

# EXILES

LIVING IN HOPE  
1 & 2 PETER

SERMON TITLE: Subversive Submission  
SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:11-25

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PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

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Identity is an ever-present buzzword. This should especially be true for Christians. We are chosen, loved, forgiven, and secure in Jesus. But Peter reminds us of another part of our Christian identity—we are exiles. The "world as it is" isn't our home. We are pilgrims on a journey, telling others along the way about the wonderful things God has done in calling us out of darkness and into his light. And just like Peter's personality, these two letters that share his name are bold invitations to cling to a living hope in the face of any suffering that may come our way.

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For the last few weeks, we have been listening to the apostle Peter as he urges his exiled friends to reorient the way they think and act in a world that is growing more and more hostile to their faith in Jesus. What Peter says to them is also a challenge to us as followers of Jesus today. *The fact is, we live in a post-Christian world.* Our country has undergone a seismic shift from the beliefs and values held by most Americans 60 years ago. Secular culture today, and by that, I mean, the "elite framework that drives our culture—media, Hollywood, nearly all public education—has become the dominant culture and Christians today are in the absolute minority. We must reorient our thinking and begin to see ourselves as exiles. We must learn from Peter what it looks like to faithfully follow Jesus as exiles in a society that not only recognizes our beliefs and values as wrong, but also as dangerous.

In 1 Peter 2:11-12, (that we looked at last week), Peter headlines a "big idea" that he will unpack starting in 2:13 and running all the way through 4:11. The "big idea" is something like—"Live an attractive lifestyle among people who are antagonistic to your faith. Do good to them regardless of how they treat you." And then in 2:13-3:7 he says, "This applies to how you relate to your governing authorities and to how you relate to those in your homes." But Peter uses a word to describe exile faithfulness that rubs a lot of us the wrong way.

**READ** 1 Peter 2:13-20 — This week we won't walk straight through this passage point-by-point. Instead, I want to make three general observations about what Peter says here about faithfulness in exile.

(1) Peter calls us to a lifestyle of submission (2:13,18; also 3:1, 7) The word "be subject"(ESV) occurs three times in this passage. It is the Greek word, *hypotasso*, which means to put yourself under someone else. It's the word "submit" —*ouch!* Submission means to *voluntarily put yourself under someone else to support them and to do them good.*

Going back to v12, Peter is saying--Live an attractive lifestyle among unbelievers and to do them good *by* putting yourself under them in ways that show them honor and respect. Submission is not something forced—it is something you do voluntarily. "Voluntarily" comes from v.16—*Live as people who are free...free as servants of God.* Only people who live free as God's servants can voluntarily/freely put themselves under someone else to serve them for their good. So according to Peter, a lifestyle of submission is the way of the exile—but it's not the way we tend to operate, right? Most of us resort to one of two automatic reactions when we feel we've been wronged or mistreated. First, the aggressive reaction. Second, the passive-aggressive reaction. Peter urges is hurting friends to not hate the people who are causing them hurt. He calls for a reaction that's 180° opposite from how we naturally react to insult and injury. He calls us to a lifestyle of submission. It just doesn't fit with our "Americanized" version of Christianity that tells us we must always stand up for our rights. *Nevertheless...*

(2) Peter says a lifestyle of submission is the "will of God." (2:15; compare also 2:3, 19, 20, 21)

A summary statement of these two points might be something like—*It is God's will that as faithful exiles, we put ourselves under those whom God has put in authority over us to respect them and do them good.*

And this applies to people in positions of governmental authority—national leaders, decision-makers, law-enforcers (2:13-17) and then the principle is applied to household servants in a typical Graeco-Roman home (2:18-2).

Side road—*Why doesn't the Bible condemn slavery?* First, it doesn't mean that God approves of slavery. *So what gives?* Had Peter and Paul led the charge against the human institution of slavery, it would mean leading the charge to overthrow the government and that would have eclipsed the Gospel message. It would also be in direct violation of what the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to write in v13—*Submit to every human institution for the Lord's sake—for the Gospel's sake.* Again, had they not obeyed v13 the Gospel would have been lost in a political uprising. It would take 100s of years for the time was right to undo the injustice of slavery through democratic processes, and it was Christian who led the way of abolition in both England and the United States.

The common focus running through this entire passage is that of submitting to people in authority even if they are unjust or harsh. Again, as we saw last week, Daniel and his three friends are great examples of how to live as faithful exiles in an anti-One-True-God nation. Submission doesn't always mean silence, but it does mean when you object you do so with respect and humility.

(3) Subversive submission is the way of the exile. It is what we learn from Jesus (2:21-25).

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### Discussion Starters

Have someone people read 1 Peter 2:11-25 then ask...

1. Talk about how you are making the adjustment to the idea that we are living in a post-Christian culture? How is it reorienting the way you think about being faithful to Jesus
2. Read point (1) above—then ask—When you hear that we are called to a lifestyle of submission, how does that sit with you? Which of the two automatic reactions do you find yourself leaning into when you feel you've been wronged or mistreated? What would have to change in your thinking to embrace this idea of putting yourself under other people to show them respect and do them good—especially those you hotly disagree with?
3. Read point (2) above—then ask—How does knowing that *it is the will of God that you do good to those who are hostile to your faith* help you make necessary changes in your life? Are there specific examples in your life right now, where the Holy Spirit might be pressing you with this truth? What would it look like to obey and follow his promptings?
4. Talk about examples in the story of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego where they did take a stand.
5. What is the "subversive submission" of Jesus? What is it about the way Jesus went to the cross that instructs in how we deal with insults and threat and people who cause us pain?
6. What is your biggest "take away" from this passage—this message?