

“Anchored” *The Book of 1 Peter*
Class Notes
Session 14

1 Peter 2.11-12 Verse 11 begins a new section in Peter’s exhortations, as Peter now seeks to emphasize that God’s people are “beloved of God” even though they are facing serious trials and struggles.

It is precisely that they (we) are God’s beloved, that we (they) experience life in this world as “sojourners and exiles.”

In light of being “strangers in a strange land,” Peter now exhorts believers to live accordingly!

While it is never easy to live the life of faith, particularly when you are being persecuted and challenged in many ways, the struggle is necessary and a part of the Christian journey.

“The depth of the struggle in which believers are engaged is explained by the words “which war against your soul.” Obviously the desires of the flesh that emerge in believers are quite strong if they are described in terms of warfare, as an enemy that attempts to conquer believers. Such desires must be resisted and conquered, and the image used implies that this is no easy matter. The Christian life is certainly not depicted as passive in which believers simply “let go and let God.” The “soul” here does not refer to the immaterial part of human beings. The whole person is in view, showing that sinful desires, if they are allowed to triumph, ultimately destroy human beings.”¹

Just as Jesus commanded His disciples to “Let your light shine...” Peter adds a similar command.

Christians are to live in such a way that, paradoxically, the very accusations of evil in the sight of unbelievers are really God’s ways of salvation, which will ultimately vindicate the believer and bring God glory as well!

1 Peter 2.13-16 Peter continues to describe the integrity of believers.

In this text, the first issue Peter describes is the believer’s relationship to human institutions and government, a similar point that Paul makes in *Romans 13.1-2ff*

Interestingly, Paul put family relationships first in his list, yet Peter puts government authorities first.

Christians are to be in “subjection” ... ὑποτάσσομαι (*hypotassomai*)... “To bring under control.”

“Submission is subjecting or subordinating oneself to someone or something else. Christians are called on to submit voluntarily to every authority instituted among men (Rom. 13:1). This includes accepting one’s role in society...That is, believers commit themselves to doing what is deemed right according to the norms of one’s own culture, assuming of course that what society calls “right” does not require a direct violation of God’s commands.”²

This submission is described two ways... First, it is rendered to human beings/leaders...Second...It is God’s will!

Submission to God is always the primary allegiance. An early church example...*Acts 5.27-29*

¹ T.R. Schreiner. *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003).

² L.O. Richards. *The Bible Reader’s Companion* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991).

It is critical to understand that this command to submit to authorities, in no way is a command to condone ungodly behavior and to violate God's Word.

It is often the case that Christians are condemned and persecuted for not obeying the governing authorities.

Peter is affirming again that this submission will silence the ignorance of others.

By submitting to government, Christians demonstrate that they are good citizens....We are also to *pray* for all!

1 Timothy 2:1-4.

As Christians, we are free to be servants (See the paradox?)...We are free because what is asked of us is what we want to do in obedience to our Heavenly Father!

The freedom of a Christian is the freedom to serve...to give of ourselves to others for their well-being.

"A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject of all." (Martin Luther. *The Freedom of a Christian*).

This is the thankful response of believers to our Lord for His love for us. D.A. Carson sums up the issues clearly:

"...Christian freedom is the liberty to live as the *servants of God*, fulfilling his will...It is not, therefore, the license to please oneself, under the pretext of "permissiveness." Four brief commands sum up these practical requirements: *everyone* is to be shown respect, as those for whom Christ died and in whom the divine likeness can be restored; *the brotherhood of believers* is to be loved; *God* is to be approached with worship (*i.e.* reverent fear; see Heb. 12:28–29); and *the king* is to be treated with respect..."³

Going Forward...

- Martin Luther..."We must recognize in our hearts and believe that we receive everything from Him and that He is our God. Then out with it, and freely and openly confess this before the world—preach, praise, glorify, and give thanks! This is the real and only worship of God, the true office of the priest, and the finest, most acceptable offering" (AE 14:32)."⁴
- We need to let our lives witness for Jesus, no matter what our circumstances.

³ D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer, and G.J. Wenham Eds. *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

⁴ Quoted in, *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).