

“Lower Thirds” Material

1/31/21

Pastor Ben Cross

1 Peter 2:13 (NIV) Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors...

2:18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh...

3:1 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, even if they do not obey the word...

3:7 Husbands, likewise...

Submit & Submission

Biblical submission is one of the most liberating, life-preserving, and life-enhancing concepts imaginable.

A spirit of submission is paramount to authentic Christianity, because it comes from the very heart and nature of God.

Submit: ὑποτασσώ *hupo/under; tasso/to order or to arrange something*

Biblical submission means to voluntarily place ourselves under someone to support them and to do them good.

Biblical submission does not mean blind, unquestioning, unqualified obedience. Submission doesn’t mean silence in the face of injustice or evil.

Submission does not mean acquiescing to evil.

Submission doesn’t mean silence, but when you speak up, it does not mean going off on a rant.

Biblical submission is also voluntarily. Literally, “Submit yourselves.”

A submissive spirit for a Christian is a personal choice we make. It’s not something forced on us internally, even though it may be forced on us externally.

2:16—Live as people who are *free*, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but live as *bond-slaves* of God.

1 Peter 2:13-17 (ESV) Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

If we can grasp that we are the bond-slaves of the most merciful, kind, generous, life-affirming Master in all the universe, then we can begin to grasp the strange, paradoxical liberty we have living as resident aliens and exiles in this world of human authorities.

While most people in this world could be described as enslaved in their so-called freedom, Christians are truly free in their balanced and yet intense servanthood of God and all others.

Romans 6:22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Martin Luther - A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

This very paradox we are called to live out is the genius of the cross of Christ.

At the Cross of Christ, we see the paradox of wrath and love, judgment and forgiveness, justice and mercy, and our lives as Christ-followers are to be marked by that same paradox as servants of all, as the free, bond-slaves of God!

2:21-25 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. 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 cross, 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.

1 Corinthians 2 The foolishness and weakness of God puts to shame the wisdom and power of man.

We are to submit for the Lord's sake, God's will, doing good, and in the fear of God.

We need authority, our children need authority. Without it, we are lost.

Authority and submission to authority is not a social construct. It's a theological construct. It's not by man's design, but by God's design in...

- ...the spirit realm
- ...the physical realm
- ...marriage
- ...society **Romans 13:1ff**
- ...the Church
- ...the millennial kingdom
- ...the Triune Godhead

Humble, wise submission to authority is paramount to true Christianity.

The paradox of Christlike submission is God's subversive way of overcoming evil with good.

It's the story of the Cross of Christ retold again and again in our individual lives as we live as free servants to all as the bond-slaves of God.

Honor everyone. (τ ι μ α ω – noun form used of Christ as "precious" in **2:4, 6** and of us in **2:7**).

Honor the emperor. (τ ι μ α ω Nero?!)

The common focus in this entire passage is responding with a submissive spirit in all honor and respect toward human authorities, even if they are harsh and unreasonable, and we don't agree with them.

We are to settle down, submit to the king's authority and seek the welfare of the "Babylonian" city in which we are exiled (**Jeremiah 29:11**).

The very fact that there is divine authority behind all human authority, we can live as free people serving those in authority for the Lord's sake. But it also means there are limits to obeying human authority. Christians are to honor human authorities (obey them) short of sinning in doing so.

There is such a thing as righteous war.

We have done what God commanded Israel never to do—see one's political preference as God's biblical will.

Ezekiel 43:1-12

There is an Authority behind human authority, so we can respect human authority, honor that authority, and think critically of that authority, without being obnoxious, fearful, spiteful or destructive and violent.

We must never play the victim. As God's bond-slaves, we are free to choose to endure injustice without resentment.

The cross of Christ teaches us that God's way of overcoming evil, at this time, is subversive, not aggressive. The government can punish evil—that's good! But the Church can overcome and remove evil with good.

Christian, you have the power of the Word, the Spirit, prayer and a new heart.

You wield a power the State can't begin to touch. You have everything you need to submit to authority the way Jesus did, so that your Gospel-centered life overcomes evil in the same winsomely subversive way.