



July 12, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything

Rebellion → Submission

Previous Sermon: Jesus Changes our Ownership into Stewardship
(Surrender)

Sermon: Jesus Changes our Rebellion into Submission. (Repentance)

Scripture: Hebrews 3:12–15; Acts 3:19; Romans 1:18–25; Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 26:39, 42

Spotlight: Submission to God will lead you to earthly peace and eternal joy.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Summary: Rebellion begins when the human heart decides it knows better than God. Romans 1 shows the downward path of rebellion: people reject the truth, refuse to honor God, exchange His glory for created things, and eventually become enslaved to the very desires they thought would set them free. Hebrews 3 warns that rebellion is not merely bad behavior; it is evidence of an unbelieving, hardened heart drifting further and further away from God. The gospel, however, declares that Jesus changes everything including rebellion. God calls rebels to turn back to Him and through repentance, grace is given. God provides repentant rebels with a new heart and a new spirit. Submission to God of love, grace and mercy is not losing freedom; it is finally being freed from the bondage of sin's deception, the downward path, and ultimate destruction. In Christ, submission to God becomes the doorway to life as God intends and true freedom.

Jesus points the way to submission in Matthew 26...

Matthew 26:39, 42

39 "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

42 "My Father! If this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done."

1. Rebellion Begins *in the Heart Before It Shows Up in the Life.*

Hebrews 3:12–15

Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. 13 You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

14 For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

15 Remember what it says: "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled."

Romans 1:21

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

Rebellion begins when the heart becomes suspicious of God, resistant to His Word, and confident in its own way. Hebrews warns against an "evil, unbelieving heart" that turns away from the living God. Romans 1 shows that rebellion begins when people know enough truth about God but refuse to honor Him as God. Sin is not simply breaking rules; it is refusing relationship, authority, and trust in the God who made us.

Many people do not think they are rebelling against God. But **self-rule is rebellion** when God has clearly spoken.

2. Rebellion Exchanges God's Truth for a Lie.

Romans 1:18–25

But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. 19 They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. 20 For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his

eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

21 Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. 23 And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

Romans 1 gives a sobering picture of rebellion. Humanity suppresses the truth, rejects the Creator, worships created things, and trades reality for deception. Rebellion promises freedom but delivers bondage.

When we refuse to worship God, we do not stop worshiping; we simply worship something lesser.

Anything we trust, obey, or desire more than God becomes a rival to His sovereign authority in our lives.

3. Rebellion Hardens the Heart Over Time.

Hebrews says sin is deceitful. Over time, the more a person resists God, the harder the heart becomes.

A hard heart is not formed in one moment; it is often formed through repeated resistance to God.

Every "not now," every "I know better," every "I'll deal with that later," and every ignored conviction makes the next act of obedience harder.

4. Rebellion Leads to Death, Not Life and Freedom.

Romans 1:24–25

The world often defines freedom as "no one telling me what to do." But Scripture shows that *rejecting God does not make us free*. It hands us over to destructive desires, confused thinking, and spiritual bondage.

Freedom *without submission to God* becomes slavery to sin.

A fish is not free when it jumps out of the water. A train is not free when it leaves the tracks. A human soul is not free when it runs from God. We were created to live under the loving authority of our Creator.

5. Submission to God and His Sovereignty Begins with Repentance.

Acts 3:19

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.

Peter's call is clear: repent and turn to God. Submission is not merely feeling sorry. It is a change of direction. Rebellion says, "I will go my way." Repentance says, "Lord, I am turning back to You."

Repentance is the humble *surrender* and verbal *admission* of the rebel heart to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Repentance includes confession, humility, honesty, and action. It means we stop defending our sin and start agreeing with God.

6. God Does Not Improve the Old Heart; He Gives a New Heart

Ezekiel 36:26

And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.

God removes the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh. Submission is not produced by human willpower. It is the work of God's grace inside us.

Jesus does not just command submission; **He makes submission possible** by changing the heart. We need God to make us new.

7. Submission Is Trusting God and His Sovereignty are Good No Matter What Comes

Matthew 26:39, 42

Submission is not passive weakness. It is active trust. It is choosing to believe that God is wiser, better, holier, and more loving than we are. The rebel sees God's authority as a threat. The surrendered heart sees God's authority as protection.

Submission is not God taking life from us; it is God leading us *into* life.

When we submit to God, we are not losing ourselves. We are finally becoming who we were created to be.

8. Submission Leads to Blessing and Peace, Joy and Freedom

Acts 3 connects repentance with refreshing from the Lord. The surrendered life is rarely easy, but it is blessed. Submission brings peace with God, freedom from guilt, renewed purpose, and the joy of walking in obedience.

The way up is down. The way to freedom is surrender. The way to life is submission like Jesus.

Jesus changes rebellion into submission by changing our desires, redirecting our worship, softening our hearts, and bringing us under His good and gracious Lordship.

Submission to God leads to a right relationship with God, an acceptance of God's will and the ultimate outcome of obedience.

Rebellion says: "I know better."

Submission says: "God knows best."

Rebellion says: "I want control."

Submission says: "Jesus is Lord."

Rebellion says: "I will follow my own heart."

Submission says: "God, give me a new heart."

Rebellion says: "I want freedom from authority."

Submission says: "I find freedom under God's sovereign authority."

The greatest act of rebellion is refusing the Lordship of Jesus.

The greatest act of submission is surrendering to the One who surrendered His life for us.

Jesus does not crush the repentant rebel; He forgives, restores, and gives each a new heart.

The call today is simple and urgent: Stop fighting God and His sovereignty and start trusting Him today no matter what comes your way.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ~ Trust God. Deny Self. Praise God. Follow Jesus.

Next Steps: *Stop* fighting God and His sovereignty and *start* trusting Him today no matter what comes your way.

Life Application:

1. Where are you most tempted to resist God's sovereign authority right now: your relationships, habits, finances, private thoughts, worship, forgiveness, obedience, or future plans? What steps can you take right now to begin trusting God in the area where you are most tempted not to?
2. God warns us repeatedly in Scripture about a heart that becomes hardened by sin's deception. What sin or attitude have you started explaining, excusing, or minimizing instead of confessing?
3. Romans 1 teaches that rebellion exchanges the truth of God for a lie. What lie are people in our culture most likely to believe about freedom, identity, pleasure, or God's sovereign authority?
4. What is the difference between saying, "I believe in God," and actually submitting to God as Lord? Be specific, especially when you think about your own life.
5. Acts 3:19 calls us to repent and turn to God. What would genuine repentance look like in one specific area of your life this week? Stop this exercise and repent to God for specific sin you had identified in your life. If you have never trusted God's sovereign authority in your life, take the first step toward salvation by confession and repenting of your sins.
6. Ezekiel 36:26 promises that God can replace a heart of stone with a heart of flesh. Where do you need to ask God to soften your heart?
7. Why do we often view submission as weakness when Scripture presents submission to God as the path to life, blessing, and freedom?

8. What is one practical act of obedience you already know God is calling you to take, but you have delayed? Baptism? Teaching? Witnessing? Samaritans Purse volunteer: Spruce Pine Relief effort?
9. How can believers help one another avoid hardened hearts, according to Hebrews 3:13?
10. When you hear the phrase "Stop fighting God and start trusting Him today," what are some ways you realize you have been fighting Him without even realizing it? Submit Today!

EXTRA: On the one hand, we need the assurance that God is in control and therefore is able to work all of our pain and loss together for our good and the good of all who love him. On the other hand, we need to know that God empathizes with us and does not delight in sin or pain in and of themselves.*

John Piper These two understandings of God's will come to light perfectly in all of Scripture but are best seen in Jesus.

*(<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/what-is-the-will-of-god-and-how-do-we-know-it>)