



Message Transcript

Benefits of Submission

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Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today. Will you please welcome our Broomfield Campuses worshipping along with us? So great to have you with us. And as we get ready to hear God's Word, let's pray, let's seek, and let's hear what God has to say directly to our hearts. Would you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise today. And Lord, we ask that as we're ready to open up your Word this morning, that you would speak directly to us. Lord, we thank you for your living and active Word, which tells us exactly who you are and how we are to respond to you. And so, Lord, in advance, we give you praise that you're going to speak to us and give us the opportunity this morning to respond in faith with however you would show us. And Lord, for what you're going to do and for how you're going to do it, we give you all the glory, we give you all the honor, and we give you all the praise in the mighty and matchless name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And now all God's people who are ready to hear him speak directly to them, agreed by saying with me, amen. Amen.

Last week we had nearly a hundred people come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior in our services, which we are praising God for. And every time that happens, it never gets old for me because every time somebody comes to know who Jesus is, life is changed for eternity, not just in a moment, life is changed in a moment for eternity. So we're talking about a whole different destiny for everybody who responds to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The question then becomes, how shall we live?

Because the Bible makes clear that when Jesus is Lord, that we're no longer lord of our life, that he's in control, so the question becomes, how shall I live? And then, what are the benefits to living the way that God wants me to live? Are there any benefits to that? And what we find in the Bible is that many times the things that we read about now as believers that God wants us to do are counterintuitive. They go against the grain of what our flesh would say that we should be living like, it goes against what we would want to do in our natural state. And yet, because we're submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ, we want to reorient our lives so we're living the way that he would want.

And so if you have your Bibles, I encourage you this morning to open up to the Book of 1 Peter, we're going to begin in chapter two, verse 11. We're actually going to finish the entire chapter, because it's giving us an entire thought block of what he tells us that we need to be doing. And as we look at this today, there's really four areas that God is going to call us to submit and what the benefits of that is. That's right. I said the word submit. Today we're going to talk about submission.

When I say the word submission in church, it's almost like a four letter word that I'm saying from the pulpit to Christians. That's how it feels to many people. And if you're a lady here today, when you hear that word, it almost is a double swear word for you. Because oftentimes when we talk about submission in the church, we talk about it as we're going to put you down, you're less than, let people trample on you, let people walk all over you, because you're worthless. And that's not what submission is. And we're going to take a look at what submission is and how God wants us, whether

we're male or female, to submit who we're called to submit to. And then, listen to this, what the benefits are for submission.

This is a message for those who know Jesus Christ personally, and for those who want to walk in his ways. And so if you have your Bible, open to 1 Peter 2, we'll go through each of these four sections one at a time. And here's the first one, verses 11 and 12. He says this, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

This is his first thought on submission, who we are to submit to, and what the benefits of this submission are. And the first one is this, submission to the Holy Spirit glorifies God. Submission to the Holy Spirit glorifies God. Now, notice how Peter writes this. He writes, "Beloved." He writes, "Beloved." Now, if we were listening to John, we would see that about every other verse, beloved, beloved, beloved. This is Peter we're talking about. Peter's a blue collar fisherman, Peter doesn't really use the words beloved, but what you're hearing in his heart is before he's ready to address what believers are supposed to live like, here's what he's calling us, "Beloved of God, chosen ones."

He spent the first part of this book talking about this great salvation we share and the living hope and the living Word that now dwells in us. And because of that, "Hey beloved, here's what you're called to do, submit to the Holy Spirit because this glorifies

God." He says, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against your soul."

Now, there's those words, "Aliens and strangers." Aliens simply means this, that you don't belong here. This is foreign soil for the believer. If you've trusted in Jesus Christ, you're part of a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, and this is a temporary place for you. That's what a stranger means, you're temporarily going to be here. So for the time that you're here, this temporary time on foreign soil, there's a new way to live. This new way to live is in submission to the Holy Spirit, right? Because it glorifies God, being submitted to the Holy Spirit. Why? He asked us this, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

I wish I could tell you that if last week you trusted Jesus Christ, that all the temptation would leave you. That that would all be gone, and you'll just live for God every day of your life. I'll tell you this, if Christ is in you, you will still be tempted, and you will be tempted until the day you die. Here's the difference now. As a believer, you no longer have to submit to the temptation that you once submitted to, you no longer have to give in.

You can submit yourself to the Holy Spirit and do what the Holy Spirit wants. Why? Because the fleshly lusts that you have, all those things in you that still rise up and say, "I want my life to still be about me, I want to please me, I want to do what I want to do, when I want to do it," all those things are damaging to your soul. Here's what it means. It means now that you're a believer, you need to listen to what the Holy Spirit shows you about your life.

And I can tell you, whether you're a brand new newbie Christian or whether you've been walking with the Lord for 30 plus years, the Holy Spirit still has a way of showing you areas that you're not fully submitted to him. It never ends. It never ends. And so what you will begin to hear if you read your Bible as a believer, the Holy Spirit will show you things that he never showed you before, behaviors that he doesn't want you to engage in anymore that were just kind of natural behaviors. As a matter of fact, behaviors that everybody else is engaging in, but for you, that's no longer a behavior he wants you to engage in.

He may ask you to forgive somebody that you think is unforgivable, which is why he asked you to forgive them in the first place. He may ask you to change the way that you steward your financial resources. He may ask you to change your circle of friends. He may ask you to change how you're going to live and what you're going to do. And here's the thing, when you hear the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, don't make it for debate. It's not a time to call a prayer meeting with your best friends and say, "Has the Holy Spirit ever asked you to do that?" No, just be obedient, because to be submitted means I'm letting you lead me.

Submission involves trust. Submission involves, if this is what the Holy Spirit wants me to do, that's of best interest to me, it will be for my good and it will bring God the most glory. So even though these things oftentimes will be uncomfortable, when the Holy Spirit shows me what to do, therefore I need to do them. I wish somebody would've told me this when I first became a believer.

I started reading the Bible. I remember when I first got saved, I read the Book of James like just those five chapters like that. And I was like, "The Bible makes sense." I had memorized verses, I knew stuff, but as God started speaking to me, I'm like, "This is so clear. It's so easy to understand now." But what I didn't understand is the more I started studying the Bible, God was showing me all these things in my life that prior to knowing him, I had lived apart from him, and he started asking me to change. And over time, I got sick and tired of reading my Bible, because every time I opened it, I thought I was getting beat up. I wasn't getting beat up, it was the Holy Spirit showing me that I was to live a holy life that looked just like Jesus. And so, he was showing me areas of my life that I needed to change.

But instead of somebody coming along inside and saying, "That's a good thing," I was like, "I'm done with this." I would close my... I didn't like reading the Bible that much anymore, too much conviction. And here's what happens that never ever goes away, it never goes away. And the reason God wants us to do this is because those fleshly desires, they do damage to our soul, if not even to our bodies. So this is why he says in verse 12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles." The Gentiles were ones who did not know Christ. "So that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

He's saying, "Hey, listen, you're a witness among those who don't believe who Jesus is. And so, keep your behavior excellent." Keeping your behavior excellent is not about becoming a Christian and then you deciding what good behaviors you're going to

do, keeping your behavior excellent among the Gentiles means, "God, I am submitting the entirety of my life to you, and whatever you want me to do or not do or start doing differently, these are the very things that I'm choosing to do because I want to bring you the most glory in light of other people and when they see me." That's what it means.

And most Christians don't live that way. Many Christians believe, "Now that I'm a Christian, now that I know I'm going to heaven, my pastor told me no matter what I do, I can't screw this thing up, which is correct, therefore I'll live however I want to live." But then they find out that their life isn't going so well and their joy for Jesus is gone and they're not really maturing and they're not really growing in this process of sanctification.

Listen, when you trusted Jesus as the Lord of your life, it means he's in control, and he's deposited the third person of the Trinity into your heart, the Holy Spirit. Which is why when you read the Bible or if you go out and engage in a behavior you used to engage in, you'll sense this inside of your conscience, "Don't go with them. Stop! Don't date him. Don't date her. Do this. Start..." You'll know, and it won't go away. And when you know that and it aligns with God's Word, you must be obedient, because it brings God glory for other people to see you living in a way that's contrary to how the rest of the world lives. Be submissive to the Holy Spirit.

It means this. When I'm submissive, when I'm placing myself under the care of the Holy Spirit, I'm trusting him for what he wants to accomplish, which means this, I

am no longer controlling the outcome. Submission replaces control. The reason we do not like to submit is because we have a desired outcome and a preferred future. And if we submit what we're saying is, I don't get to choose what the outcome is going to look like. But here's the truth, the Holy Spirit has better interest for your life than you even have for your own. And if you submit to the Holy Spirit, what you're saying is, "God, I don't care where you take me, what you have me do, where you lead me, what you say, I will do what you want me to do, because I know for a fact you have my highest and best. And by living this way, other people will see your light in me, and you will get more glory. Therefore, I want to do what you want me to do." That should be our normal posture all the time.

However, for many Christians they believe that's for like the super spiritual kind of Christians. Like if you've been a believer in 30 plus years, then you should start living like that. But I'm kind of new, I'm in my first 20 years, I'm just getting my feet wet. No, if you've been a believer for five minutes, this is the calling on your life for how you're called to live. You answer to God for how he's leading you. Now, if you haven't heard of the Holy Spirit in your life, there's two reasons you haven't. Either, number one, you're not saved, so you're not hearing him on a regular basis, or number two, you're not walking in alignment with the Lord.

If you're saved and walk in alignment with the Lord, you will hear of the Holy Spirit when he wants to tell you what he wants to tell you. And that doesn't mean you wake up and every five seconds every day, "Holy Spirit told me, Holy Spirit told me, Holy Spirit..." That's weird, right? I'm talking about if you're aligning your life with God,

saying, "God, I really do want what you want. And Lord, show me what to do." The Lord has a way through his Word, through people, through circumstances, of directing you in such a way that you'll know, this is what the Lord has for my life. And I don't need to ask anybody else what they think, because this aligns with his Word.

It means this, you have a new identity. The old is gone, the new has come. And that's why this, oftentimes in church we talk about behavioral modification a lot. We don't from this pulpit, because it doesn't work, right? But a lot of times in church you'll think up, just say no to this, don't do this, don't do this, don't do this, don't touch, don't handle, don't taste, don't, don't, don't, don't, don't. It doesn't work.

And I believe it was in 1984, Nancy Reagan, who was President Ronald Reagan's wife, came out with the Just Say No campaign. Do you remember this? That was going to end drug use in our country. Just say no. Tell me, in 2019, how well has that worked for us? Has the drug problem gone away? You can't just say no. Your yes has to be larger than whatever it is that you're saying no to. Which means this, I have to say yes to the Holy Spirit all the time. If I'm saying yes to him, then these other little things that he's asking me to relinquish or start or stop or start doing differently, become very easy.

Now, they may not be fun, they may not be things that I want to do. And I would tell you this. Oftentimes, in my growth in holiness, many times in my growth in holiness, the very thing that the Holy Spirit is asking me to do goes contrary to everything that I enjoy and everything that I think is best. But I will tell you this, every time that I've submitted to the Holy Spirit, over time I find that's what I should have been doing all

along. The Holy Spirit is only leading you into the things of God so that Jesus can be more prominent in your life. Are you submitted to the Holy Spirit? See, the benefit is it glorifies God.

And notice what else he says. He says that they may observe your good deeds. This is the pagans. The people that don't believe in Jesus. "And as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." Now, what's the day of visitation? Right? The day of visitation really means, as the Lord draws near. And the Lord draws near in grace and the Lord draws near in judgment, which means this. If you live your life for Jesus, as the Lord draws near to people that he's saving, he will remind them of their experience with you and what it'll look like to be a Christian as he saves them.

I mean, just think about this biblically. In Acts 7, Steven stood up in front of the Sanhedrin, which was the ruling council of the day, and called them stiff-necked, hardhearted, and how they killed the very Messiah that had been promised for all the years to come. But don't worry, he rose from the dead and he's willing to forgive you if you submit to him. They didn't like the message, so they threw him over a cliff to stone him. As they were stoning him, there was a young man there named Saul.

As Saul was watching, he was giving approval as Stephen was being bludgeoned by all these stones that were killing him. As Steven was getting stoned, he looked up and said, "I see the Lord," and asked the Lord to forgive those who were stoning him. Do you think that stayed in Saul's mind for a while? It sure did. Because when he got knocked to the ground on his way to Damascus, when he was on his way to persecute

Christians, the Lord showed up to him and he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

And certainly in that moment, he remembered Steven, who he had given approval to, and how Steven went willingly to his death knowing that same Lord. And it's interesting because in that moment, he would've had to think about all the suffering that Steven did as he died for the Lord, and God was giving him a ,forte taste like you thought that was suffering? Wait till you see what I have for you." Right? That's how God works in the lives of believers when believers are submitted to the Holy Spirit, because even in death, God uses a Christian's witness to glorify himself. Right?

But how about in judgment too? Jesus Christ is coming back to planet earth real soon. We don't know when, we don't make predictions, because God tells us not to, but it's soon. I mean, just look at the world. He's coming back soon. When he comes, for all those who don't know him, he's coming back in the day of visitation. And on that day, when people see the Lord immediately and bow to their feet and claim that he's the Lord, there's going to be reminders in their mind all the time, "Yeah, that guy I worked with, yeah, that pastor, yeah, that person that went to that church, yeah, oh... I had every opportunity to trust Jesus and I didn't." You're a witness to the Gentiles, you're a witness to people who don't know Jesus.

The reason you want to be submitted to the Holy Spirit and continually grow in your submission to the Holy Spirit is because when you do, other people see that Jesus Christ is alive, and God gets more glory. Amen?

Amen.

It's the same thing Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5:16, right? When he got done talking about being salt and light, he said this, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Well, where do these good works come from? You couldn't do any good works before you were saved, so where do they come from? Good works come from the Holy Spirit doing a good work in and through you. That when people see you post-conversion, they might say, "I knew them before they were saved and I know them now. And obviously, there's a different thing, idea, force controlling them." And we say, "It's not a force, it's God, it's the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity that is doing good works in and through me."

Now listen, if I started this message saying, "Hey, there's four benefits of what I'm going to tell you today. One is to glorify God. Who wants to glorify God more?" Everybody would go, "Oh, yeah, yeah." All right. Submit to the Holy Spirit in everything. That means he gets to decide where you live, who you date, who you marry, how many kids, what you're going to do next, what the next step. He gets to choose it all. Well, I don't want him to choose it all. Yes, you do. The enemy lies to you and says, "If you submit to the Holy Spirit, he's going to take away all your fun. You're never going to have friends, you're never going to enjoy life. You're going to lose this, you're going to lose that." No, no. If you submit to the Holy Spirit, you will have the most full, robust, rewarding life. And it doesn't take away trials and it doesn't take away pain, but what it does do is fill you with incredible joy on the inside, knowing that you're bringing God the

most glory. Amen?

Amen.

Submission. Isn't it great? Right? Submission to the Holy Spirit glorifies God. Notice what he says next. You're going to love this one. "Submission to civil authority silences the critic." Submission to civil authority silences the critic. Notice what God says. "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution." You see that in your Bible? Man, I'm not making this stuff up. It doesn't say, "To the institutions that you deem worthy, that are Christians," no, "Submit yourself for the Lord's sake." So what's the motivation? I'm not doing this for me. I'm not doing this because I want to, I'm not doing this because I agree with every decision they're making, I am, for the Lord's sake and for his reputation, submitting myself to every human institution, whether to a king, as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and the praise of those who do right, for such is the will of God, that by doing right, you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Submit to all civil authority. How do you like that one? Now, you might think our political system is messed up. Okay? Go back and study the first century. I mean, if the Caesar was walking down the road and you didn't say, "Hail Caesar," you could lose your head. If you said, "Jesus is Lord," you would lose your head. Caesar is Lord. He's not just a leader, he's God. Right? That was the system that they lived in. And in that system, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, here's what Peter says, "Submit to every human institution. Submit. Let them lead."

Now, how can I let a government system that I know is broken lead? Because I'm entrusted to one higher than that government system. I'm entrusted to the Lord, Jesus Christ, and his Holy Spirit in me, which for the Lord's sake I am submitting to. Now, let's bring it back to modern day politics. How many know there's at least two different parties in our... there's more than two, but two main parties in our political system? And how many know that the longer you live, the more polarized they're becoming?

I mean, in my lifetime, we've had different presidents that have served very, very differently. There's no possible way that in your flesh, you could love every decision that every president has made in your lifetime. It's impossible. Why do we submit? Because Jesus Christ asks us to. Because we're part of a higher kingdom and we have a higher calling, therefore we're called to submit.

Now, this isn't the only place that says this in your Bible. If you flip back to Romans 13:1, you can read what Paul said about the exact same thing. We're familiar with Romans 12, not being conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. And we love that. But how about Romans 13:1? It says this, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." Every governing authority, God's the one who has established that, God is the one, whether you realize it or not, who put those leaders in place. Therefore, submit to them.

Now, I get it, we're all attorneys here, we're all, "I don't have to, because that

goes against God, we're going to get there." But listen to what he says in verse two. "Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed themselves will receive condemnation upon themselves." Right? We are called as Christians to submit to all governing authorities. That's what we're called to do. The only exception I ever see in scripture is if the government mandates something that goes against the Word of God.

Now, you might sit there and say, "Well, everything they're doing goes against the Word of God." I'm saying like we smuggle Bibles into communist countries that don't let people have Bibles. And the governing authorities say, "No, you can't." But Jesus said, "Go make disciples of all nations." That trumps whatever the government would say. Does that make sense? But be very careful and make sure you have solid scriptural support. And even when you do and you go against and you have civil disobedience and you're doing it for the Lord, then do it in such a way where you're ready to take the punishment for what you're doing too. Right? Because some of us, "Well, I'm going to go against the government and I'm going to form a rally, I'm going to form a faction, and we're going to..."

If you're going to do that for the Lord's sake, then how do you do it? You do it with all gentleness, you do it with all respect, you do it because of your conviction. And you're willing to take the punishment for what you stood up to do, because that will honor the Lord too. Okay? Does that make sense? We don't like that teaching. We only like that teaching if our political candidate is in office, then we like that teaching for the most part. But if somebody else gets elected, then we don't.

I mean, you just look at our presidents, the last two presidents that we've had. Both of them have very different views of governing, different ideas as to how things should be done. And either you loved one and hated the other or you hated one and loved the other, that's just the way that it works in terms of your own flesh. But I can tell you this, no matter who's been president since I've been a believer, I've prayed for them and their wife for God to have his way with them. Right? We're to pray for Governor Polis, who's in office right now regardless of any of his convictions, because God's established him as the leader of our state. It doesn't mean we have to agree with everything, it means we're called to submit to him in everything that doesn't go against the Word of God. Amen?

Amen.

And we're called to honor him and we're called to love him. Does that make sense?

Yes.

That's how we're called to be as Christians. And if you don't like what's going on, we happen to live in a great nation where we can actually vote. Most Christians don't even vote. Vote. That's a great place to put your attention and time and effort if there's things that you disagree with. And for those of you God may be stirring, run for office, be involved in the political process, nothing wrong with that. But once it's established, that's established by God, and we're called to submit to that. And the reason we can do that is because we know there's a higher authority than those in charge on earth,

and we're entrusting ourselves to him for whatever the outcome would be. Make sense? That's what God calls us to do. So, submit to that.

He says, "For such is the will of God, that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." See, here's the problem. Most Christians we want to open our mouth and tell everybody why the government's wrong and why everything else is wrong. Sometimes if we just shut up and just do the right things and use our tongues to promote the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord and I'm submitting to governing authorities, because that's what Jesus would ask me to do and I love Jesus, so I can honor leadership that thinks differently than me, it would have more of an impact than just shouting and being against everybody that doesn't think just like you. Amen?

Amen.

That's why he says in verse 16, look at this, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves for God." See, we think freedom means I can do whatever I want whenever I want to do it. That's not what freedom is. Freedom means, I'm entrusting myself to someone higher and I have freedom to serve that person who is higher. As free up in the Lord, what that means, I have the freedom in Christ to do whatever brings Jesus Christ the most glory in my life. I have total freedom for that. I do not have freedom to go sin, I do not have freedom to go against God's Word, I do not have freedom to do what I want to do just because it feels comfortable for me, I have 100% freedom to do whatever brings Jesus Christ the most glory in my life. That, I have freedom to do. That, you have freedom to do.

So don't use your freedom to like cover up evil, meaning this, "Well, I'm free, I know I'm saved, I can do whatever I want. You know, I got this sin over here. That's no big deal. I know I'm saved. I'm going to..." Don't use your freedom to cover things, use your freedom to be vulnerable and transparent, use your freedom to glorify and honor God in all things, right? That's what we're called to do.

I mean, even when Jesus... Do you remember when Jesus, they were kind of picking on him? I mean, this is why you silence the ignorance of foolish men. There will always be people that pick on you if you're a Christian. If you live for Jesus, there will always be people that pick on you. 100% of the time, there will. Here's how you silence them, by doing what is right and good. Right?

I mean, think about Jesus. Peter and Jesus were getting picked on for not paying the two drachma tax or whatever it was in that day. And Jesus' answer was, "I don't have to pay it, because I'm the king of the universe, but because I'm submitted to all human authority, we'll do that. Hey Peter, go fish and you'll find a coin in its mouth. Why don't you pay for me and for you?" No big deal. It means this, render to Caesars what's Caesars', render to Gods what's God's.

Well, the taxes are too high. Okay, they are. So, then pay them, because you're entrusting yourself to a higher power. I'm not cheating the government because I'm a Christian, I'm honoring the government because I'm a Christian. Does that make sense? That's what we're called to do. It's uncomfortable for us. It's uncomfortable. We've learned to be polarized in everything that we think and take tweets and short

little statements, and then hate people because of what they say. Doesn't matter.

Doesn't say, "Anywhere in here, you have to like everything that's decided, you have to love everybody in such a way that you feel really warm and fuzzy inside," no, it means you honored them, right?

There's a benefit, you silence your critics when you do that. Who here wants to glorify God and silence their critics? Here's what you do. You submit to the Holy Spirit and you submit to civil authority. Number three, you do this. You find that submission to any authority finds favor with God. Submission to any authority finds favor with God, because it's almost as if the Holy Spirit knew, "Well, now you're talking about government, but we'll kind of slide through that one, but that's it. Because I'm an American and I'm an individual and I'll do whatever I want whenever I want it. Nobody can make me submit to anybody."

And by the way, just so you know, we live in a very anti-authoritarian culture. We don't like authority over us. When we get pulled over for a speeding ticket, we don't usually thank the police officer, "You know what? Maybe I was traveling too fast and endangering some of the other drivers. Thanks for reminding me of that." That's not how we think. We think, "Don't you have anything better to do?" Maybe that's just how I think, just being vulnerable, right? I mean, we don't like to submit to authority, we like to submit to our coaches, if our coach is good and we deem them good enough, we like to submit to our teachers, if we feel they're really called and they're doing well, we like to submit to those at restaurants that really have our best interests at heart and treat us kindly.

But when they don't, we don't like to submit to anybody. "We're individuals, you can't treat me that way." That's how we think. That's our flesh. In the Spirit, when we're submitted to the Holy Spirit, we're called to submit to any authority that finds favor with God.

Now, verse 17 is really a hinge verse between what he's been talking about. Notice what he says. "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the King." We could do a whole message on this. Honor means to show preference to. Show preference to all people. Show preference to all people. What would the world be like if every time every Christian met somebody else in their heart of hearts, here's what they would be thinking, "Your life's more valuable to me than my own. So I just want to make sure during the time that we have together, that you feel more valued by me than I do by you. I'm here for you."

And what would the world be like if every Christian really lived like that? That's honoring all people. Now, all would include all. That's saved and unsaved. That means everywhere you go, every conversation you have, every person you talk to, you're going to treat them that they're more valuable than you. That's what it means to honor all people. That's the call. I mean, that's God's Word. This is coming from the throne room of heaven saying, "Here's how I want you to live, honor all people."

In Philippians 2:3, it says this, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Consider people more important and look out for their interests. That's what it means to honor all people. Then he says this, "Love the brotherhood." Love the brotherhood. That's the fellowship of believers. You should genuinely love them.

Now, most people will give lip service to that, "I love all Christians. I love them. Love them. Don't really like them, but I love them, because I have to love them." Right? Love means demonstrably showing tangibly how you love them, so that they know that you love them. Like how would they know that you love them? By your word of encouragement, by your financial gifts, by your care, by your kindness, by your thoughtfulness, by your forgiveness. How have they seen it in you?

Love the brotherhood. I mean, you see how these are hard. They're not only hard, let me tell you what they are, they're impossible without the Holy Spirit in your life. Honoring all people and loving the brotherhood, impossible without Jesus. But with Jesus, all things are possible. Amen?

Amen.

Then he says this, "Fear God. Fear God." Well, why are we to do that? Because God's the one telling us to honor all people and love the brotherhood, and you should be more careful about what God thinks than about what everybody else thinks. Because we grade ourselves on the curve. I mean, I can look in the mirror and give myself a good grade, even if I've had a bad day. I'll find something. "Well, at least I'm better than so and so."

I mean, my flesh can do that just like yours can. But when I align myself with the

Lord and I fear the Lord and I'm asking, "Hey, how did I do today? With you living in and through me, did I live today the way you would've lived in and through me?" My grades aren't nearly as high, right? And I'm usually asking God for more help. And I'm usually asking for forgiveness for a way in which I handle this situation. And I'm usually asking God, "Don't let me repeat that one again, I see that that was wrong," or, "I'm going to..." It's what means to fear the Lord, it means I want what God wants. I want to live this way because this is what God wants all Christians to live like. I want to love all people and honor them. I want to love the brotherhood. I want to fear God. And notice what he says, "Honor the King. Honor the King."

Now, if you think that's hard in our day for the president of the United States, think about what it was like in the first century. And Nero was emperor at the time, you know what he did? He would dip Christians in wax and light them on fire and use them as candles at his parties. So, this guy you're supposed to honor as the king is somebody who's probably killed somebody that you know very personally, maybe a family member or a friend that attended your church, in a brutal, horrible way, and then blamed you and all your people for the fire that that happened in Rome.

And here's what God says, "So honor him too. Show him preference." What? What has he ever done to earn my honor? Because God established him as king. So you honor him. Do you see how hard this is? It is impossible without the Holy Spirit, but this is what God's called us as disciples of the Lord, Jesus Christ. And when we do that, we find favor with God.

Notice what he says in verse 18, "Servants, slaves," majority of the first century

people that were reading this were servants or slaves, probably 80 to 90% of the people. "Servants be submissive to your masters with all respect." Okay? Students, be submissive to your teachers with all respect. Athletes, be submissive to your coaches with all respect. Employees, be submissive to all your employers with all respect. "Not only to those who are good and gentle," not only to the ones that you like, not only to the ones that like you, but notice this, "But also to those who are unreasonable." Unreasonable.

Unreasonable, my modern day translation would be a pain in your backside. That's unreasonable. They don't get it. They don't value me. They're making things hard for me. This is difficult. Hey, honor them too, because God's the one that's established this authority. And here's what I find in our culture as Christians. There are times where God may remove you from a situation because there's such abuse going on, and if you can establish your freedom and get under someone else's authority, then by all means do it. But there are other times I've found in my own Christian walk, where I'm praying to get out of a situation, God's like, "Oh no, no, no. I want you in that situation to show me honor by honoring someone that you're having a real hard time honoring, by honoring someone that's doing it the wrong way, by honoring someone that's disappointing to me."

And I would love to tell you, oh, that's just been in the secular world, that's been in ministry where I've served with people who hurt people, who did a lot of bad things, who I've had sidebar conversations with and said, "It's really hard to follow your leadership. And can I just show you some things?" And not only has it made it harder,

they've said, "What I'm doing is exactly right, if you want to work here." And I've prayed for God, "God, I want to get out of here, I want to leave," and he's like, "No, no, no, no. You're going to stay here." And so, I've told my pastor that I've worked for, "Hey, no matter what, I'm going to honor you with my behavior, I'm going to honor you with my lips, and I'm going to honor you with my life, because you're a pastor." And I've done that. And I've been faithful in that.

And I think when you do those things, then you find favor with the Lord. That's exactly what the Bible says. Notice what the next verse says, "For this finds favor." Keep in mind this. When you think about your life, we live in America, so we're always thinking about what's in it for me? And what's my next goal? And how am I going to get there? And how's this going to happen? When God looks down from heaven, who has your future, and sees that you're submissive and honoring to leadership in the place that you're at, especially when it's uncomfortable, what does he do? He gives you favor.

You want more of God's grace? You want more of God's power? You want more of God opening doors for you? Submit. Here's the truth, if you can't follow, you'll never be able to lead. If you can't follow, you can't lead. Many people walk into an organization, be it a church, a business, or whatever, they get there day one and they start giving their verbal resume or the written one, "Here's what I can do for you. I'm awesome. Let me show you what I can do." Right? How about this, go clean our bathrooms for about six months? How about this, go serve in children's for about six

months? How about this, go be part of a small group where somebody else is leading that you don't like for about six months? Let's see that you have the spiritual tenacity and maturity to be under someone that's different than you that doesn't lead like you. If you can submit, I know you can lead. If you can't, I know you're going to be a pain for everybody that you'll rule over, right?

Who can submit? Well, we don't like that because guess what? That takes time and pain. Two things we don't want to give up. But you give up time and pain, God will elevate you. I mean, think about all the stories in the Bible that you like. I mean, Joseph did everything God asked him to do. He's one of the few men in the Bible that you can make a case that had moral excellence. And what happens to him? He gets thrown in prison for a period of years because he did what was right. Did God see him? God saw him in prison. God knew he was going to elevate him. And he continued to submit while he was in prison. And one day God made him number two in the nation, and had his brothers come and even bow to him. You will get to where you're going through submission, not by putting people down.

Amen.

If you step on people to get where you're going, people will step on you later. You will reap what you sow. When you submit the Lord's way and say, "Okay, God, this is the situation I'm in, I'm doing it your way, I'm going to do it the way you want, and this is totally uncomfortable, it feels like a waste of time, and this is terrible," you'll learn lessons along the way that when you're in leadership you'll do differently. Submission. You want to get to where you're going? Submit. It finds favor with God.

For this finds favor if for the sake of conscience towards God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. When you submit, there are times where you will suffer unjustly, you'll just be uncomfortable.

If you're an athlete, I promise you, in your tenure of an athlete, you'll have a coach that's terrible. You'll have a coach that plays somebody else instead of you. You'll have a coach that personally picks on you. If you're in school for a long enough period of time, you'll have a teacher that doesn't like you, that will make things hard for you, that will put you down. If you're in the workforce, you will have a boss that is no good, that will treat you poorly. These are all opportunities from the Lord to grow your spiritual strength. God is sovereign. None of these things are happening by accident. And when you're submitted to the Holy Spirit and submitted to the authority over you, it finds favor.

Why do you think that the first commandment for children is honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and you may live long on the earth? It doesn't mean, "Hey kids, your parents are always right, they always do the best, they're always..." Unless you're my kids. But in... Not true, not true at all. It doesn't mean that parents are always right, it doesn't mean that you even were born into a good family, it doesn't mean you even had two parents, but because they're in authority, when God looks down from heaven and says, "Because of your love for me, you're submitting to them and they're not even doing it right, but you're doing it because you know that honors me," God will open up doors for that person. He will open them up.

If God sees a humble submissive person, he'll always open doors eventually, it just won't happen on your timeframe. Because we're microwave people. We want the thing done like tomorrow. "I submitted today, I did what you wanted me to do, and she was a real pain in the rear. So, when do I get the promotion?" Like in five years. Like there's things I was praying in my 20s that I see God answering now. Right? And I'm kind of getting old. I mean, sometimes it takes a while for God to take you on that journey, but you're never wrong by submitting to the Lord and by submitting to authority, right?

"For what credit is there," he says in verse 20, "if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience?" He's like, "What is the..." Like, what is it to you like if you sin and people treat you bad, like what benefit is that? Like if you cheat your boss and you're caught cheating and you're fired and you're like, "Oh, I'm suffering so much." No, you cheated, you stole from your boss, you got fired. That's the consequence. You know, what benefit is that?

But notice what he says, "But..." let's say you treat your boss with honor, "But if when you do what is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." You treat your boss right, you treat your boss with excellence, you're there early, you stay late, you're serving him, they give somebody else the promotion and you're devastated because it was a big raise and you didn't get seen, let me tell you who saw it, Jesus saw it. And he's seeing how you respond to it and he's saying, "I saw what you did and I still have your back. And don't you worry, I'll right all the wrongs, I'll make it right. Just stay in faith with me. He's not your future, I am. He

doesn't hold your promotion, I do." When you do the right things, you give God the opportunity to show up in areas that you never thought.

I mean, I think about 1 Thessalonians 5:24, it says this, "He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it." Most of us think that our authority holds our future, they don't. Like if you blame authority for why you're not where you are, you don't understand who Jesus Christ is in your life. "Well, my pastor puts me down, I never get to get here. My boss does this. My parents do..." You don't get it. You don't get it. Nobody holds your future, but God. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. And if God has you in a situation that's uncomfortable, it's only because he's building spiritual muscle and tenacity for where he's about ready to take you. So serve faithfully where you're at. That's the word. Amen?

Amen.

Three of you are excited about that word, but that's okay, because God's excited about that word. I mean, and this is why it's hard. I mean, as a pastor, I mean, my wife can tell you, I mean, there's really not a time I tune out. I mean, even on vacation, it's hard for me to turn off what's going on here. I think about it 24/7, and yet even while I'm first among equals among our elder board, I answer to our elder board. Our elder board is authority over me. And there are times and continue will be times where our elder board says, "No, no, no, this is where we're at, this is where we need to go." I've learned to say, "Okay, I'm not controlling that. God, you've established that board."

I used to think about, why did you put that person? Or how come this person

has... No. God, you've established this, so I'm submitting to that because I know by submitting to that, you always have my best interest in mind. Everybody is under authority somewhere. Like, you never get to a place where as soon as I shirk all my authority, you want to be under authority, because that's what causes growth in your life.

And then finally, he says this... Because if you're sitting here saying, "This is way, way too hard. There is no way I could do this," that's why God's Word gives us number four. He tells us, submission to Christ's example provides purpose for suffering. Submission to Christ's example provides purpose for suffering. "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving an example for you to follow in his steps." Now, as Americans, we start thinking about what's my purpose? What's my purpose? We think about job, employment, future, finances, houses, what's my... Here's your purpose. You're ready? You're going to suffer like Jesus did when you submit and do what he wants you to do. That's your purpose.

No student is above his teacher. Jesus Christ entered the world naked in humility in a barn, he died naked and humiliated on a cross, he entered with nothing, he took nothing out, even though he was the king of kings and the lord of lords in all of his riches. He provided the example for you. If anybody had the chance to usurp human authority, it was Jesus Christ, yet study his life, you'll see that he never did. As a matter of fact, he got punched by the high priest, kind of smacked around by his minions and the Roman soldiers. And yet, he didn't do anything.

I mean, he even said, "I have 12 legions of angels, I got 72,000 angels that could

come at my dispatch. My kingdom's not of this world. I'm going to submit to what you're doing because this is what my Father's asked me to do. I've entrusted myself to my dad." The only way you can submit to earthly institutions is if you're completely submitted to the Lord, Jesus Christ. He called you for this purpose. Now, we don't like this purpose. I'm just telling you we don't like it. But notice what Paul says in the Book of Philippians. He says the exact same thing. This book on joy, this Philippians short four-chapter book, oh it's a great book, it's a great book. Notice what he says in Philippians 2:10. "That I may know him and the power of his resurrection."

Oh yeah. Amen. Preach it. I want to know Jesus and all this power and his resurrection from the dead, and the fellowship of his sufferings being conformed to his death. Here's what I want to know. I want to know what it's like to suffer like Jesus did, I want to know what it's like to be conformed to his death, because the more I suffer and the more I'm dying on the inside, the more I realize what Christ did for me. That's what I'm yearning for. And for this very purpose, if you want to know what it's like to be a Christian and you start submitting, you're going to suffer in all sorts of new ways, you're going to experience injustice in all sorts of new ways.

And when you do, here's what the Lord will be saying, "Now you know what I went through for you. Now you know what I did for you. I didn't have to do any of that. And because you're doing it, it's bringing me more glory, other non-believers are seeing me at work, and you're doing what I want to do, and you're finding my favor and way to go. I'm so proud of you." Powerful, isn't it? It gives us a purpose for we're suffering. And you say, "Yeah, but I don't deserve to suffer like that," that's why God gives us

verse 22.

"In talking about Jesus," quoting Isaiah 53, "who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth." I haven't done anything wrong. What did Jesus do wrong? Like, what did he do wrong? The answer is he did nothing wrong. He did nothing wrong. He did everything right, and yet what did they do? They nailed him to a tree, they beat him severely, they spit on him, they punched him, they mocked him. But he did nothing wrong. Have you ever done anything wrong? I mean, if Jesus, the king of kings and lord of lords endured all that, I mean, how much more should we expect that kind of treatment being his followers?

But notice this, verse 23. "And while being reviled, he did not revile in return. While suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously." You ever read in your Bible that when Jesus was being mocked and spit on that he spit back? They spit on him and he hocked back on them? Said, "You jerk"? When people were hurling insults at him, say, "Hey, you got me now, but wait till I come back, I'm throwing you in hell for all eternity"? You ever see that in the Bible? You ever see people when they're beating him saying, "You think this is a beating? Wait till the beat down I give you on judgment day"? He didn't revile back, he didn't say, "I'm coming to get you," he didn't say, "You're going to get yours," here's what he was saying, "Dad, forgive them, they don't know what they're doing. Dad, into your hands I commit my spirit. I'm entrusting myself completely to you." That's what our Savior did when he was treated unjustly. What do we tend to do?

We want to call a Congressman or our attorney or write a letter or tell all our friends how unjust we've been treated. In this world you will have tribulation, but take heart Jesus Christ overcame the world. It means this is sobering for us, because when we see our Savior, we love that he did this for us, we just don't want to do it for those evil people out there. But it was those very evil people that was us, that Jesus did it for, and that's why he's calling us to suffer injustice for the sake of his name. Amen?

Amen.

This is a hard message. I realize how hard this is. This totally goes against the grain of anything that's comfortable, and yet this is what it does, it brings us favor with God, it silences the critic, it glorifies God, and it provides a purpose in our suffering. And notice what he did, he entrusted himself to God's sovereignty. Can you trust that God's got a bigger plan for you than what you have? And notice this. "And he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds we're healed."

It means not only are we trusting God's sovereignty, we're trusting the Son's substitution. Jesus died in my place so that I could have life. I already have everything I need. I'm trusting the Savior's healing. Here's a quick word on healing. Oftentimes, on this side of heaven, God can heal physically. Oftentimes, on this side of heaven, God can heal emotionally. Oftentimes, on this side of heaven, we see different types of healing, but we don't always, but here's the promise. If you're a Christian, when you meet Jesus you'll be completely healed. You will have no more emotional pain, you will

have no more physical pain, right? You'll have no more spiritual pain. It all is going to be healed.

And by the way, even if the Lord heals you on this side of heaven, physically, you're still going to die. And even if the Lord heals you emotionally, you're still going to deal with pain. And even if there's spiritual abuse that's happening in your life and the Lord heals you, there's still going to be pain with Christian people on this side of... It's just always going to happen. But in heaven, a day is coming where our healer is going to take away every bit of pain we've ever had, and wipe every single tear from your eye. Amen?

Amen.

We can trust that, for by his wounds, you've been healed. And then he says this in verse 25. "For you," that's me and you, "were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your soul." It means we can trust the Lord's guiding and protecting. It means every place you're in, even the most uncomfortable of uncomfortable, even the most unjust of unjust, here's what God would say, "And I'm with you. I'm with you. I'm with you."

Now, here's what I would say. And we'll talk about this in a couple weeks when we talk about marriage. Now, because this is what comes up in our heart. If you are being physically abused, emotionally abused, then you need to come talk to one of us as pastors. There are definitely times biblically that we are called to help other people who are suffering injustice. This message is not about, take a beating for Jesus, but I

will say there are other times that we're too quick to pull out, where we're in unjust situations and we pray about it, and God's like, "Yeah, I know it's totally unjust and I see you, so stay in it because I'm building something for you." And there's a wisdom involved in that.

So please don't walk away and say, "Pastor Jeff told me to take more abuse," I'm not telling you to take any abuse, I'm telling you to submit to the Holy Spirit of God and to governing authorities and to any authority you have in your life, and to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Because he suffered, it's not uncommon that we would suffer either. And when we suffer, don't be surprised, but just know that God's doing a work in your heart to grow you as a disciple. Amen?

Amen.

Would you stand with me as we pray? Lord, I know the tenor of this message, it's a hard message. Lord, it's hard to preach because it goes against the grain of everything I am and everything we are as a people, and yet, Lord, it's what you're calling us to. So, Lord, all we're saying is we need your help. Lord, help us become submissive men and women for your glory, in Jesus' name, amen.