

Theme: Faith in Exile

Title: Submission to Authority – I Peter 2:13-25

Aim: To see submission as an essential part of living as exiles.

Intro: Submission is not a 4-letter word but it is a dirty word to many in today's world. "Question authority" is the banner cry. "I have my rights!" "You're not the boss of me!" "You can't tell me what to do!" Submission is defined as "the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person" (or group). In the Greek the word is "hypotasso" – "to arrange under, subordinate, subject one's self, obey." Submission is very much a Biblical word & mandate. According to "The Gospel Coalition," "The word for submission (*hypotasso*)...occurs [38] times in the New Testament, always with reference to a relationship in which one party has authority over another." Theme: Faith in exile. We who are Christian, followers of Christ, are exiles in this world that's not our home. So how do we live as exiles? Submission is key. Last week we touched on what Peter wrote in I Peter 2:11-12 (read). Peter then expanded on what it meant to conduct our lives in an honorable way so people around us will be pointed to God. I Peter 2:13-25 [READ]. I) "**Be subject to every human institution.**" God has placed us under several levels of authority – family/parents, church leadership, job, etc. – but this primarily means governmental authority. Romans 13:1-2 – "***Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, & those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, & those who resist will incur judgment.***" Note that Peter writes, "for the Lord's sake." Obedience to governmental authority – at whatever level (emperor/king/president, governor, senator, mayor, etc.) – is honoring to God. Following Jesus means following the government's rule of law. And it doesn't matter if you like the leadership or agree w/the law. Peter & Paul wrote their epistles under the shadow of an evil, oppressive Roman government, whose emperor thought himself to be a god & was not friendly to Christians. Both Peter & Paul died at the hands of the

Roman government. Now, we've said it before: the only time/situation when we should/must disobey the law is when it is counter to God's Word/standard. But even then, we must be ready to suffer the consequences of breaking the law. Peter wrote "This is the will of God..." Obedience to the law, submission to the authority of government, is the will of God for His children. Living as exiles in this world involves submission & that submission to governmental authority is "doing good," & that "good" serves to "put to silence the ignorance of foolish people," i.e., those who don't know God & are sure that Christians are anti-government & anti-law, are rebels against government, who expect Christians to be obstinate. Peter said to these exiles, "Live as people who are free..." Christians are free – not to live however we want, but to live as God wants us to live. We are not to use our freedom "as a cover-up for evil, but [live] as servants of God." That's what people need to see from us – that we are servants of God, seeking to do His will & represent Him well. We're here to be about His business, to be His ambassadors, to point others to Jesus. So, as servants of God, we're to "honor everyone. Love the brotherhood" – ***By this all people will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another***" (John 13:35). "Fear God. Honor the emperor." All of this goes together. We honor God by honoring those over us in government.

II) **Be subject to your masters w/all respect.** Peter was addressing Christian "servants" here. I think that correlates to the relationship between employee & employers/bosses. The word is not the word for slave – doulos, but servant, hired servant -oiketes – even "domestic servant," which makes sense. Those who were driven into exile would not have been slaves, who would have been delighted to be exiled & thus freed. Rather, it is very likely that some of those exiles, to make a living, would have sought employment where they could & hired on as servants of others. So Peter addressed the many who had become servants. He called them to submit to the authority of their masters w/respect, not just for those who were good to them & gentle w/them, "but also to the unjust." It must be so difficult to work for someone who

is unjust & hard to get along w/. I haven't had that since I was in high school. But Peter tells us that in such a situation, the believer's focus is to be on God – on representing Him & honoring Him. Even if one suffers unjustly, “It is a gracious thing” – a work of God the Holy Spirit w/in to point others, even the unjust employer, to Christ. If you do wrong & suffer for it, you get what you deserve. But if you honor God by doing what is right & suffer for it, God takes notice & will use it to reach others & further His kingdom. Let others see Jesus in you on the jobsite. Be an example of respecting those who are in authority over you. Again, the only time you should not submit to that authority is when you are asked to do anything counter against the word/standard of God. And, again, be ready to deal w/the consequences. III) **We are called to follow Christ's example**. Jesus suffered for us, submitting to the only authority over Him, the Father. Jesus submitted to His Father's will & eternal plan. Mindful of God the Father & His plan of redemption, He submitted to the unjust oppression & mistreatment of religious & governmental authorities. Peter said we should follow in His steps. And being mindful of His Father He was also mindful of us. He suffered for us, dying at the hands of sinful men in order to pay for our sins, suffering the wrath of God in our place. As the songwriter wrote, at any time Jesus “could have called 10,000 angels to destroy the world & set Him free. But He died alone for you & me.” Peter delineated Jesus' perfect example. 1) He committed no sin, though He died as a common criminal (& bearing our sin). He endured the shame & pain, doing His Father's will, for us. 2) There was no deceit found in His mouth. He didn't offer pretentious defense. He didn't deny who He was. Isaiah 53:7 – ***“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.”*** 3) He was reviled but did not revile in return. He didn't rail against His accusers or even condemn them as they mistreated Him. Instead He prayed, ***“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do”*** (Luke 23:34). 4) He suffered, but didn't threaten. Instead, He “continued entrusting

Himself to Him who judges justly.” Jesus did exactly what we should do when we are mistreated – trust ourselves to God, knowing that He will balance the scales. He will vindicate His children. He will bring His Church to triumph. There are a lot of Christians throughout the world suffering for the sake of Christ who will see God’s justice brought against those who oppress & persecute. IV) **Peter closed these thoughts w/a reminder of the work of Christ on our behalf**, carrying out the redemption plan of God. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.” Jesus wasn’t like Moses: “Here I am, send Aaron.” He Himself bore our sin – all our sin. “He paid a debt He did not owe; I owed a debt I could not pay. I needed someone to wash my sins away. And now I sing a brand-new song, Amazing Grace. He paid a debt that I could never pay.” He did this so we could have new lives in Him – dying to sin & living to righteousness. Saved, transformed that we might live no long for ourselves but for Him, as we were created to do. His righteousness counts for us & by the Spirit at work in us, we can live righteous lives. “By His wounds you have been healed.” Isaiah wrote, “*He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, & w/His wounds we are healed*” (53:5). That last part is often misunderstood. There can be a case made that physical healing is made possible by the suffering & death of Christ. God certainly does heal sickness & disease & wounds. But the primary meaning of these 2 verses is that by Jesus’ death & resurrection those who believe are healed spiritually, made alive spiritually; once broken, made whole in Christ. Praise God for the healing Christ brings. Just as Isaiah wrote – “*All we like sheep have gone astray...*” (Is.53:6), so Peter reminded his readers (including us), “You were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd & Overseer of your souls.” Again, remember who you are – followers of Christ. Yes, we once were straying sheep, but now we have the Lord of all as our Great Shepherd. Once we were on our own, going our own way, helpless to gain life, hopeless of the future. But now we have an Overseer of our souls – Jesus Christ our Savior/Lord. Now we belong to

a family, we are citizens of the kingdom of God. We are exiles in this world & scattered by God wherever He would have us live & serve Him. But we belong to Him & to each other. We have a faithful God who will complete the good work that He has begun in us (Phil.1:6). Living in exile calls for submission, 1st to God & then to those He has placed over us. Our submission honors God, is a witness to those around us, & follows the example of Christ. It certainly takes faith – faith in exile.