

“Standing Firm in the Grace of God Series”

Lesson #3 “Submission in Suffering”

1 Peter Chapter 2:11-25

Scripture: 1 Peter 5:6-7 “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Introduction:

The story is told of a ship’s captain who during the night saw in the distance a faint light, immediately he told his signal man to send a message: “Alter your course by 10 degrees south”.

Promptly a return message was received: “You’ll need to alter your course by 10 degrees north”.

The captain was angered that his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: “Alter your course 10 degrees south...I am a captain!”

Soon another message was received: “Alter your course 10 degrees north...I am seaman first class Jones.”

Immediately in a rage of fury, the captain sent a third message knowing it would command fear “Alter your course 10 degrees south I am a battleship.”

Then the reply came “Alter your course 10 degrees north I am a lighthouse.”

-Paul Aiello, JR

Isn’t this the way we are sometimes? We want our way and we push to the ends of the earth to get it. We certainly don’t want anyone telling us what to do. As I thought about this story a sadness came over my heart when I realized that many times in the society that we live in we know the light is the lighthouse and still want it to move. Have our hearts become so hardened? And if any injustice has happened to us (Like a Seaman 1st class telling us what to do) Watch out! Guns a blazing we step into John Wayne’s boots and set things straight, because this is the American way.

Transitional Statement:

Today, we are going to talk about doing things God’s way. And, I think, at the heart of this message is the idea that its not all about us but its all about God and His redemptive plan for mankind. And the way we relate to people in this world either pulls people closer to God or pushes them farther away.

Lesson:

I. Christians are to set the example, not join the crowd!

1 Peter 2:11-12

11 “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

A. These Christians were aliens and strangers scattered among the Gentiles from their homes in Jerusalem by the persecution that broke out against the church Acts 8:1.

1. But, they were to live as aliens and strangers not engaging in Gentile ways. Jesus prayed this same thing for His disciples would be in the world but not of the world John 17.

B. Here, Peter says to abstain from fleshly lusts

1. Abstain means to “hold ones self back from”
2. Fleshly lusts are those things which are bodily and temporal that are deeply longed after and even craved.

a. They wage war against the soul.

-In other words they have eternal ramifications.

3. POINT TO NOTE: Fleshly lusts are not a sinful nature as some New Testament translations seem to promote.

- a. We are not born into sin and we are not inherently sinful
- b. Brethren we are created in the image of God to be Holy and Righteous
 - We can help ourselvesWe must help ourselves
 - We do have choice in the matter.

C. Christians God doesn't want us to join in with others embracing the idea “when in Rome do as the Romans. Or somehow taking up the idea of situational ethics which implies that the rules change for every given circumstance.

1. We are a Royal priesthood, a Holy nation the people of God
2. Born of imperishable seed.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation”.

A. So, That

1. Even though they are slandering you:
 - Speak evil against you

- Falsely accusing you
- Try to tear you down and gain the upper hand on you

2. You stay pure so that they may see your example and maybe their hearts will change.

**-Here Peter reminds us of our goal
....changing hearts for God**

II. The most powerful Christian Example we can have is Submission

A. I was talking to a friend of mine who preached a lesson on submission and titled it “The Dirty Word”. He noted that it was only dirty because we had made it that way.

B. Submission, in reality, is a wonderful thing so before we get to the next set of scriptures let’s take a closer look at Submission to understand God’s purpose.

1. Submit comes from the Greek word “hupotasso”
 - “Hupo” meaning under
 - “Tasso” having to do with rank or authority.

* Put together it means subordination or obedience to authority

POINT TO NOTE: There are 2 Kinds of Submission

- a. The Active Voice in the Greek carries the idea of putting someone in submission and this is reserved only for God.
- b. But, here in our text Peter uses the Passive Voice which means to voluntarily place oneself under.

2. At the heart of Submission is:

- a. The Realization that God is sovereign (Over and above all)

-That He is all knowing

-He is in control

-And that He has one general purpose “**The salvation of mankind**”

- c. And to that end, He has established structure and authority in this world.

-It is not because one person is better than the next or that He favors one person over another, but he wants everyone to have a chance at salvation.

-So having said that, God hasn't placed us here on earth to just fumble through life without any cause except saving ourselves.

- d. Submission is a willingness, from the heart, to trust in Him to guide and protect us
 - It is a denial of self for the Lord's purposes

3. When we are not submissive we:

- Have lost focus of God's purpose
- We have become Rebellious
 - Looking only to satisfy our own interest
 - Unwilling to deny ourselves
- *i.e. we have centered God's will around ourselves

Transitional Statement: In the following text, Peter is going to discuss with us three categories of Submission. In today's lesson we will only get to the 1st two.

III. The 1st Concerns Our Public Life (Submission to Government)

1 Peter 2:13-17

13 "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right

A. Peter says Submit or be obedient, to every human institution (Kings, Governors, Presidents etc.)

1. Yea but my question is what about those ridiculous rules they come up with?
 - a. Hunting & Fishing license
 - b. Speed Limits
 - c. Seat belts
2. God says it doesn't matter what they come up with you be obedient
 - a. Unless it is sinful Acts 5:29
3. We are to recognition that God established these governments for his purpose
The salvation of Mankind and He is working them toward His end.

-Romans 13:1ff

B. And this is for THE LORD'S SAKE

1. Here specifically it is a preposition that means through.

a. So godly submission is to be through Christ

-So when we are obeying the laws of the land we are to remember that it is a reflection on Christ because it is done through Him.

15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

A. Here submission is meant to silence the ignorant slander of foolish men.

1. Remember in Verse 12 how the Gentiles were slandering these Christians?

2. Godly submission stops the devils work dead in its tracks.

a. I wonder how many inroads the devil has had in my own life because of my own lack of submission.

16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond slaves of God”

A. Here, Peter says don't use you Christian freedom as a cover for evil.

1. Christians, you have been taken out from under the regulatory check list of the Old Law, but this doesn't give you the right to take liberty with the grace of God and make up your own rules.

2. Romans 6:1 Paul says “shall we go on sinning so that grace may abound...”

B. Use your freedom to become a slave.

1. Exodus 21:2-6 Voluntary Slave Pierce by Awl

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king

A. Being Christians doesn't give us the license to get on a high pedestal and look down at other people.

1. This reminds me of Israel's struggle in:

Obadiah 3

*3 "The arrogance of your heart has deceived you,
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
In the loftiness of your dwelling place,
Who say in your heart,
' Who will bring me down to earth?'*

2. We are to:

-Prize and value other people
-Love the brotherhood

*Fear God means to be in Awe of Him

IV. The 2nd Points to our Work Life (Submission to Masters)

1 Peter 2:18-20

18 “Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

A. The word Servant here is not the Greek word used for slaves. Servants are usually linked to hired workers with their master being their employer.

1. Peter tells us that we are suppose to submit to our master / employers
2. Be obedient and follow their directions
 - a. Even when they are not looking
 - b. Even when they are not fair
 - c. I had a friend at AEP who was always talking about God and telling others how to be godly. And, this guy always worked hard till the bosses weren't looking. Then he was a slack master. One day a fellow employee commented how it was hypocritical for him to preach God at every turn and then cheat the company when they weren't looking and he was right. His example was turning people away from God.

B. And we are to treat them with respect

1. He doesn't say they must earn the respect
 - a. He simply says treat them with respect.
2. Certainly some bosses don't deserve respect
 - The very word “unreasonable” in our text means warped
 - Bosses can be unjust and ungodly people
 - And even harsh
 - They can even make our lives miserable
3. In my mind respect comes from a heart that sees the potential in someone and somehow believes in them to be their best.
 - *You see when respect is given even when not earned it makes folks want to live up to it.
 - *So, we respectfully submit and endure even unfair and unjust treatment because of our awareness of God, knowing He is working out His plan toward the salvation of mankind.

*Could a little respect and obedience at your work place win some soul for the Lord?

- C. Its interesting just how much time we spend at work. Sometimes we spend more time at work than with our families. God wants to have an influence at our work places too and He does that through us.

19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

- A. God is pleased, when because of our awareness of Him, we patiently bear up under unjust suffering.

-What about when we bear up but not patiently...grouching and complaining is God pleased with that?

-By doing this we are paying a bill that is not even owed, therefore it is written on our account as a credit

-In the form of favor with God

-On the other hand, if we suffer because of some sin we have committed and endure the punishment of it, we are only paying what is owed, there is no plus or credit at all...there is a deficit.

- B. Our plus comes from patient endurance in suffering knowing that God is working out His purpose of salvation through us.

- C. And Paul tells us in Colossians 3:23 “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,”

V. We are called to follow the example of Christ’s Submission to God.

1 Peter 2:21-25

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. 25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

- A. So why was Christ willing to suffer for us?

1. He hadn’t done anything wrong, He was perfect in every way

2. Yet he took our sins and carried them to the cross of suffering for us.....2 Cor 5:21

B. And upon that cross those people treated Jesus unfairly to say the least. They heaped insults and falsely accused Him of many things. They spoke evil against Him they reviled him and spat upon Him.

1. Yet He was patient and loving and kind
2. He didn't strike back
 - He could have called ten thousand angels
 - He could have sent fire from heaven to smoke them all
 - *But what kind of example would that have been?
 - *How many souls would have been added to the kingdom as a result of the wrath of Jesus?
 - *Would you even be a Christian today?
3. Oh but He didn't do any of those things, but in full submission to the Father He showed them the very heart of God

-He asked the Father to forgive them saying they didn't know what they were doing.

-He even found joy in it Heb 12:1-2

C. Here Peter says this is why you were called.

1. To follow Christ's example and be willing to suffer for the sake of others.
2. One might say that God wants me to be happy.....

-NO! God wants people saved.

-And He is willing to let us suffer to accomplish it.

Conclusion:

So the question of the day is how does God change the heart of a stubborn person?

-ANSWER: By submitting servants willing to suffer in His name.

Like a lighthouse, by our examples we help steer people to safe waters.

....But, when our example grows dim people crash against the rocks and are lost forever.

Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

Has your light been shining?

Possible Questions:

Introduction Story:

1. What do you think of the captain arguing with the lighthouse?
2. Is this typical of our society today?
3. Can you remember a time when you acted like this?
4. Would the captain be a good influence for Christ?

Point I. Christians are to set the example not joint the crowd

1. How do fleshly lust wage war against the soul?
2. Is sin just part of our nature?
3. What does God think about situational ethics?
-When in Rome do as the Romans thinking....
4. Why are we to keep our behavior excellent?

Point II. The most powerful Christian example is submission

1. What is the most powerful example we can have as Christians?
2. Define submission?
3. What type of submission are we to have?

Point III. Submission to Government

1. What are some government rules you don't agree with?
2. What does submit for the Lord's Sake mean?
3. What does Exodus 21:2-6 mean to you?
4. Do other people have to earn the right for us to honor them?
5. What difference can public submission to government make for the Lord?

Point IV. Submission to Masters

1. How much time do you spend at work or working?
2. Is there a submission that is not godly?
3. Why would God want us to submit to employers who are only out to make a dollar and care very little about us?
4. How can you respect someone that is treating you terrible and why would you?

Point V. Called to follow Christs example of submission

1. What purpose have we been called to?
2. To what extent did Christ suffer and to what end?
3. What does Heb 12: 1-2 mean to you?
4. If Christ would have cursed mankind from the cross and called his ten thousand angels to smoke these rascals, who deserved it, would this have increased the number of people that God could have reached or decreased it and why?
5. Is God's Aim for you to be happy?