This is my body & blood")
 - Immorality & incest, where the "Love Feast" was thought to mean sensual orgies
 - Damaging trade, as by the silversmiths of Ephesus (**Acts 19:21-41**)
 - Tampering with family relationships, because often homes were, in fact, broken up when some members of the family became Christians and others did not
 - Turning slaves against their masters, due to preaching that every person had worth & dignity
 - Hatred of mankind, due to preaching of the evils of the world and lost sinners
 - Disloyalty to Caesar, for no Christians held firm that Jesus Christ and no other was Lord; they refused to worship the Emperor's "godhead," burn incense & declare Caesar as lord
 - Every Christian is an advertisement for Christianity; a Christian life is the strongest missionary force
 - **Matthew 5:16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
 - *Day of visitation*--OT phrase that describes God's coming to judge or bless, as in Jesus' return
 - The Christians actually did defeat the slanders of the heathen, as recognized in ancient documents

- Celsus (2nd century Greek philosopher) made a systematic attack upon Christians, accusing them of ignorance, foolishness and superstition and all kinds of things--but never of immorality
- Eusebius (4th cent Church historian) wrote that the Church had demonstrated "modesty & purity of life. . . to every nation both of Greeks and barbarians" such that "the slanderous accusations which had been brought against the whole Church also vanished."

⇒ **1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

1 Peter 2:13-20 Submit to Those in Authority

- *v13-14 Submission*--from a military term meaning to subordinate oneself under another
 - *For the Lord's sake*--we are honoring God by exhibiting our trust in Him and committing to Him
 - All believers are equal before God; submission is a key theme of Spirit-filled living
 - **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
 - **Ephesians 5:21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ
 - **Barclay**: Our primary concern should not be about whom we should be over but whom we should be under. Humility will prevent the submitting person from becoming burdened, and the person submitted to from becoming overbearing. All believers must submit to each other.
 - Note that Peter wrote this with Nero, the Herods, Pontius Pilot, Festus, Felix & others in mind
 - **Matthew 22:21** "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."
 - **1 Timothy 2:1-2** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people--²for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.
 - Our culture rejects the concept of submission; rather, focus is on pride, which puts self above God
 - *v15 Foolish people*--our obedience & humility pre-empt those who are looking for reasons to criticize us
 - *v16 Cover-up for evil*--Christian freedom is never to be an excuse for self-indulgence or license
 - Christian freedom does not mean being free to do as we like; it means being free to do as we ought
 - Grace has been used as an excuse for sinning -- get more of God's love for breaking His law?
 - Even the great pagan thinkers saw quite clearly that perfect freedom is, in fact, the product of perfect obedience (Seneca: "No one is free who is the slave of his body", Cicero, Plutarch, etc.)
 - **Galatians 5:13** You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.
 - *v17 A summary of Christian duty, which highly contrasts that of the world*
 - *Honor all*--revolutionary at the time! 60M slaves, subject peoples (e.g., Israel), elite, rulers, etc.
 - *Love. . . believers*--the Church is the larger family of God & its bond must be love
 - *Fear God--fear* does not mean terror, but awe and reverence (**Prov 1:7**)
 - **Proverbs 1:7** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge
 - *Honor the emperor*--the most amazing of the four directives--at the time, Nero. Why honor *him*?
 - **Romans 13:1** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.
- ⇒ We cannot reverence others until we reverence God
- *v18 Slaves*--mainly prisoners of war; ran gamut from laborers to doctors, teachers, etc.
 - Jewish slaves were: 1) temporary indentured servants or 2) result of God's judgement (e.g., Babylon)
 - Roman slaves were often trusted & well-treated, but in Roman law were not persons but things (living tools), with no legal rights whatsoever; hence there was no legal basis for rights or justice

- Christianity brought a revolutionary concept that slave and master were equal; Christianity's influence (as shown in **Philemon**) took until the 4th century to eradicate slavery in the Roman Empire
 - *Slave* (Greek *doulos*) is often translated as *servant*--it sounds better, and is more accurate for the modern work environment. However, applied to submission to God, for us it must mean *slave* in terms of the recognition of His ownership and our total commitment
 - **1 Corinthians 7:21-23** Were you a slave when you were called? Do not let it concern you, but if you can gain your freedom, take the opportunity. ²²For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman. Conversely, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.
 - **Colossians 3:22-24** Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only to please them while they are watching, but with sincerity of heart and fear of the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with your whole being, for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴because you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
 - **Barclay:** Rome savagely crushed rebellions; to preach abolishment of slavery or rise up against it would have had even more severe repercussions than the persecutions. Rather, like leaven, Christianity had to work in the world for many generations before the abolition of slavery became a practical possibility. Peter was concerned that Christian slaves should demonstrate to the world that their Christianity did not make them disgruntled rebels but rather workmen who had found a new inspiration towards doing an honest day's work.
 - **Reeder:** With Christian influence marital anarchy, sexual anarchy, abandonment of children, establishment of the family, the care for widows and eradication of slavery all took place by the 4th century under the lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship. They confronted paganism with a Biblical world and life view and Christians made a difference because they lived differently as men and women brought to Christ. Now we are descending back into marital anarchy, sexual immorality, sexual perversion, the destruction of children with a loss of the dignity of humanity made in the image of God and it pains my heart that the church is as silent in the 21st century as it was in the 18th century and allowed the establishment of the slave trade.
- A Christian working for a Christian is not a reason for claiming exemption from discipline
- *Those who are harsh*--our submission is not contingent on the attitude or behavior of superiors
- *v19-20* Reacting as Peter directs requires humility and faith that God is in control
 - We are called to behave so as to give glory to God--as good citizens, in society and as servants
 - The Bible shows that God meant life to be ordered & He appointed the state to maintain such
 - We cannot accept the privileges that such order provides without also accepting the responsibilities and the duties which it demands
 - In NT times, submission was imposed; now participative government requires involvement & cooperation; however, our highest duty is still to God--that may at times bring issues with the state
 - **Acts 5:29** Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!"
 - Christians are not isolated units; their freedom therefore is the freedom to serve within a community
 - Christianity brought a new relationship between master & worker + new attitude to work (**Col 3:17**)
 - **Colossians 3:17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
 - Said of the popular nineteenth-century English author William Arnot: "His preaching is good. His writing is better. His living is best of all" -- May that be said of us all!
- ⇒ We are driven to submit since: 1) we must show the power of God's grace; 2) we are ever under the Master's eye; 3) we have been called to serve and suffer; 4) **Christ has been set as our example**
- ⇒ Our motivation rests fully on a Christ-focused and sin-defeating Gospel of grace and glory

1 Peter 2:21-25 Christ as Our Example

- v21 *Called*--such is sometimes for our own maturity's sake and for the greater glory of God
 - Jesus is our model of enduring unjust masters: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."
 - **Matthew 16:24-25** Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.
 - Suffering with uncomplaining steadfastness & love may show a life that leads others to God
 - v22-24 **From Isaiah 53:9** Jesus was the Suffering Servant
 - Jesus came to wholly submit to His Father's will and showed total faith in God
 - *Die to sins*--we were "in Him" when He died & when He rose, so sin has no power over us
 - *Healed*--not from bodily ills, but from the debilitating sickness of sin
 - v25 *Shepherd*--One of the oldest and often used descriptions of God
 - *Overseer/Bishop*--our guardian, protector, guide, and director
- ⇒ **Reeder:** Elect exiles will embrace their calling from Christ to suffer for Him in patient endurance, even in injustice, because His suffering both saved them and set an example for them.