Radiant Church, October 8, 2017

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**Submission to Masters**

**1 Peter 2:18-25**

Peter shifts his emphasis on submission to authority from last week’s passage:

He moves toward the authorities (bosses, supervisors) directly over us

He specifically talks about unjust authorities over us

1 Peter 2:18 *Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.*

Scott Bartchy/historian:

“Central features that distinguish 1st century Greco-Roman slavery from that later practiced in the New World are the following: racial factors played no role; education was greatly encouraged (some slaves were better educated than their owners) and enhanced a slave’s value; many slaves carried out sensitive and highly responsible social functions (doctors, teachers, government administrators, etc.); slaves could own property (including other slaves!); their religious and cultural traditions were the same as those of the freeborn; no laws prohibited public assembly of slaves; and (perhaps above all) the majority of urban and domestic slaves could legitimately anticipate being emancipated by the age of 30.”

Some people were born into slavery through their mother’s side

Others chose to indenture themselves to a slave master as slaves

Slaves could buy their own freedom, and the freedom of family members

Slavery was a better employment option for poor people, people in debt or people new to the area than was running around looking for odd jobs

1 Peter 2:19 *For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.*

This is a short, pithy statement Peter makes. Our perspective, really what we hope in and for, is what determines how we respond to hard times and unjust suffering.

1 Timothy 4:10 *For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

We cannot endure sorrows and/or suffering for unjust/unfair reasons, unless we have our hope in something greater than our own vindication

We can evidence God to our tormentors when we respond to their torments with grace.

1 Peter 2:20 *For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*

Let’s ask ourselves a hard question: “How often do we pay a price because we are Christians living like Christians?”

We often get confused. We too often think something happening to us is unfair. We have a hard time seeing that much of our own heartache is a result of our own poor decisions, borne out of our poor motivations, which are in turn borne out of the false idols we may be chasing instead of Jesus.

As believers who have been made free from being forced to sin, we can now see sin for what it is. In other words, we can “own our own sin” because we’ve been freed from that very sin.

When reading any passage in Scripture, we need to learn to ask the question: “Where is the gospel in this?”

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

When we believe the gospel, that we are no longer under judgment, the Spirit can train our hearts to have more compassion for our tormentors…because they are under condemnation. They’re living under a death sentence, and we’re not.

Ron Sider, in his book Christ and Violence:

“Following Jesus does not necessarily mean acquiescence to injustice…but it does mean that if the Christians obey the biblical command to follow Christ’s example, they will refuse to regard oppressors as enemies to be reviled and hated. Rather, precisely as they remember that Christ died for their sins while they were still enemies of God, they will imitate God’s unfathomable love for enemies incarnated in His Son’s cross.”

1 Peter 2:21 *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

In the business world, Christians should not be known for their assertiveness as much as they are known for their industriousness, their work ethic, their kindness, their fairness and their honesty

In our personal lives, we need to suppress the desire to be noticed. Our desire for “justice” is more often than not a desire to be seen as important, as significant, as worthy of honor

In our personal finances, we display the gospel when we inconspicuously choose to follow Jesus in every adventure and share our possessions

Church members can learn to give themselves in self-sacrificing surrender to one another

1 Peter 2:22-23 *He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

Jesus left His own vindication in the hands of His Father

He didn’t fight for His rights, He willingly relinquished His rights for us

1 Peter 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. But his wounds you have been healed.*

Suffering is the divinely intended manner of bringing the greatest victory of God into the world

1 Peter 2:25 *For you were straying like sheep, but now have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

So four questions to ask yourself:

1. Are there observable attributes in you that point to the gospel?
2. Are there observable attributes in you that really don’t point to anything?
3. Are there observable attributes in you that actually point away from the gospel?
4. What do I really want my life to point to?

Tim Keller, prayer: Lord Jesus, I confess that in my public life I am just not different enough from my neighbors and co-workers to attract either hostility or interest in my faith. I am not visibly happier, kinder, more humble, or wiser than others. O Lord, help me to grow in grace so I can be a credit to you, to whom I owe everything. Amen.