

Hello // online //

Digging this series “Hope in Exile”. Helpful for us to realize
WHO WE ARE.

Exiles: we live here, but we don't belong here.

Our true home/kingdom is in a “far country.”

This life is our journey toward that place. [heaven]

And so we *long for* and *live toward* that hope.

And the more that hope gets into us [the more heaven gets
into us] the more we live different.

Last week we looked at how this changes our hope in
government.

**Today we are going to look at how this changes our
hope in the workplace.**

Some of us work to live ...

work is hard ... unfair ... wear us down ... feels pointless and insignificant.

Ecclesiastes 2:22-23

22 What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity [worthless].

Working to live feels hopeless.

Some of us live to work.

Get identity/significance from what we do/what we have.

Our work is where we put our hope ...

But in the end this is a false hope ...

Ecclesiastes 5:10-12

10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? 12 Sweet is the sleep of a

laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

Aren't you glad you came today??? Real uplifting !!!

So whether we live to work or work to live we end up drinking from the same cup of hopelessness...

But the Gospel gives us a new hope...

It's a hope independent of money/position/power.

1 Peter 2:18a

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect,

Our hope isn't dependent on who we are in the workplace.

Now, it's easy to get distracted by the wrong things here.

You hear servants and masters ... "Are we in Downtown Abby?"

I'm not saying purposely go find the job you hate and jump into it.

No!

We live in a time where we get to choose a job and career.

Back in the day it wasn't like that.

Definitely not when Peter wrote this.

What family you were born into typically determined what your career was going to be.

Allow me a brief second to address any concerns that God is condoning slavery b/c he is silent in this passage.

Not so.

He is speaking into workplace conduct according how the economy functioned in that day.

Plus there are passages of Scripture like Philemon that show how Christianity was subversive to this established form of indentured servitude.

Paul asks a Christian master to take back his runaway slave, but to take him as a free man, bought in Christ's blood.

Christianity, but for a few horrendous exceptions in history, has always been out front leading the abolition of slavery.

So God is not okay with slavery ... he is for every person's flourishing.

Now let's get back to dealing with this concept of masters and servants.

Kind of confusing ... hard to relate to.

Actually, there are plenty of similarities to our employment/employee relationship today.

A master then was like today's bosses and supervisors.

And servants weren't just unskilled laborers, many were professionals like doctors, nurses, lawyers, artists, musicians, soldiers.

They were given dignity and respect for their contributions to society and civilization. (like employees / labor force).

[USA strength is how they value the working class]

At the same time, these servants were of a different class with limited freedoms. Their employers had a lot of power over them.

[All the Marines said 'Amen']

So I'm sure Peter is writing to a ton of servants who probably wished they could switch places with their masters.

[Dream: Wouldn't it be nice to be the boss ... grass is always greener.]

It's interesting that Peter writes about the workplace here and only addresses the servant or employee role.

Perhaps it's because many in these churches were in the servant class. But we know that there were also masters.

Most likely what he is doing here is elevating the position of servant.

No doubt they were seen in Roman society as being on the lower strata.

But Peter is making an argument that runs throughout this passage.

To be Christian is to be a servant "no matter who you are in the workplace!"

Christianity elevates servanthood. [Jesus said ... great in his kingdom ... must be servant to all]

This changes our hope and what we live for.

Our sinful nature wants to be “Lord of the Manor” so that everyone has to serve us.

But in Jesus’ economy the higher the calling the greater the service and humility.

Paul talks about Apostleship like this:

1 Corinthians 4:9

“For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.”

So we don’t put our hope in titles or our position in the workplace. [or church for that matter]

We put our hope in Jesus.

We take our cues from him.

And right off he smacks us with that pesky phrase again ...

“Be Subject”. [humble submission]

This is not advice ... this is a call to follow Jesus.

Now if you have a great boss, great benefits, great salary, great work environment ... this is a layup.

But what if you don't have any of those things?

“Stick it to the man?”

Nope.

Be subject ...

1 Peter 2:18b

not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

Our hope empowers us to be a blessing regardless of our work environment.

I like that the Bible is honest here.

Let's be real ... there are good bosses and there are bad bosses.

But not bad b/c they expect us to get to work on time AND work hard AND hold us responsible for mistakes.

That's not a bad boss.

Word here is unjust [skolios = crooked]

Someone with corrupt morals and character.

The kind of boss that yells and throws fits and gets mad.

The kind of boss that overworks and underpays his employees.

The kind of boss that is willing to cheat and lie to make more money.

The kind of boss you dream of saying, "Take this job and shove it!"

As satisfying as that may feel in the moment ... Jesus says
“slow your roll.” [tranquilo]

Don't give them what they deserve ... give them what they
don't deserve.

God says ... be subject to these crooked bosses too.

**Stuff like this is why the Bible is unpopular ... even with
Christians ...**

We don't like to read these things...

Or we read them and do theological summersaults to get it
to mean what we want it to.

But make no mistake ...

Following Jesus means being humbly submissive in every
kind of work environment.

This doesn't mean compromise your ethics and morals.

No! Work hard, be a blessing, be honest. [regardless of
what comes your way]

That's hard to do if that might mean your job is on the line or your employer is going to go postal on you.

I know some of you in the room that have made those hard decisions for Jesus' sake and paid for it.

You lost income / your job / financial security.

Some of you got passed over for promotion b/c you didn't "bend the rules" like a good team player would.

So what is the benefit if when we suffer we seem to be losing out?

Our hope is knowing God has a purpose for our suffering.

1 Peter 2:19-20

19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

You might think it weird that God would look and see us suffering and not step in to stop it.

Sometimes he does ... sometimes he doesn't.

God promised that one day suffering will end, but until then we must endure it.

And God's doesn't waste our suffering.

James 1:2-4

2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We don't take suffering as punishment from God.

We see it as an opportunity for God to produce spiritual life in us.

God uses trials to make us more like Jesus.

[PAUSE]

**You heard of the term "ambulance chasers" ...
Christians aren't supposed to be "trial chasers" ...**

Not all suffering pleases God.

Sometimes we are the cause of our suffering. We sin and suffer for it.

God isn't giving us credit for that.

We experience God's grace when we do good and suffer for it.

The scope of suffering reaches beyond material/physical suffering.

V19 "One endures sorrows" -- the idea here is mental and emotional anguish.

That's speaking of our language.

So much of the anguish we suffer from our workplace is mental and emotional.

- In the competitive marketplace our fellow employees put us down.
- Impossible demands/quotas are put on us.
- Bosses berate us / blame us / throw us under the bus unjustly so they can look good.

Even in a decent work environment the pressure to perform well every single day can bring mental/emotional anguish.

This is true of every occupation position.

Employer/employee/student/homemaker ...

The expectation to perform at a certain level can make it hard to endure under.

Yet, we are not called to give up or work half-heartedly.

We are called to humble submission ... Work hard ... be a blessing.

And in all of it we are to be mindful of God.

We aren't to endure for the sake of enduring ...

In our endurance we are to be thinking about God.

Our hope comes from knowing that work can be worship to God.

Colossians 3:22-24

22 Slaves obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing

the Lord. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.

We have to recover the sacredness of work.

Too often we think working for the church is REALLY what pleases God and he puts up with the rest of us.

Actually, not so.

What you contribute in work is a part of God's mission for His people to be a blessing to others.

Work produces good and services that better life, bring order, bring joy, create IPA's ... which again brings joy ..., enforces law and order.

Lord thank you for the police and firemen that keep us safe, uphold law and order.

Lord thank you for the rancher that raises cattle, the butcher that buys it, turns it into steaks, and sells it to me.

Lord thank you for the brewers of IPA ... [deserve Nobel Prize]

[now that I got us hungry for lunch]

Your work makes a difference.

And what you bring to work, in your skills and abilities, are necessary to make that happen.

Those are God-given gifts he's given you to steward as His servant.

God gave them to you to put them to work to be a blessing in your workplace and beyond.

This helps us to come to work with a mindset to work as worship to God.

That doesn't mean you wear cheesy Christian T-shirt slogans and blast KLOVE at your cubicle.

Work that is worship (mindful of God) is gracious in God's sight. Whether or not it involves suffering and sorrows.

It is worship because it is following Jesus and trusting God.

1 Peter 2:21-23

21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Our hope comes from looking to Jesus' example and trusting God.

Jesus is a hard act to follow.

But we have been called to follow his example.

He was the king of the universe, [YAAAAHHH!!!!]
but came to be the suffering servant to all. [BOOOHHH!!!!]

What did he do when people fileted him with their words?
Nothing.

When he endured physical/mental/emotional suffering did he react in kind?

Nope.

How did he pull that off?

He entrusted himself to God.

That means he didn't listen to the people's press about him.

He didn't take their judgments (good or bad) to heart.

AND, it also means he didn't judge himself.

He entrusted himself to His Father in heaven who is just.

There is a lot of wisdom for us to dig into right here.

Why do we react and respond poorly toward people mistreating us?

Why do we have trouble living in humble submission?

B/C we derive our value from people's words and actions toward us.

Believe the lie “I am what people say and think.”

- when this is praise we can get an overinflated sense of who we are → pride
- when this is criticism it can lead to despair.

Either way it leads us to believe a false reality about ourselves.

But the criticism doesn't just come from the outside ...

If you are like me you have a pretty obnoxious inner critic that doesn't take enough time off.

And my inner criticism makes me more sensitive to believe outside criticism and praise.

When I yield to that what comes out of me isn't humble submission.

I either become arrogant or insecure.

So how do we cut through these false images?

We do what Jesus did ... we entrust ourselves to God who judges justly.

God gives us the best assessment of who we are.

This is so freeing to live this way!

Look at how Paul deals with a church where he was being ranked in importance with the other apostles.

1 Corinthians 4:1-4

1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

First, he rejects the notion that “apostle” was his identity.

Nope, you want to know what us “apostles” really are ... we all are just servants and stewards ...

Second ... your judgments about me are a very small thing.

My judgments about myself ... I don't even go there anymore ... they are really worthless.

He lets Jesus be the judge over him.

Why is this freeing?

B/C we stop living toward what people want us to be
... we stop living toward who we think we should be ...

We start living toward what God says we are...

And this is where our hope is secured ...

**God doesn't say these things b/c we earned it by our
hard work and obedience ...**

Our hope is secured in the work Jesus did for us.

1 Peter 2:24-25

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Working hard for Tom's, Compassion International, World Mission doesn't earn you God's favor.

Only b/c Jesus suffered and died for us.

He bore our sins on the cross ...

Why?

So that in his death we “die to sin”.

There is an immutable law.

We are born into sin.

The only escape from it is death.

That is the conundrum.

Until we die we are enslaved to sin.

But Christ came and died in our place.

He did the work we couldn't do.

No amount of suffering you and I go through earn us God's judgment that we are now justified [perfect in righteousness w/o sin].

That judgment from the Father only comes by Jesus' death and resurrection.

It is his suffering alone that made it so we could hear God's good judgment over us.

We were created to hear God's words of life spoken over us.

But b/c of sin we lost it.

Now, in Jesus the Father looks at us as holy, righteous, justified.

He call us His sons/daughters.

His blessing over us is the same as the blessing over Jesus.

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

The Father is well-pleased with us.

Not b/c we earned it. Did all the right things. Suffered for hime.

But b/c Jesus suffered for us.

Not a Christian yet, hearing this for the first time.

Say 'Yes' to Jesus today. Give up trying to earn God's favor or peoples favor through your efforts.

Confess and believe that Jesus is Savior and Lord and you will be saved, healed and restored.

For Christians in the room...

Let's remember God never promised this life will be club-med.

Entrust yourself to the Father who knows your suffering and has a purpose for your suffering.

Work with hope and worship toward God.

Call to Come: Communion & Giving

As we come to communion we partake in the symbols of Jesus' suffering for us.

This is a ceremony of fellowship with God. [Communion]

We are remembering that we are united to Christ in his death so that we die to sin.

Blood shed / Body broken.

But as we have died to sin with Christ, so we live to righteousness in His resurrection.