

A feminist film captures a statement made by a proponent and catalyst for this movement: “Don’t tell me what I can’t do.” This by all accounts also happens to be the mantra and guiding statement for most peoples lives. Isn’t that true.

Well, within this very statement there is harbored the seed of pride and hatred toward authority. Our pride begins with our belief that we are self-sufficient, superior and able to accomplish things in and out of our own volition. This pride is the same pride that surfaced during the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. The root from which our pride is grown, gains its nourishment from our desire for our own glory. We desire people and the world to make much of us. Unfortunately we bring this attitude into our relationship with the Creator as well. In light of Him, we still find a way to make much of ourselves. And today, this is how most people listen to God, read His word, and follow His commands—in pride. Peter wasn’t much different. He struggled to submit to the Word of God. Instead of submitting and conceding that He needed God’s word to instruct Him, Peter always maintained the posture throughout the Gospels of the one who “instructs God.” Peter’s struggle is ours as well, but we will learn from Peter’s mistakes and also find true freedom in the humbling lessons he learned.

Although Peter was granted a special place amongst the ranks of the disciples, it is clearly noted that Peter struggled with authority and submission. As a leader himself, Peter displayed his impulsivity in many situations, such as when in haste he chopped off Malchus’ ear¹. Jesus had explained to Peter and the disciples many times that “this cup” had been given to Jesus by the Father. Rather than trusting Jesus in his authority, Peter refused to accept the proclamation of Jesus and this led to an outlandish and disobedient act in the garden.

Many times Peter did not heed Jesus’ warnings. In Matthew 16:21-23 Jesus again explains to Peter that he would have to suffer and die. Jesus, as in many circumstances throughout the gospels, was foretelling and preparing the disciples for the inevitable. But Peter, in his hot headed and zealous manner proceeded to rebuke Jesus in his claim. He rebuked and challenged Jesus so vigorously, that Jesus recognized that Satan was working in Peter’s words to tempt him. Jesus had to rebuke Satan in this case and put him in his place. Once again Peter displayed a haughty spirit toward authority. He refused in some manner to follow Jesus’ claims, when they didn’t align with his natural way of reasoning. Instead of seeing Jesus as his leader, Peter often times saw himself as Jesus’ protector. And when Peter was arguing with the other disciples about who would be greatest in the kingdom, Peter argued persuasively in order to prove his special place in Jesus’ heart. It was true, he did indeed have a special calling, and it came at the word of Jesus. However, Peter viewed Jesus’ role and kingdom in the wrong way. Peter’s view was that he would be ruler. He was motivated by his desire to BE in authority not in his desire to submit to authority.

This perspective of Peter continued, and it culminated on the night that Jesus washed the disciples’ feet—right before he was to walk the road to the cross. Peter’s response to Jesus’ humble action is telling. Peter couldn’t believe that Jesus would do such a thing—acting as a slave and servant. In Peter’s mind Jesus was his leader, not his servant.

¹ Jn. 18:10, 15

However, Peter didn't realize that a servant, submissive posture is what produces the greatest leaders.

Jesus' words of earlier instruction to the disciples is paramount; "a student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher and the servant like his master²." In this verse, Jesus was teaching servant hearted leadership. Jesus was teaching what it is to be submissive to authority, even in leadership. We can see that throughout Jesus' ministry he was constantly training servant hood into the hearts of the disciples through menial tasks, such as when he asked them to prepare the Passover supper³, or when he had them collect the bread in the feeding of the five thousand. Even though it was a constant teaching of Jesus, it just didn't quite sink into Peter's way of thought. However, we see evidences in Peter's ministry, post-Pentecost, that suggest otherwise. And we come to one such passage here in 1 Peter 2:13-25.

I want you to keep Peter's struggle with authority in mind when you read this passage. I struggle with this passage, as probably you will too. I'm not going to claim to answer all your questions in this message. More so, I'm promising that I'm probably going to stir up even more fire and questioning in you.

But we're going to see a truly Christ-like portrayal here by Peter. Reading these words from an aged Peter are going to give us incredible insight into some important lessons he learned—ones that tamed him and caused him to welcome a posture of submission rather than fight it.

I want you also to keep in mind the brutality of Peter's situation as he wrote this letter—we'll be referring back to it often. Peter is writing during the reign of Nero. A tyrant. The atrocities that Nero waged upon Christians specifically were previously unheard of, and a telling foreshadowing of the Holocaust horrors of Hitler. Nero's hatred for Christians was spreading, and it is into this context that Peter penned this letter. We cannot venture to understand the depths of torment that Nero was unleashing, but he was mutilating Christians mercilessly, burning them as lanterns at his garden parties. Nero was filled with vengeance toward the God of the Bible, and was clearly adverse to any of Jesus' commands and the injustices that were going on were horrendous.

Yet, here...Peter writes to the believer's about submission to authority. Not just any authority, but in 1 Peter 2:13 he says, "submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to **every** authority instituted among men." Peter lumps in **every authority here**. What does that mean in the GREEK— EVERY. Every authority. And just to make sure we don't leave anyone of you out of this, turn to Romans 13:1; "**Everyone** must submit himself to the governing authorities, **for there is no authority except that which God has established.**" We not only need to include every authority, we need to note that in regards to submission, it is every person's God given responsibility. No one is excluded. God has established the authorities that exist, and we need to learn His purposes in their governance.

² Mt. 10:24

³ Lk. 22:8

Yes, Peter is lumping Nero into the mix, and with Paul's writings included I want to make sure and lump you in as well. We all are included in this message of submission. Not only we are included, along with the leaders of today, but many other leaders throughout the Old Testament.

You remember King Cyrus from the book of Ezra? Cyrus was a wicked King from the Old Testament who worshipped the God Madok. And God worked through him to rebuild the temple even though he wasn't a believer. In Daniel we remember Nebuchadnezzar, who before he came face to face with the living God, was an evil King. Daniel submitted to his authority even though Nebuchadnezzar worshipped false gods, forbade Jesus worship, and consorted spiritists, witch doctors, and soothsayers for his direction. Not to mention Joseph serving with pagan Pharaoh, and David paying honor to King Saul even though Saul came after David violently trying to kill him.

Every authority includes all of these men throughout history—both those for and adverse to God. Peter is recognizing the sovereignty of God in all kingly and governmental authority. The word “submit” here is properly rendered as the phrase “you should submit.” This word is making a righteous declaration and proper command. For the very word in the Greek *hypotássō* comes from the root word *hypó*, meaning “under” and *tássō*, meaning to “arrange”. Literally this usage of submission means to be “under God’s arrangement.” When we place ourselves under, in subject to, or we place ourselves under subjection, we are humbling ourselves before a mighty God’s arrangement and decree. We do this by maintaining the humble posture of **1 Peter 2:17; “Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.”**

This word submission denotes “rank,” a rank established by God. We show proper respect to the office for which God has appointed for the said leader, and in doing so we are reverencing God in our honoring of our leader. Our goal toward which we strive in maintaining this attitude: *for the Lord’s sake*. In maintaining an attitude of reverence for the leaders God allows to take the lead, we are displaying His humility and character to the world. We are displaying our submission and allegiance to His sovereign “arrangements.” This brings Him glory and allows Him to work in us and through us. This in consequent will do the opposite of what we think it will. Many people think, that to defy authority is to be bold and brave and rebellious. However, Peter’s life demonstrates just the opposite.

In Acts 5:29 Peter makes this statement, “We must obey God rather than human beings.” Hidden within this statement is Peter’s growth in regard to his understanding of what it is to be a submissive leader. His prior timidity during temptation before the cross, had now vanished because he no longer feared men, and he was displaying his new heart to the people. His first allegiance was to God’s word, instruction and truth. Peter was becoming a man under authority and his words in 1 Peter 2:13-3:22 display his growing wisdom as well. It is here that Peter instructs us in submission: both slaves to masters, wives to husbands, citizens to government authorities etc. Peter not only became of man who saw the importance in submission and obedience to God and his ordained authorities, but he also taught it in his writings.

This submission counter acted Peter's prior timidity. In submitting to the Lord, and to his authorities, Peter became bolder. In acknowledging God's ordination in authority, this made Peter even MORE secure in His God's sovereignty, even with Nero as his ruler. So it is not true! Boldness and confidence do not come from our confidence in ourselves—our own self-esteem. A true posture of confidence, assurance, and authority comes from maintaining an attitude of submission to Jesus' Lordship. It is not ill fitting to submit, but rather it is advantageous to us. When we submit to God, we allow His unhindered and unending power, blessing, and authority to move through us. Let's face it; we can never compete with the power of the ONE who created the heavens and the earth. We can barely observe the great expanse of space, let alone try and create it for ourselves. There is freedom in conceding to God's greatness. When we submit to His authority and purpose for our lives, and all of history, we find rest from the burdens that we carry, and we are left in brilliant wonder at the thought of getting to play a part in His extravagant story of love.

On the flip side, we need to remember that God establishes leaders for different purposes, and we are to fall in line with His decrees. In the Old Testament it is very clear that God would raise up leaders and nations to bless Israel, as well as to punish and discipline Israel for their unfaithfulness. Scripture tells us that all authority is **“Sent by the Father, to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.”** In this light, we see all authorities as God's agents and servant's rather than His adversaries. If we are too quick in our flesh to make a judgment toward leadership, we can work against God rather than for Him.

Do you see that? We could work against God in fighting authority.

Think about Cyrus in Ezra. He was a man devoted to idolatry and all that that brings. He was a pagan in his beliefs, yet God used him for righteous ends—the rebuilding of the temple. Can you imagine if the Christians of that day had risen up and usurped his leadership in rebellion? The people of that day could have taken it upon themselves to hold a civic and political revolt, and in doing so they would have cut Cyrus out of power.

...Good right?

...Wrong”

Cyrus was God's intention. So there's a principle here that's for you and me. The principle we're going to look into is very Kingdom minded and so it is not natural to how we think, but I feel the following quote gives us a good launching point:

“Moses founded an institutional religion, a religion of ordinances and rules; Jesus founded a personal religion, a religion of character. Moses legislated with reference to building up a commonwealth; Jesus enunciated with reference to building up man, for he knew that the best way to build up a true commonwealth is by building up men, man by man.”

This quote is stating the difference between the law of religion vs. the law of God. Humans tend to set rules to shape behavior. This is why liberal government believes that

more government rule and enforcement will produce a utopian society. They believe that more rules will mold better behavior. The belief demonstrated here is that government in some way is God's mechanism to reforming and changing the world. Therefore, people wrongly focus all their time and attention on trying to change these institutions. Now, I'm not saying that this is a bad cause, but the way in which we go about it is all-wrong in most cases.

Jesus had and has a different law. The law of God. Jesus' mode of change and reform was not to modify the behavior and outward actions of men, but the inward motivations of their heart. By changing the man, woman or child, in their heart, Jesus taught that this would produce societal change and a wealth of society. Therefore, His commands were not lengthy, they were one—LOVE. He was all about focusing on the loving character of His followers, for in doing so, He knew He could make the deepest impacts on even the most evil of societies. During Nebuchadnezzar's reign he lodged Daniel in there—a man of character. During Cyrus' rule, there was Ezra and Nehemiah. There was Moses, and Joseph, and now there's Peter—on down to you and I. God intentionally molds new hearts among believers like you and I. This changes how we act and live, and thus brings about the change that we're looking for.

Now what about resistance? What about war? What about any reconnaissance of any kind? We can attack this question now. Can we resist? Can we rebel? What if our leaders are ungodly?

And the biblical answer to this is NO—with a YES in mix. No you can't rebel violently and fight back with the same ammunition that's being used to fire upon you. This is counter to God's plan. If we fought fire with fire, it proves to only bring more fire.

The Bible teaches about this when it talks about turning the other cheek—and do not resist the evil doer. It's not stating that you are to take abuse, and just roll over in powerlessness. It's encouraging you to fight, but fight with something different...LOVE—who you are—your character.

One cheek is hate—the same tactics your enemy is using, but the other cheek is love—doing good—righteous behavior. Your offense is your righteousness. When someone kills you, kill them with kindness. When someone unleashes on you in violent anger, get control of the situation and unleash on them violent patience. This is where war can be righteous. There were many times in the Old Testament where God decreed war. But the warring was not for the sake of war itself. The heart of it was righteous. The heart of it was love. God was seeing the oppression, the tyranny, the dictatorship in cultures, and therefore He would raise up an army to act in love. Instead of fighting with oppression, fighting with tyranny or fighting with dictatorship, God's armies' would fight differently. They would fight to release oppression, fight to abort tyranny, and they would fight for God's rule among men. This was and is God's plan for warfare.

Think about how God kills off your rebellion and pride. When you get angry and proud, God comes at you with a sword of peace and humility. When you are calloused, God comforts you. When you are envious, God lavishes riches on you, thus killing any desire you have to want anything from this world. The best defense is a good offense. I'm not

saying roll over if you're attacked. Know enough to get control of the situation as best you can, but don't stoop to your attackers tactics; quench them with the character of God.

Vs. 15 “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.”

This verse is reiterating what I just said. You're free. That means no one but God has any power over you neither in life nor in death. But you can use this freedom to puff up in entitlement and hostility toward earthly authority, or you can use your freedom to choose goodness. See the world doesn't have a choice without Jesus. They're rebellious with a stone for a heart, until Jesus saves them. They are bound. You and I are free.

Now, even Christians may make their freedom in Christ a pretext for indulgence in the most base and degrading sin. The apostles saw this tendency in human nature, and in nothing are they more careful than to guard against this abuse. We don't have to use our freedom for this, we can now choose between flesh and spirit. A whole new realm has been opened to us. The choice is up to you. Are you going to use your freedom to do good and therefore silence your foe, or are you going to use your ever equal freedom to choose your flesh and continue to respond how your attackers respond. That's up to you.

...a last point in this section before we move on. I want to make a quick note about prayer. In I Timothy Paul instructs us to Pray for those in authority. I want to point out his tactic in warfare in soliciting us to pray for our authorities. You see, every time we rise up and attack an authority, we are declaring that their fight is with us, and that our fight is with them. This is not so. Their fight is with God. When there are bad authorities in place, they are warring with God, and Satan is using them to try and execute his plans. But prayer is a great tactic in this. When we pray, we solicit the power, the armies, and the battalions of heaven to go to war. They go to war on behalf of God's kingdom. They don't go to war on behalf of us. We benefit from their fighting, for sure, but it's because the righteous armies of heaven fight for the glory of Jesus.

Therefore, prayer is a MOST powerful rebellion against authority. A good one. Instead of acting in violence toward our violent authorities we're acting in love and praying for our enemies'. This solicits the power of heaven on our behalf, and God acts in response to our prayers.

I say this about prayer because I don't want you to feel powerless against tyrannical or bad authority. You need to see that there's power that's bigger than your physical rebellion. That power is the power of God, and its laid hold of through prayer. People who physically take up causes against leaders have a very low view of God and his power because they refuse to pray. In not praying, they are saying “our control of this situation is better than God's control—He's not doing anything and CAN'T, so we're going to.”

On we go...

1 Peter is taking a tiered approach with us. He started with our government authorities, and now he's going to move to more civilian matters, yet he's going to apply the same principles.

I Peter 2:18-22; “Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”

Now slavery is an odd concept in America, but it’s still a reality in most parts of the world. Now, we tend to take the moral high ground and say “what is Paul talking about with slaves.” Slavery is wrong. We abolished that. We don’t have slavery.

Well in that culture, slavery was ingrained into the culture, and I believe he’s speaking physically and spiritually to all of us here. We are not to consider ourselves as slaves, or to act as slaves. In our subjection to civil authority we are not to forget that we are freemen in the highest sense in Jesus, and that liberty is an invaluable blessing. We have been made free by the Son of God, John 8:32, John 8:36. We are free from sin and condemnation.

But even though this is the case, many of us today still act as slaves. “We receive beatings for doing wrong, and that’s not commendable by God.” We continue to live in sin like we have to do it—we’re obligated—and then we receive bad results. The Bible tells us that this is putting ourselves under mastery. We become slaves to whatever masters us.

This can happen in practical ways. We place ourselves under the mastery of Credit Card companies, loans, memberships etc. We willingly get ourselves caught in a web of our own choosing. We sign the dotted line hesitantly for educational facilities, job environments and banks. Every time you sign your signature, for better or for worse, you are placing yourself under authority. You should consider wisely who you bind yourself to. Underneath some policy or guideline, you are binding yourself to that agreement. Now sometimes this is O.K., but many times as with credit cards, you’re giving someone else more control into your life--slavery. Paul is addressing this here. We are free men and women in Christ, but for better or worse we still put ourselves in slavery.

Now as with some cases, signing on dotted lines is Godly, and Peter is instructing us to submit to our masters or do what both parties’ agreed on with the utmost respect.

Peter is telling you to suffer for doing right—commendable. Putting yourself in slavery and submission under God is good. Binding yourself to each other can be good if the terms are Godly. Paul called Himself an ambassador in chains. He saw his role as chained in love to the Father and chained by his love for you and I. This is admirable, because this denotes commitment to each other. Being enslaved in love to God and others is good. It shows our commitment and our allegiance, and in this allegiance we receive Christ’s benefit.

And the same is true again like noted before, for those in slavery around the world. They are to recognize their overseer as a God-give authority and should enact the principles of prayer and righteous living toward their master.

Now Peter's going to move us again—from government, down to a public affairs matters such as slavery, down into a personal matter. Instead of submission being about those we are submitting to, it's about us. It's about us becoming like Christ in our character. That's the most important thing. That's our greatest act of surrender and worship.

Peter now gives us the example of Jesus. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth," yet He was conscious of God. Who could have been more harshly treated than Jesus? The injustice that was done to Jesus was greater than that of the Holocaust. It rivals racial genocide, child prostitution, and abortion. He was sinless and blameless, which is more than we can say about any one caught in these tragedies. He was perfectly loving and deserving—he was deserving of good things—you and I are not. He bore our sins so we might die to sins and live for righteousness. Can you think of anything more unjust?

We were dead in sin, for we wrongfully turned away. Like Cain we've murdered, like Rahab we've prostituted ourselves to lesser loves. Like Jonah we've disobeyed.

...like Samson we get caught up in our own strength.

We all deserve pain of the highest proportions, yet we are up in arms about the injustices in this world, and we fail to talk about the greatest injustice ever done. What about the man who suffered the cross? He was bludgeoned and pulverized for crimes He didn't commit—crimes that you did. He took the beating and wrath you and I were meant to carry and he suffered death so you and I wouldn't have to. He bore the turning away of his father's face, so you and I could spend eternity in His face.

Yet no deceit was found in his mouth. He didn't gossip about what someone had done behind his or her back. He didn't take revenge and hurt someone, even when one of his friends betrayed him. He didn't cut people out of his life through bitterness. He never harbored resentment. With the entire wound that people put on Him unjustly, Jesus never found it JUST to retaliate. Yet we do! And we call it justice.

We think it's JUST to hold unforgiveness. We want that person to KNOW how much they hurt us, and to hurt as much as we do.

We think it's JUST to bad-mouth, slander, or take revenge, or even hold political uprising.

Yet there's a rebellion that's greater still and that's the rebellion that never takes place at all. Submitting well under even the worst types of leadership, provides you with a

chance to share Jesus when people watch your service. They watch your righteous response and they say, “that’s not how I respond.” They see you hand cookies to the guy who slandered you. They see you extend forgiveness to those that raped you. They see you offer a helping hand to that person who once destroyed you... and they have no grid for that.

There’s no worldly way to deal with that...its counter our nature.

Even right now, you may be thinking...Jesus why didn’t you stand up? We may think Jesus to be ludicrous, and yet His seemingly weird behavior saved your life. This is counterintuitive because it’s the Kingdom. You can’t relate to it because it’s beyond you. Only when you get to Jesus, can you act this way.

You think you’re bold, or a man because you rebel against authority by using the same tactics the world does? That’s not courage, that’s cowardice. Anyone can do that.

Try being like Jesus. That’s hard. Try responding in forgiveness when people spit on you. That’s what real warriors and real rebels do. Having Christ’s power not only means you have the power to act, but you have the power to restrain. Restrain your flesh and act in love. That’s hard. That’s Jesus!!!

1 Peter 2:23 says they hurled insults at Jesus—but he did not retaliate. They scourged him, beat him, drilled thorns into His scalp, and He made no threats. Jesus could have defended Himself. He could have called down legions of angels and it would have been over, but love held Him there on that cross. He didn’t retaliate because if He had He knew our salvation would have been lost. Instead, and this is another couple phrases I want to draw out, “He was conscience of God,” and He “entrusted Himself to the one who judges justly.”

We don’t get this...

...when and because we’re not conscience of God and we don’t trust Him.

When painful things happen we revert back to the Garden of Eden and we doubt that He’s good and that His word is true. He’s in control. When we have belittling authorities or we feel like someone or something is taking us in a direction that’s unjust, we don’t trust. We don’t trust that the God who worked through Pontius Pilate to bring about the salvation of the world, can use ANYONE to redeem your circumstances.

The unjust boss—unsaved parent—burned out Pastor—heretical church in town—those you disagree with—camp leader—bible teacher—coach—mentor—counselor etc.

I’ll be honest, I struggle with this teaching. I have served under some pretty bad leaders, as far as even bad leaders go. What preceded from my life because of this fact was a long streak of rebellion. I rebelled because I had never seen good leadership.

But I come back to Kingdom and these verses. Everyone is to submit. God has placed ALL authorities in place. Even the bad ones are placed and allowed to be in leadership for our benefit. And if you think about it, the bad ones can work the greatest good in some ways if you and I see the Kingdom as being the crafting of our character. Nothing can inflame prayer, intercession and worship like serving under a bad leader, for we are forced to go to God. Nothing can bring out the fruits of the Spirit like patience, self-control, kindness. For there is no greater test to true joy, true love and true peace as there is when a bad leader is leading.

Think about Jesus—the bad leaders during His crucifixion. Think about the result. Bad leaders, exposed the greatest righteousness.

Therefore, we as followers are truly brought to a place where we have to answer the question: “Do I trust Jesus?”

Anyone can love, have peace, and display joy when everything is going right. We surround ourselves with friends that tickle our ears and exalt us. Anyone can do that. There’s no honor or merit in that. Jesus’ works are almost impossible to detect when everyone is self-producing it and faking it. But Jesus SHINES bright in darkness and is manifested when joy, peace, kindness etc. are shining in spite of insufficient leadership.

Do you see the ramifications of our submission? They’re deeper than our authorities. It has everything to do with us displaying, becoming, and experiencing the fullness of God. Our good or bad response to this truth can determine our depth of relationship with Jesus on earth.

Now we’ve seen how we model Jesus in a governmental model, a civilian affairs model, and we’ve gotten a glimpse into an example of submission in Jesus. But why all these examples? Why does Peter want us to get this? Well, it’s for our reward.

I Peter 2:23-25 “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

What happened here? When Jesus chose to operate from a Kingdom mindset in regard to submission...what happened...Redemption happened. By entrusting Himself to the One who judges justly, Jesus displayed the perfect and pinnacle of trust. He showed us what true trust can do, and the eternal ramifications that it can have. For you and I’s wounds were healed through Jesus’ submission—eluding to (Isa. 53:5).

What are the wounds? What in the world are we healed from—well, the world. We are healed in our perspective toward the Kingdom, so we can live for it and not against it.

Submission is a Kingdom concept and value, not a worldly one. Rebellion, disrespect, anarchy, political unrest, and even various forms of civil disobedience are acts of worldly pride. Our actions in these various modes display our **unbelief in God not our belief**. Our actions show that we don't believe in God to do it, and we don't trust His goodness in it, so we're going to take over.

A quick note: What about Martin Luther King Jr. Does his role in the abolition of slavery display distrust in God? Can we rebel and still be submissive. I would say this. I can't judge Martin Luther's heart in his actions. What I see, is that he didn't set out to rebel, but he set out to live righteously. He acted lovingly and displayed Kingdom behavior. In this way he submitted to those in authority, even those that didn't agree with Him, but through His biblical actions he honored first and foremost the God of heaven. His desire to love God by doing Godly things is what brought the revolution, because LOVE is the most rebellious thing we have to this world's operation.

Through Jesus' righteous and good living before the Father, you were brought abolition from slavery as well. You were healed from the world and the sin and death that it brings. Romans 6:11 says "count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Now sin brings all kinds of effects to our lives. It brings physical death—sickness, disease etc. It brings spiritual death—separation from God in Hell. It brings life complications, pains and trials—marital divorce, child rebellion, depression, failure. All of these things are resulting from sin.

The question about the KINGDOM in this passage is not about what Christ was dealing with and healing on the cross through His submission. That is first and foremost was and is our sin. The questions today are to what extent do we receive the healing effects of the cross' work in this life—NOW.

Now there are three basic views of the Kingdom that are important to understand because it will impact our submission.

The three views are: Kingdom not yet, Kingdom now, Kingdom now and not yet. Kingdom "not yet" theology would diminish Christ's rule in our heart's, and place Christ's reign would only be over heaven and the future, and not over earth and the NOW. As we learned in 1 Peter 1, our salvation is not just when Christ enters our heart, but He keeps us and Delivers us through every moment of everyday. If you believe in Kingdom not yet theology, you will be an inactive believer and be sitting waiting for heaven. You will also believe that this world's immediate concerns are more important than Kingdom concerns. You will be interested more in preserving your life here, rather than investing in your life for eternity. This has a powerful effect on your submission. If Jesus' kingdom is not in some way operating now, through you and in you, as well as in the world, there will be two things driving you: perpetual fear and distrust.

You will feel like you need to react or ignore every injustice because God is not here to get justice. You will be afraid because you have no grid for God being in control. He's

some deistic god off in no man's land just waiting—on who—maybe you I guess. Your fear and distrust will manifest in two ways. Either you will forgo all His promises and forgo the mission He gave you to reach the world, and you will hide, or you will take it upon yourself to save the world and you will become an activist toward every cause, except you'll miss Jesus because your fear will be driving you, not your faith.

Kingdom now -- theologians are the popular health, wealth, and happiness preachers of today. They portray God as your 24/7 on call doctor who is going to wipe away every pain in this life. He's going to bring about your complete peace and restoration, and you don't have to wait for it. You have to pursue it and CLAIM IT! It's all yours NOW.

Makes sense! It's already yours. By His wounds you are healed! So why should you have to put up with any kind of disease, ailment, trouble or discomfort. The trouble is this belief and theology excludes Jesus.

His friends abandoned him, trouble surrounded Him and He experienced great discomfort. After the cross, this theology excludes Paul and Peter and any of the disciples as being part of the Kingdom. It would exclude their constant teaching on suffering and sacrifice, and would most definitely put an end to martyrdom.

If the Kingdom now theology had been a part of the early church, we would have to assume that Paul would have CLAIMED Epaphroditus' healing as a RIGHT in Philippians rather than asking for people to pray for his healing. He would have done the same with Timothy's stress-sickness instead of prescribing that Timothy drink a little wine to calm his ulcer down. And most definitely we would not expect Paul to welcome his thorn in the flesh as a grace. Instead we would have seen Paul renouncing it as Satan's scheme's and pursuing God for its removal. Instead we see Paul's acknowledgment of God's hand in the pain.

Kingdom now theologians have taken it upon themselves to do God's job as healer, authority and kingdom advancer. Because of this, authorities are not seen to them as those to whom we should submit to—especially those that are not Jesus followers. They are seen as people who are standing in the way of God's rule, to which these theologians see themselves as an answer to bring in God's Kingdom. Submission is very hard to go by in this model because this person cannot see God's "appointment" in leadership nor authority. Authorities are viewed as adversaries to God, not His servants.

Kingdom now, and yet not yet is the view of the New Testament and this passage here. Peter uses the phrase "took up" our sins. The Greek word for this indicates a progression in regard to our healing. It denotes that Christ is carrying something through to reach its needed consummation or end goal. We are told that at the cross we were Justified (made right with God in standing), sanctified (become more and more like Jesus each day), and glorified (our final state of perfection in heaven). This all happened AT ONCE—NOW, but yet we are walking it out in sanctification, waiting for our end—glorification—NOT YET. Jesus' healing is progressive, not instant. He give us saving faith, but then he

gives us KEEPING ON faith, and finally He give us FINAL FAITH—glorification. This is how salvation is spoken about throughout the entire New Testament.

In this way, we move to the next passage. We like sheep have gone astray, but now we have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls, 1 Peter tells us to end. **You were like sheep going astray.** You were in the process of wandering, being tempted and being deceived and to some extent you still wander. Christ then returned you.

This goes much more in line with KINGDOM submission and true “healing,” because it has to do with character and who God’s making us. His crafting of us is not instant it is gradual. Life’s lessons are best learned in trials, refinement and walking things out. This is how heaven will be. We will be ever growing in knowledge of God. There will be a moment where we’ll see Him, as through clear glass, but the meditations on His glory will over joy us forever. This is the pattern of heaven. If we have this as our view, then submission opens up for us. Every time we have a good or bad leader, we will see our response to them as being the same. Our job is to actively love and do good, therefore displaying the character and nature of Christ. Therefore submission becomes about our walk with Jesus and becoming more like Him.

You may be under good or bad leadership today—I don’t know. Regardless of your situation, I will venture a guess though. God is trying to do two things. He’s trying to shape your character and bring out the fruit of the Spirit in you, and/or He’s revealing to you your pride through that leader.

Every fault you see in your leader’s life is probably manifested ten fold in your own. That problem that is manifested in you, is your rebellion against God and seeing it provides you with the opportunity to REPENT. God is revealing to you your sin and pride in thinking you know how to do things better than God. God appointed that leader until further notice. Your job is to focus on your response and Christ-like growth. Repent of your attitudes; let the Spirit fill you, and be humble enough to examine YOU and not them.

If you do this, you will be able to forgive, be kind, love and serve your leader. It may even be to your benefit in this case if you have a bad leader because then your flesh will get exposed all the more. You’ll get that sin out of your life, and you’ll really get to see what the Spirit can do through you. The Spirit will do it, in spite of you. That’s the power. That’s Jesus.



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