

Intro (Section Header)

my name is _____ // Welcome [here in room - listening online] //

In 1 Peter 2:13-17 ... been a great series looking at how the church is a pilgrim people ... passing through ...

We are a people with a living hope ... live *toward* that hope.

Changes not only how we see ourselves [royal priesthood / holy nation] ... big implications for how we live. [next section]

Before jumping into the next passage need to read the intro to it.

1 Peter 2:11-12

“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

Who are we? Sojourners ... a pilgrim nation that belongs to God.

We are IN this world but not OF it.

B/C of this we are given the imperative ... “KEEP YOUR CONDUCT HONORABLE!!!”

Where? On Sundays at church ...

No! Everywhere ... “Among the Gentiles.” [not church]

That means there shouldn't be a “church-Jesse” and then the “real-Jesse”.

We've made a way of life of this in the South.

Florida Georgia Line, “We cuss on them Mondays & pray on them Sundays.” ... “This is how we roll.”

I'm not saying cussing will guarantee a spot in hell.

But make no mistake ... we are called to live different b/c we are Christians.

Some of you are looking for a brown bag to breath in ... (RELAX)

This isn't about piling on rules upon rules to force you to look and talk a certain way.

Too much of that craziness growing up.

Only ended up making robots and rebels.

- don't listen to that music ... hell's bells
- don't wear baggy clothes ... **until it changed to tight jeans ... then we didn't know what to do**
- don't wear makeup, no rated-R movies ...
- DON'T HAVE FUN

The message was moralism. The more rules you kept the more holy you were.

We took that and ran with it. We started making up new rules so we could be holier.

Maybe you grew up in that ...

That isn't the gospel.

We don't behave so that God will love us or bless us.

When you get the gospel everything gets reversed.

God loved us and did whatever it took to save us.

We live in response to His love!!! (not earn it)

What does the rest of that verse say ...

1 Peter 2:12

“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable ... “

Why?

“SO THAT” ... here comes the motivation ...

**when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see
your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.**

We live honorable lives to display Jesus to others.

We live for God's glory.

That is the big change that happens when God saves us.

We start living *toward* heaven. (Exiles/Pilgrims)

Before we get to God's Kingdom in heaven, God puts his kingdom into us.

So, what happens b/c of this?

Again, our inward desires and motives change.

And that inward life change shows its visible fruit in our conduct.

1 Peter 2:13

“Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution,”

What does honorable conduct look like for a Christian?

Again this isn’t parting your hair on the side and wearing dockers to church. (no judgment if you do)

Actually, it’s conduct that flows from a heart posture.

We are to live our life in humility and submission.

Hard to say that without my facing turning sour ... (still lots of sin in my heart).

Humility / Submission?!? “Don’t like the sound of that ...”

“I want to be in charge / in control.”

You might be thinking ... fine ... I'll be submitted here at church on Sundays. I can handle that for an hour.

No ... its meant to be the posture of our hearts by which we approach EVERY HUMAN INSTITUTION.

That phrase is a little cryptic.

But if we were to read through the next 30 verses [we won't] we'd learn what that means.

God designed man to be submitted to various institutions that would govern his life and conduct for his betterment.

This is true for every human, Christian or not. Our lives intersect with these institutions.

They are ...

- Work
- Marriage “slash” family
- Church
- and the one we will look at today ... government.

Have you ever wondered why you see these institutions throughout history in nearly every culture?

Because humans are made in God's image. [explain]

The upholding of these institutions is one way we show that.

These institutions can make humans prosper ...

But when corrupted or abandoned they are the source of much pain and chaos.

That is why Christians should care about them and uphold them in our lives.

And that means more than just going to the voting booth on election day.

We should honor and care about the government we live under.

1 Peter 2:13-14

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

Let's be honest ... it's easy to submit when your party is in the White House.

Peter talks about the supreme emperor. That was the Caesar of his day.

[didn't get to vote ... still had to honor and submit.]

To give you some greater context ... that was Nero.

Nero is famous for being a lunatic ... one of the worst eras of Christian martyrdom and persecution happened under Nero.

Submission to that guy?

That dude was evil ... how do you practice Christian humility and submission to someone who is evil?

How do you keep from demonizing the "other side"?

V17 bullet points what this looks like.

1 Peter 2:17

"Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

One of the central truths of our faith is that EVERYONE is worthy of honor.

Why? → [God's image]

Every single person has intrinsic value and dignity ...
regardless of how they live their life.

... regardless of how they treat us.

But what if that person is abusing us ... persecuting us ... what then?

It is important that God never demands we be punching bags.

V16 “Live as people who are free...”

When we have freedom to create healthy boundaries to keep ourselves safe ... we should do that.

If you are in an abusive relationship you have this freedom in Christ.

But, we cannot take our freedom too far ... while we get to create physically safe boundaries ...

We cannot hate, dehumanize, or demonize people.

That is one way we use **“freedom” as a cover-up for evil.**

You are not free to hate, harbor bitterness, revile others.

Humility and submission in these difficult circumstances means doing what Jesus said to do...

Matthew 5:43-44

43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

“Jesus, c’mon ...”

But this is the way of following Jesus.

Instead of using our words to curse and cuss our enemies he calls us to pray for them.

Some of us try to find a loophole ... curse and cuss them in my prayers.

The kind of prayer that Jesus had in mind stemmed from a heart of love, grace, and mercy.

We pray for God to change their hearts, to save them, to rescue them from the destructive path they may be on.

[Eternity is a long time ... and hell is hot]

The prayer isn't "me focused" ... it's "others focused."

Let's recognize how much of a miracle that is.

To get our hearts to change that much toward people who are abusing us emotionally or physically ... on their own a person as a better a chance of raising the dead than getting their heart to change like that.

It takes God to intervene.

It takes an understanding of the grace and mercy we received through Jesus.

That is the only way we can remain in humility and submission in trying times when gov't seems to be losing their minds.

But what about when the power shifts to our favor?

The danger is a different one.

We have to make sure our humility and submission don't go too far and turn into worship of the government.

We must always be submitted to God first.

There is a thread running through this passage that reminds us of this.

V13 Be subject for the Lord's sake [*uses Lord ... Ruler of rulers.*]

V16 "Live as people who are free ... but live as servants of God."

V17 "Fear God."

Can I call out the 40 year old elephant in the room [not referring to myself]

I grew up in church and basically you HAD to be Republican.

There wasn't freedom to not be Republican.

Now, let me be charitable and assume the best of the church leaders in those days.

It may have started out innocent enough.

Perhaps ... perhaps ... that one party's values seemed to have more aligned with Christian values.

I'm not saying that's for sure ... just trying to be charitable.

But what it devolved into was a Christianity that united itself to and fully embraced the Republican party.

"If we could get the right people in power ... then things are going to turn around in this country!"

Government became our living hope for societal renewal.

We began to worship a party.

That is not what Christian humility and submission looks like.

There is not a political system, economic system, political figure that is worthy of our worship.

Jesus didn't come to die for the Republican party or capitalism!!!

If you are a Christian and a democratic socialist. You are free in Christ to be that.

If you are a Christian and a republican capitalist. You are free in Christ to be that.

**What we aren't free to do is worship at the altar of gov't.
[and put our hope there]**

**But there is a good motive behind why we do that.
[regardless of your political party]**

We all want the world to get better.

We all want injustice to end.

When we stop worshipping our side of the aisle we can actually see that we have that goal in common.

But our desire to be "right" blinds us from seeing what is honorable in others.

Both sides reflect something of the desire for redemption.

One side wants to progress toward a better future.

One side wants to reform back toward a better past.

I would argue that they are both pointing to God's redemption plan.

As God's kingdom progresses forward it reforms us back toward His original design of a sinless world.

God's Kingdom progresses as it is reforming us.

In the church Dem and Rep both have a place. Not only that, but they are called to love one another, care for one another, and honor each other ... even in their differences.

That can only happen as we hold tightly to God's kingdom and to our politics loosely.

There is no perfect politician, except Jesus.

That is who we are to be submitted to above all!

1 Peter 3:16

“Live as people who are free ... living as servants of God.”

Jesus is not only the perfect politician ...

He is the the perfect example of a submitted, humble servant of God.

Jesus lived perfect humble submission for us; and is working it out in us.

We can listen to a sermon like this and think ...

“I’ve got this ... and become proud and arrogant.”

OR

“I can’t do this ... and not even try.”

The gospel reminds us that both responses are wrong.

What we have to realize is that Jesus lived a perfect life of humble submission to the Father.

John 5:19

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

Jesus didn't have dependency issues. He wasn't insecure and afraid of failure.

He lived to glorify God so that others would glorify God.

He showed us what it meant to honor the emperor and God.

“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are Gods.”

Jesus paid his taxes and he tithed.

But when push came to shove he obeyed His father.

And this is what brought about the greatest change and our living hope.

Jesus' radical obedience brought about radical salvation.

It wasn't a salvation from the Romans. He didn't come to overthrow earth-bound governments.

He overthrew the greatest tyrants that ruled over us. (Sin and death).

Not by military might, picket signs, or forceful power.

His way was humble and subversive.

That is the way of Christians!

Regardless of who is in power - Nero or Trump - our hope is in Christ alone!

This humble subversiveness means we don't hold back truth ... Jesus didn't.

He spoke truth to everyone, even those in authority.

But he also reminds us that His kingdom "isn't of this world."

Our hope is not based on who is in the White House.

Our hope is based on who is sitting on heaven's throne right now!!! [Jesus]

And so we follow his way of humble submission.

It is no different for his disciples.

Response

Not a Christian:

- Can hope in politics ... history shows us that never brings the results we hope for.
- Can hope in following the rules ... cross fingers ... maybe just get into heaven.
- Your only hope is in Jesus. He overthrew sin and death by dying on the cross.
- His kingship is the gov't you really desire. He is good, just, loving, faithful.
- Put your hope in him today.

Christians in room:

- How are you doing living a life of humble submission?
- What does your social media account reflect about your politics and where you place your hope?
- Our witness is needed more than ever ...
- Live in a political climate that is polarizing ...
- Church is not called to give allegiance to one side of the aisle.
- Allegiance is to Jesus and His Kingdom first.

- Live to give honor to everyone human being ...
- By this our lives glorify God and display Jesus to others.

Call to Come: Communion & Giving

As we come to Communion ...

- We are reminded that Jesus endured the cross to receive the crown.
- The bread and wine remind us how far Christ's humble submission goes.
- But it also reminds us that he is also the ultimate King we are to submit to and put our hope in.