

1 Peter

Part 8 – A New Lifestyle as a Christian

1 Peter 2:13-25

Submission is not an attractive word these days. Most people don't wake up in the morning and think about all the ways they can joyfully submit to the rule of another person or their civil authority. Just consider how faithful you are to stay under the speed limit signs! We would rather serve others in what we have to do in order to do what we really want to do. The end goal is our aim. Even today our society encourages us to work hard for the sake of liberty and not servitude. If you work hard enough then you'll get what you want: less responsibility. This line of thinking believes that having fewer responsibilities in life is the gold standard of liberty. But when Peter teaches the early church about true liberty, many things were turned upside-down.



Main Idea: We live in the world as God's citizens by the power of the gospel ready for good works.

1. We must submit to our civil authorities with good works... (vv. 13-15)

- For more on Peter and Malchus (see Matthew 26:51-56; Luke 22:47-51; John 18:1ff)
- St. Augustine of Hippo writes *City of God*, published in 426 AD
 - The City of God: The place of God's Kingdom established through the proclamation of the gospel, uniting a people who possess a new heavenly citizenship.
 - The City of Man: The world that is against God, whereby men and women live by in passions of their flesh for self-glory (also called *The City of Destruction*).
- Human governments are established by God, and they should reward good works and punish disobedient works.
- You can be one of two types of people who respond to this: One who follows every civil rule perfectly, the other who finds all the exceptions to the rule.

2. ...because out of your heavenly freedom flows service to God and others (vv. 16-17)

- "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all" (Martin Luther, *On the Freedom of a Christian*).
- If you're in Christ, you're free from validating yourself before God on the basis of your civic submission and involvement.
- The gospel is the only true antidote to the ills of humanity. The church has been established to dispense this antidote for the coming judgement so that people who were once enslaved to sin are freed by Christ.

- **Integrity** – As servants of God, Christians need to have integrity. We will find over and over again that the laws of God are *not* always welcome in the City of Man. We have to navigate our citizenship on Earth with the understanding that our freedom in Christ makes us servants to God's law first, and to the extent we can submit to society's laws, we should do so with eagerness in our hearts.

3. **Submit to your earthly masters with good works, even the unjust... (vv. 18-20)**

- Slavery in the Roman Empire was different from American slavery.
- Servants or slaves were in the empire as a result of war, poverty or they were born into it. They would belong to the master of the household and would be educated or wealthy, uneducated or poor within the limitations of that particular household.
- American slavery by comparison was race-based, had very limited paths to freedom, and rested on kidnapping which according to Scripture is a sin and was a capital crime under the Mosaic law.
- The glory of the City of God is showcased in the gospel witness of a servant, who humbly and quietly gives his or her respect to their masters because Christ has done something new in their hearts.
- **Confidence** - Christianity brings the confidence that righting injustices is ultimately in the hands of God. There is no greater justice than knowing that any sin done to me for doing good, is ultimately against God, and God knows how to judge justly.
- Peter teaches here that there will be consequences in the City of Man not only for doing wrong, but also for doing good!
- The reward for being a Christian in this life is most often in the context of unjust suffering. It is there that we experience the gracious care of God.

4. **...therefore, imitate your Lord because your Lord suffered for you (vv. 21-25)**

- Peter says the greatest honor in this life as a Christian is to suffer for doing good. In this way, we are partakers of Christ's life.
- **Meekness** – Enduring suffering as a Christian with patience and without resentment. It is a quiet trust in God, that the world isn't collapsing in on me because God is "out of control," but that God really does control the affairs of the day so that I do not have to threaten back or verbally abuse others for their sins against me.