

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

Submission to Masters 1 Peter 2:18-20 Part 2

The Scriptures calls us to honor human institutions even in the most difficult of circumstances. Christians are never encouraged to fight for, stand up for, or even defend their rights. Rather they are being called to “patiently endure.”

Let us once more go back to **1 Pet. 2:18-20** and see if what I just shared with you is not so. **“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. (19) For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. (20) For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”**

We are to honor human institutions and the authorities set over us. We are to patiently endure any injustices that come our way. And this was true even of the institution of slavery.

In order for these truths to come alive for us we need to understand the basic elements contained in this passage. What are those basic elements?

1) Mandate - “Servants be submissive to your masters.” The word for “servants” was the word OIKETAI which is referring to house slaves.

Though these Christian slaves had been created in the image of God and had become joint heirs with Christ. And had been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus and had all the rights associated with such a high standing yet they were being called by the Lord to be submissive to their masters and to suffer patiently all the abuses that might be heaped upon them. To suffer patiently the fact that they were considered property rather than people. To suffer patiently the fact that they had no legal recourse in the the courts. To suffer patiently the fact that they could not even contract a legal marriage.

How does all this apply to us? It appears that the human institution that has replaced the master/slave relationship is the employer/employee relationship. Though our employers do not buy us and make us their property they do in fact purchase our time and we are required to submit to them during the time of our employment. If we do not like the conditions that we are working under we have the freedom to talk to our employer so that any grievances that we have might be settled. And if this does not work we have the freedom to quit. But we do not have the freedom to resist them.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

MANDATE CLARIFIED

Respect - their submission was to be **“with all respect.”** Though their submission to their masters was to be characterized by respect or fear the respect or fear being generated toward their masters was flowing from the knowledge that they were to serve their masters as they would serve the Lord.

Eph. 6:5-7, “Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; (6) not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; (7) with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”

Col. 3:22, “Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”

The service that I am rendering in this fellowship even though you are my employer is to be rendered as unto the Lord. And the service that you are rendering to your employer is as unto the Lord. When we understand the obligation on our part to view our employer, as the Lord Himself. We can see clearly why it would be wrong for us to become involved in any activity that would disparage him or her such as gossip. Or become in any activity that would be viewed as resisting or rebelling against him or her such as protesting or striking.

Extent - and this would extend even to the most perverse masters. **“..... not only to the good and reasonable, but also to those who are unreasonable.”**

If you were a Christian baseball player it should be very clear to you that the option of striking against your employer would be wrong no matter how unreasonable you might think your employer to be. To strike against the baseball owner would be the same thing as striking against the Lord Himself for the simple reason our service is to be rendered unto the Lord. Compounding the problem of a Christian ballplayer striking is the fact that he is under contract with the owner to play baseball for a certain amount of money with certain benefits for a certain time period. For them to refuse to play is not only violating the principle of submission to every human institution whether good or bad. But they are also failing to honor the principle of our “yea being yea and are nay being nay” (Matt 5:37). I can understand how unsaved ballplayers would feel free to participate in this strike action but I can’t understand how saved professional ballplayers could feel that same freedom. Their action I believe provides a sinful example that should not be followed.

Up to this point in this passage we have considered the MANDATE, and then we have seen the MANDATE CLARIFIED and now we will go on to see the MANDATE EXPLAINED.

MANDATE EXPLAINED

If we would in fact embrace these truths that I have just shared with you it becomes a powerful testimony to others as to how little the things of this world matter to us compared to the value we have placed on bringing pleasure to our Lord. If we would in fact embrace these truths that I have just shared with you it becomes a powerful testimony to others as to where we are ultimately placing our trust! Bearing up under suffering while being obedient in the matter of submissiveness makes this testimony even that much more powerful.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

ACCEPTABLE SUFFERING

Let us read **V. 19** “**For this (their submissiveness) finds favor if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.**”

Let me ask you a question. Let us say that you are a Christian professional baseball player and you are presently on strike with all the other professional players. But let us say you had been listening to these messages over the last several weeks and decided that you for the Lord’s sake needed to break with your fellow players and cross the union picket line. Whatever millions of extra dollars you or other baseball players might receive if there was no salary cap placed on you was of less importance than being obedient. Would you suffer for that decision? And the answer would be, yes!! Your willingness to suffer in order to be obedient demonstrates in a very dramatic way how important obedience is to you.

The Christian baseball player who crosses the line because of his conscience before the Lord will suffer and will suffer unjustly but hopefully what will console him is the fact that his action has found favor with God.

The phrase “**finds favor**” literally means “this is a grace.” The idea is that this attitude on the part of the one seeking to be obedient is worthy of thanks. Or, in other words, those who are willing to suffer for their conscience sake toward God makes God grateful.

This is a wonderful place to be!! It is a wonderful thing to know that the Lord is pleased with us. It is a wonderful thing to be in the place of favor even if that means crossing a picket line and suffering for our conscience sake. It is good because it exalts the Lord! It says very loudly and clearly that the Lord is trustworthy.

Let us consider David. After the failure of Saul to be obedient to the Lord, Samuel anointed David king over Israel in **1 Sam. 16**. Though David had a rightful claim to the throne of Israel based on the Lord’s rejection of Saul and his anointing by God’s prophet Samuel, he still as yet was not king. How should a king in waiting be treated? Hopefully regally but this certainly was not the case with David. David’s growing popularity with the people and even within Saul’s own household led Saul to seek David’s life (**1 Sam. 18:5-11**). Saul continued to make further attempts on David’s life but was thwarted by his own son Jonathan (**1 Sam. 19:11-17**).

The intensity of Saul’s hatred toward David increased to the extent that he slaughtered any group which gave David aid and comfort (**1 Sam. 21:1-9, 22:9-19**).

Keep in mind the fact that David had been anointed king. David has the right to rule the nation. At some point you might think David would cry out for his rights. But rather he was concerned only with the outworking of righteousness.

In **1 Sam. 24** we read that Saul was again chasing David. And in his pursuit of David Saul happens to enter a particular cave in the area of Engedi in order to relieve himself. Unknown to him was the fact the David and his men were in the cave. David’s men tried to persuade David to kill Saul but for conscience sake before the Lord he did not rise up against Saul.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

He responded to the urgings of his men by saying **“Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord’s anointed.”** Why didn’t David strike Saul? Because of the Lord. Because of conscience sake. David did not feel that he needed to act in order to get what was rightfully his. He rather chose to entrust himself and his rights into the hand of God.

As God’s children the things of this world have little value for us. What good is it for us to store up treasure upon this earth or to enjoy more of this world’s pleasures. We hopefully have seen the futility of these things. If the Lord truly wants us to enjoy certain things of this world then we need to allow Him to provide those things for us rather than us resorting to the ways of the world such as protests or strikes to obtain them.

But maybe after a period of time as David was continuing to be pursued by Saul he would be tempted to regret his past decision. Maybe if he had another chance to get rid of Saul this time he would. Maybe his convictions would waver under the burden of his suffering.

In **1 Sam 26** David had another chance to strike against Saul. **VV. 6-12 “Then David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, saying, “Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?” And Abishai said, “I will go down with you.” (7) So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him. (8) Then Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time.” (9) But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can you stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be without guilt?” (10) David also said, “As the Lord lives, surely the Lord will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down in to battle and perish. (11) The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord’s anointed.....”** David did not have to fight for his rights because he truly believed that the Lord would fight for him. He truly believed that in seeking to do what was right that he in fact would find favor with God. That God in fact would be pleased with him. **AND IT DOES NOT PLEASE THE LORD FOR US TO RESORT TO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD TO OBTAIN THE THINGS OF THE WORLD ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY HAVE SO LITTLE VALUE.**

If we fail to embrace the truths I have shared with you concerning submission to various human institutions including our employer and when under the burden of sorrows begin to fight for our rights it becomes a powerful testimony as to how little importance obedience is to you. If we fail to embrace the truths I have shared with you concerning submission to various human institutions including our employer when under the burden of sorrows it becomes a powerful testimony as to how little importance you are placing in the Lord to bring blessing into our lives.

Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript

UNACCEPTABLE SUFFERING

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.” For us to patiently endure suffering that we bring upon ourselves by wrong action is unacceptable to the Lord and does not find favor with Him.

Those who are currently striking against the major league owners are not being paid and will continue to not be paid as long as this strike lasts. Some of them may have to sell some of their properties. That may have to forgo the purchase of certain luxury vehicles. They might if the strike goes long enough have forfeited the opportunity to accomplish some pretty significant things on the baseball field. But be assured they will not find sympathy from the Lord or His favor. They have sought the things of the world using the means of the world. They have placed their trust in themselves and their methods rather than entrusting themselves to the Lord.

The world believes that life is most fully enjoyed and we are most secure when we stand up for our rights. They believe this so fully that they are willing to place themselves even in a position of suffering in the pursuit of their rights. But this attitude and these actions give no pleasure to the Lord. We have come to understand that life is most fully enjoyed as well as secured when we are seeking to find favor with God. And what finds favor with God is that rather than fighting for our rights, seeking to provide for ourselves and our families, by the efforts of the flesh, we are willing to place our trust in Him as our provider and our defender.

CONCLUSION

We have been called by the Lord to be submissive to all human institutions and this even includes even the institution of slavery.

Our submission to those who have been placed over us such as our employer should be as unto Christ. This would preclude derogatory speech and other specific actions such as protests and strikes.

Bearing up under suffering while seeking to be pleasing to the Lord in the matters of submission finds favor with God. This provides a powerful testimony to the world as to what we really value. It tells the world that that money and the things that money can buy have very little value in contrast to finding favor with God.