

1 Peter 2:18-25 Following in Christ's Footsteps

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

We are once again talking about the subject of Submission

A) You know, there are certain words that are just hard to understand or hard to grasp

B) Words that sort of grate at you. "Foreclosure" is one of those words.

1) "fired" would be another one of those words. "Inoperable" is a harsh word to hear.

C) The word - Submission is hard because it naturally grates against our idea of freedom.

D) America - Land of the Free - Home of the brave - right? Don't talk to me about Submission

But Peter is showing us that - Submission is actually a Jesus thing

A) V.16 - We are free in Christ - Yes but we are actually slaves to God

B) So Submission in any form begins with being submitted to Jesus - His Will - His word

C) But Peter is also showing us that Submission in the right setting and for the right reasons

1) **is commendable to God**

D) **And it is a good witness** - which is the theme of this section of 1 Peter

1) Key verse in this section is v.12 "Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles."

So last time we looked at Submission in relation to the GOVT -

A) When we are to submit why - but also when not to.

B) Today we are looking at Submission in the workplace

C) We see the principle in V.18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear -

1) Fear here is actually respect - be respectful

C) Historians tell us that at the time of this writing at there were as many as **60 Million slaves,**

1) In the Roman Empire

D) And In the Roman empire - Slaves were not considered to be people - just tools

The Greek philosopher Aristotle---

A) And it's amazing how people quote Aristotle and read Aristotle and think he was so cool.

B) Listen to his view on human rights: **"A slave is a living tool and a tool is an inanimate slave."**

C) One of the Roman noblemen named Varro said, **"The only thing that distinguishes a slave from a beast or a cart is that a slave can talk."**

D) And one author recommended that if you're going to buy a farm,

1) that you should toss out the old slaves to die, because they're just "broken tools."

E) So Roman in law a slave was not a person but a thing; having absolutely no legal rights whatsoever

And get this, if you were a slave and you ran away and you got caught,

A) They would brand the flesh of your forehead once you came back with a big F.

B) Not for you get an F on the test, but for fugitive.

1) Signify This is a runaway slave.

C) This is a fugitive. And he would be ill-treated the rest of his life.

1) Even put to death with no trial whatsoever

IT WAS A HARD LIFE

Now here is something that I need to mention - The Bible NEVER condones slavery.

A) But when the Bible speaks of Slavery it is often just recording it as being the social norm.

B) In a similar way the Bible never condones – polygamy –

1) but it records that Jacob and David and others had more than one wife.

C) SO the Bible does that it simply recording – what was happening -Not condoning

When it comes to the subject of slavery –

A) The gospel of Jesus Christ would actually help to eradicate slavery.

B) We see a beautiful example of this in the book with the title – Philemon.

1) Philemon was a friend of Paul the apostle – and Philemon had a slave named Onesimus

C) Onesimus ran away – ends up in Prison in Rome – where he meets Paul who is also in Prison – 1) Onesimus gets saved.

D) When Onesimus jail term is up – Paul sends him back home to Philemon

1) with the Letter that is now in our Bibles – called Philemon

E) Paul instructs Philemon to receive Onesimus back – but not as a slave but as a brother in Christ

1) In other words – don't brand him with the F on his forehead for fugitive –

2) but wrap your arms around him – and treat him as a brother

Now that doesn't mean that – Onesimus wasn't still going to work for Philemon – No he would

A) Slaves were the work force in the Roman Empire

B) Most of the teachers, doctors, managers, even actors and musicians were all slaves

C) So Onesimus was still going to have a job – working for Philemon –

1) but their relationship would now be one of being brothers in Christ

D) In fact- Slaves and Masters could end up in the same Church – could be a little awkward –

1) Your slave could be your home group leader –

E) So it was important that they learn how to navigate these waters rightly

1) Christian slaves and masters were both learning this

Now the problem that Peter addressed here seems to be in the Context of a slave working for an unbelieving Master

A) Peter instructs is that the slave needed to be in submission to their master – whether good or harsh

B) The word harsh is interesting - it means one who is crooked or bent

C) Some people are just really twisted – they are all wound up like a human pretzel -

1) bent by life/ bent by sin/ their outlook is twisted

D) Their dealings w/ others are twisted/ – know someone like that?

E) Now in those days – there were not Unions or HR departments to complain to.

1) Slaves couldn't go on strike

So Peter instructs servants – to be in submission – even when your boss is harsh or a jerk.

A) The word submissive here is very graphic – *means to rank yourself under someone else in order to lift them up & build them up*

B) Place yourself under that person – to lift them higher! – Why? – 2 main reasons

C) #1 V.19 It is commendable to God

V.19 -20 in the NLT ¹⁹ For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment. ²⁰ Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you.

The Word Commendable = it is praiseworthy

A) When you suffer injustice for doing good – **God looks on you with favor and dispenses His Grace to bear up under the pressure.**

B) Maybe some of you here work for a boss who is difficult –

1) Catch this when you endure that with a good attitude – It is praiseworthy to God

2) He is going to give you daily grace to bear up under that pressure.

C) But there is a flip side: Peter says – if you are punished for doing wrong – for being a lousy worker

1) You cut corners. You don't finish the job. You get in trouble – there is nothing praise worthy about that.

I read about a pretty intensive survey that was done – where they discovered that American workers admitted to goofing off 20% of the time.

A) That's one whole day per week, essentially

B) Workers admitting to spending time on the job

1) browsing the internet – personal calls – extra-long lunches or breaks

C) 20% of their time on the job was spent on personal matters having nothing to do with their Job

D) Christians should be the best workers in a company – because we are working for God –
1) not a pay check

Here are Two verses I have adopted that have served me well in the places where I have worked.

A) "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" Colossians 3:17

B) "Whatever you do, DO ALL to the glory of God" – 1 Corinthians 10:31

C) You work with that mentality – and your bosses will take notice and you will be trusted and rewarded

1) My experience with Alpha Beta. – Best worker – Hot shot

I've told you before about those three workers laying bricks to construct a church building.

A) A young boy came up to the first worker and said – what are you doing – he said I am laying bricks – with a Scowl – don't bug me kid.

B) The boy went up to the 2nd worker and asked the same question – what are you doing –

1) that man said – I am earning a living

C) But when he asked the 3rd man the same question- What... doing? The man responded –

1) I am building place for people to come and worship God –

D) the boy remarked that man seemed really happy about what he was doing.

1) It is all about perspective.

So the first reason for submitting in our workplace even when our boss might be a tough to deal with

A) is this: it is Commendable before God –

B) But the 2nd reason is even greater – In doing so we are following the Example of Christ

²¹For to this you were called, (Our Calling as Christians) because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²²“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;

B) Now The word Peter uses for example is very vivid.

1) The Greek word is hupo/grammos, which means literally writing under,

C) In ancient times when they wanted to teach little kids their ABCs, - place paper over letters – trace

So this is what Peter has in mind Jesus Christ is the one by whom we are trace the behavior of our life,

A) whether good times or bad times.

B) And so the reason why we put up, endure harsh circumstances and harsh people,

1) is because Jesus did it.

C) The text says we're following his steps; literally footprints, footsteps.

1) Like a dad walking in the snow & his son is following behind him putting his little feet in Dad's big footprints.

**D) We are following in the footsteps of Jesus –
Song - I have decided to follow Jesus -no turning
back.....**

1) Where are those footprints headed? – to Calvary –
to the cross

**E) Deny yourself – pick up your cross and follow
me**

1) Realizing that in this life there is going to be
suffering and persecution

**Peter wants us to pay attention TO HOW Jesus
suffered**

#1 He didn't fight back –

**A) When they were reviling against him – he
didn't revile in return**

**B) To revile means to rail on someone – Jesus
dealt with that his whole life –**

1) Because of his mother Mary – being pregnant
before marriage he was called an illegitimate child

**C) During his ministry he was called a
blasphemer/ on the cross he was mocked –**

1) But he never fought back – he never railed on
his accusers

Notice Peter says – He didn't even threaten

**A) Jesus didn't say - "Wait till after the
resurrection. I know where you live."**

**B) Now, it's not like he didn't have backup, right?
I mean, he had backup; am I right?**

**C) Remember when Peter tried defend Jesus in
the garden at his arrest – Jesus said Peter – put
away your sword**

1) Don't you know that I can call Twelve legions of
angels – A Roman legion was over 5,200 soldiers

**D) So in essence Jesus was saying – don't you
know I can call – over 62,000 angels to defend me
if I wanted to.**

1) Jesus didn't need angels – he could have spoke
and all of his enemies would have been obliterated-

2) He had that kind of power

**In fact Jesus said nothing – and when he finally
opened his mouth – this is what came out -
"Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are
doing."**

A) Come on are you serious

**B) Which is no doubt – why the one thief on the
cross had a change of heart**

1) Never seen anyone suffer with such dignity

C) He goes from reviling Jesus himself to asking –

1) Lord would you remember me when you come
into your kingdom?

**D) So Jesus didn't Revile – didn't fight back –
didn't threaten – didn't seek to get even**

**This is our dilemma – it is a lot more fun to get
EVEN than to FORGIVE. - Am I right?**

**A) Some of you are looking at me like – "I have no
idea what you are talking about Pastor Rob – I
always forgive!"**

**B) Hey, if it would have been me, I might said
"Father, fry them, flatten them. I don't deserve this."**

1) It is so natural to want to fight back.

**C) It is like the maid who worked for a large
estate – where the family was made up of
ungrateful spoiled brats**

1) One day she was fired for no reason.

**D) Well on her way out the door they were all
standing around, and she took a five dollar bill
out of her purse and threw it to Fido the family
dog.**

1) And the family said, "What's that for?"

**E) She said, "I never forget a friend. And that's
for all the times he helped me clean your dishes."**

1) Ooh that felt so good for her to say that.

2) And we laugh at that because we know that
would feel good.

**That is not the way of Jesus – he didn't fight back
– he didn't threaten – why**

**A) #3 He committed himself to God - to him who
judges justly V.23**

**B) Here's the picture Peter is painting: with every
new insult leveled on Jesus, Jesus said, "Father,
I'm committing that to you";**

1) with every abusive word, "Father, I'm giving that
to you";

2)with every punch to his face , "Lord, I'm committing that one to you";

C)with every snap of the whip, "**Father, I commit that to you.**"

1)And over and over, repeatedly, until finally on the cross he said,

2)"Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit," and he bowed his head and he died.

Guys it is so important that we learn to do the same thing.

A)We live in a fallen world – with fallen people – who do things and say things – hurtful

B)And if we don't learn to put those things into the hands of our heavenly father who judges justly –

1)**you'll become a very bitter person**

C)Bitterness will tear you apart – bitterness will defile you and those around you.

1)bitterness will destroy you –

D)Think of how many relationships get torn apart by anger and holding on to that grudge.

"Oh, I got my cool, little grudge.

1)I'm taking my grudge home and I'm gonna nurse it and feed it and pet it."

E)**No. Let it go. Commit it to God**

1)You just keep giving it that to God – knowing trusting – he will deal with that situation and person in his time

Now Peter tells us there was a reason that Jesus did this:

A)#4 He saw the big picture – V.24 the purpose of his suffering

24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, **that we**, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

B)Jesus Knew the purpose of his suffering –

C)It was so that our sins could be forgiven – we could be saved – we could be healed of all our hurts

D)We were all like Sheep going astray – going **our own way** –

1)Jesus came and died on the cross to rescue wayward Sheep

E)**Brought into relationship with God**

Now we have a Shepherd – good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep

A)He loves us – for us – overseer of our souls

B)Now our future is bright

C)Now This is Peter's point in using this analogy

1)– If we respond to those who treat us badly the way that everyone else in the world does

D)**No one will see Jesus in us – no one will see a difference** –

1)no one will be drawn to Christ by our witness – Nothing honorable about that v.12 Live honorably

But if we can follow the example of Jesus –

A)People who don't know Jesus will see **something in us – Jesus followers**

B)They don't see anywhere else in the world. –

1)There is a difference – Honor – a beauty – dignity

Pastor Rob I get what you are saying – but this is hard – I am just not that spiritual.

A)I get it and believe me My natural tendency is to complain about our GOVT.

B)My natural tendency is not respect the man or the office

C)My natural tendency **isn't to suffer patiently** – when I am being reviled I want to revile back –

1) if me or my family is threatened – Give it to them w/ both barrels

D)And My natural tendency is I don't want to commit things like that into the hands of Him who judges rightly –

1)that will take too long – I want Justice right Now

But here is what I want to leave you with today – Jesus is not just our example he is our supplier

A) If Jesus is only my example – this is discouraging – I can't on my own be like him

B) This is the beauty of the Christian life – Jesus is Risen – he lives inside of us by his Spirit –

1) He helps us and empowers us

C) V.24 again we see the means – How the power is unlocked *who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness*

We died to sins – When Christ died – we died w/ Him –

A) and we continue to die to sins – the natural tendencies of the Flesh

B) Having died to sins that **we might live** for righteousness –

1) the word might used there is not passive – like it is a 50/50 chance -

C) Might is ACTIVE – that he would empower us with MIGHT to live for righteousness

Remember in Chapter 1 Peter said we were born again to living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead

A) We often think of that Hope as only talking about Heaven

B) But it is so much bigger than that.

1) Hope = Absolute expectation of coming good –

C) Idea – everything that Jesus ever promised we can bank on it –

1) Live with an absolute expectation of coming good

D) That promise is going to be a reality in my life

Hope that we have in Jesus – Absolute expectation that:

A) We can stand strong in his Power – Ephesians 6:10

B) We are more than conquerors – Romans 8:37

C) We are never forsaken – Hebrews 13:5

D) He will complete the work in us that he started – Philippians 1:6

E) List goes on and on – All the promises and yes and Amen in Christ

Close today: Maybe you are in a situation right now that is hard – hard time submitting to

A) Commit your heart to Jesus today – Lord I am giving that to you

B) Commit that situation to Jesus – **He wants to meet you today –**

1) Dispense his grace to help you bear up under the pressure

C) **Humble ourselves before him and he will lift us up**

D) He resists the proud but gives grace to the humble

E) One way to humble yourself is to admit your need