**1st Peter Series**

**COMFORT FOR THE SUFFERING**

**“Your Submission 2”**

**Last time we closed with talking about submission to authority, and there was a little bit of misunderstanding. So let me clarify. When the Bible says we are to submit to authority, it is not saying that we can’t redress wrongs, or seek reform.**

**Peter and the apostles lived in a totalitarian society where Caesar’s word was law. They did not live in a democratic system where some other leader can be voted in. Nor did they live in a culture with a first amendment guarantee of free speech.**

**So when Peter exhorts the church to live in submission to authority and to take ill-treatment with patience, the only other choice they had was to rebel and die, or face imprisonment.**

**We Americans live under a system of government that DOES allow us to seek reform, and to address wrongs done by authority figures.**

**It is HOW we address them that matters most. We can do it right by moving through the legal system, voting new people into office who share our concerns, or seeking some other peaceful, lawful way to do it.**

**Or we can do it wrong by involving ourselves in riots, property damage, threats, insurrection, or other unlawful means to bring change. These methods move us out of the bounds of God’s will into Satan’s territory. The Bible is crystal clear about lawlessness—unless the law you’re breaking requires you to disobey God.**

**Listen to Paul about lawlessness, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness,” (2 Cor. 6:14).**

**So, I hope that helps clear up the submission to authority issue!**

**But we’re not done with submission yet, for Peter continues in Chapter 3 with the subject of *submission at home*:**

**3:1a “Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands,”**

**This passage runs totally against the entire attitude and belief system of today’s culture, in particular the feminist movement.**

**Let’s stop here and ask a question: Is the Bible the inspired Word of God? Is it fully God’s Word to mankind? If so, then God must know what is best for the wife and the home. He only acts out of love and with our well being in mind.**

**The very first objection typically raised regarding submission is, “But what if they’re not worthy of respect? How can I submit to a man that hasn’t earned it? Who may even be utterly unworthy of honor? Who doesn’t even walk with or know God? A non-Christian?”**

**But it can be done, or God would never say do it! I believe the key to successful submission is found in the following passage:**

**“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Col 3:23-24).**

**The key is “as unto the Lord, and not to men (or to a man).” Could you submit to the Lord were He here? Yes! That is the first step in successful submission. Submit “as unto the Lord, not unto men.”**

**Jesus said, “Inasmuch as you’ve done it to the least of these...you’ve done it *to me*” (Matt. 25:40).**

**All submission should be “As to the Lord, not as to men.” For it is the Lord who will reward you! I hasten to add that this is not talking about a wife who is being physically abused, or whose life is in danger. That is another thing altogether.**

**Peter’s words here are about an attitude of trust in God while you practice submission. Even regarding a husband who is far away from God, Peter says there is power in submission to reach that man:**

**3:1b-2 “...that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear.”**

**Notice, she’s not preaching at him. She’s realized that isn’t working. Peter says it can be done “without a word.”**

**The weapon that works is the double edged sword of “chaste conduct” meaning a pure life, coupled with the fear of God.**

**For the unsaved husband, the best advertisement for the truth and wonder of Christianity is a wife who daily models the Christ-life. According to Peter, that’s how to get a new husband!**

**Next, Peter deals with how the woman dresses...**

**3:3-4 “Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— 4 rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”**

**These passages have been taken way out of context by many well-meaning Christians. Women have been told to dress plain, drab, in non-flattering clothes, and to not wear makeup, or have their hair done, and so on.**

**But the word “merely” changes all that. Do not let your adornment be “merely” outward. So, not JUST your appearance, but even more so your inner man—A gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in God’s sight.**

**Now a “gentle and quiet spirit” is from the Greek words meaning “divinely inspired inner calmness.” This woman has peace with God, and her worries and cares have been cast upon the Lord. She is at peace. She brings tranquility into the room.**

**Peter is saying, “Clothes and jewelry can be bought, but divinely inspired inner calmness and tranquility are priceless!”**

**Next, Peter points to the holy women of OT times for an example:**

**3:5-6 “For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”**

**In vs 5 he speaks generally without naming anyone, but in vs 6 he names Sarah. Peter says that Christian women have a spiritual inheritance in Sarah, calling them ”the daughters of Sarah.”**

**While Abraham left all believers a legacy of *salvation by faith*, Sarah left believing women a legacy of *success by submission*. Her legacy is, “Sarah obeyed Abraham.”**

**And it wasn’t always easy. She followed him when he unwisely sought safety from famine in Egypt. She held her peace when he told the half truth about her being his sister. She trusted God when Pharaoh brought her to his palace based on Abraham’s white lie!**

**“...whose daughters you are (Christian ladies) if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.” Sarah had no fear in her submission, for she trusted God.**

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**Next, Peter turns to the men!**

**3:7 “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”**

**Peter exhorts husbands to be understanding, but understanding of what? “Giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel.”**

**The word “vessel” points to her body, so Peter is simply stating that the husband is to be gentle, kind, and considerate of her weaker frame. It has nothing to do with being less intelligent, gifted, capable, or talented.**

**The feminists among us can go all day about women being equal to men, but physically that’s not true. On the whole men are stronger by nature, and are exhorted not to lord that over the woman.**

**When the 3 angels visited his tent, Abraham told Sarah, “Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes” (Gen. 18:6).**

**But then look what he did in cooperation with her, “7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.”**

**Abraham did the heavy lifting. God the calf, prepared the calf, and set the table. To top it off, his name for Sarah was “princess,” for that is the meaning of her name.**

**So, in picking things up around the house, or doing difficult manual labor, the man should practice chivalry, be considerate of her limitations, and step up to help. For you are “heirs together” of the grace of life!**

**And to add a little incentive to the man, Peter adds, “That your prayers be not hindered.”**

**The word *hindered* is from a Greek word used to describe hindering someone by breaking up the road they’re traveling on. It is used to describe someone being detained unnecessarily. Paul uses this word to explain to the Romans why he had not yet visited them, saying “Satan has hindered me” (Rom 15:22).**

**So Peter is describing what happens in a home where the husband doesn’t treat his wife Biblically. Prayers are hindered. The Holy Spirit is grieved. Satan seizes his opportunity and throws up roadblocks to obstruct our prayers.**

**This may not at all be the reason for why our prayers sometimes go unanswered. But it’s worth examining to be sure.**

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**Next, Peter turns from marital relations to church relations:**

**3:8 “Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;”**

**Notice the adjectives: be of one mind, compassionate, loving, tenderhearted, and courteous. These are relational words that are to typify how Christians treat one another. They are the glue that keeps a fellowship together, and the oil that keeps the church running smoothly.**

**Then Peter broaches the subject of offenses, and how to respond to them.**

**3:9 “not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.”**

**First we have the law of *retaliation*...Don’t do it, says Peter. Don’t take vengeance. Paul writes the same in Romans,**

**“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord...21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Ro. 12:19,21).**

**This is not saying you should not respond to a terrible accusation, or stand up for yourself in court when a major wrong has been perpetrated against you. It *is* saying to avoid being vindictive, vengeful, spiteful, and live by the law of “eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” We are to learn to leave the wrongs against us in the hands of God.**

**Then comes the law of *realization*...”*Knowing* that you were called to this.” Called to what? Called to bless those who curse you. Called to live like Jesus did, which Peter described in 2:23...**

**“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.”**

**So there is the law of *retaliation*, the law of *realization*, and lastly is the law of *remuneration*...”that you may inherit a blessing.”**

**What kind of blessing? Peter answers it next:**

**3:10-12 “For ‘He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous, and His ears *are open* to their prayers; but the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil.’”**

**The blessing is “loving life,” seeing “good days,” and answered prayer.**

**To enjoy these blessings we must first be sanctified in our conversation, refraining from saying something evil or deceitful.**

**And second we must be sanctified in character. “Let him turn away from evil and do good,” always remembering that “the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.”**

**LET’S PRAY**