Submission and Suffering - Part 2

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 February 2025

Preacher: Joey Snodgrass

[0:00] You can take out your Bibles and open with me to 1 Peter. It's been like a year since we met together last, so I'll spend a few minutes just doing some review of 1 Peter.

So if you remember, 1 Peter is a book written to Christians who are suffering, Christians who are enduring difficulty and are being persecuted for their faith in Christ.
And so he calls them elect exiles, and so much of this book is centered around the theme of suffering. And yet he calls them to have joy and to rejoice through their suffering because they're walking in the steps of Jesus himself.
So a couple of weeks ago we looked at being subject to the governing authorities. So we spent a lot of time thinking about us as Christians and our relationship to the government, what the limits are, and what the Bible commands us to do.
This week speaks specifically to servants being subject to their masters, and it moves into a beautiful treatment of Christ and his suffering for us.
[1:15] And while this week speaks specifically to servants or household slaves, could be called it in that world, Peter is addressing them specifically.

But the truths that he communicates apply to us today, even in our world. Okay, so how many of you have a job in here of some form, even if it's babysitting or whatever?
Nice, nice. Nice, nice. Okay, so for some of you, you could be described as working a job you don't enjoy for a person you don't like.
Working a job you don't enjoy for a person you don't like. Anyone, is that true of anyone? It's okay, I'm not going to tell them. Cashawn, put your hand down. Okay. No. So when I was in high school, I had a glorious job.
I was the janitor in a gym. And as glamorous as that sounds, it was worse. So pretty dirty, nasty job, but free gym membership.
[2:17] That was about the gains. So that job wasn't particularly enjoyable. That job wasn't like a particularly great boss that I had, but it was some money in my pocket.

It was good discipline and work. You know, hours were not super flexible or anything. But anyway, that kind of feeling of a job you don't enjoy for a person you don't necessarily like is really the situation these servants would find themselves in.
These servants could be called slaves in the ancient world. It's not slavery as we think of it. We'll talk about that in just a minute. But they were the closest thing we can compare them to in our world today would be employees.
Now, these were employees that didn't have rights, but they would receive payment for their work. They would receive some benefits for their work. And it may shock us that the Bible acknowledges the existence of slavery and yet doesn't just outrightly condemn it.
Like Peter doesn't just outrightly condemn slavery here, this servitude here. And it might shock us, but I do want you to notice the dignity that is bestowed upon the servants here because they're addressed specifically as people.
[3:39] In the world of Rome, they would have no rights. They would not be viewed as people per se. But here, Peter and the New Testament always addresses them as persons, addresses them head on and gives them commands and some instructions as well.

So let me read verses 18 through 20 for us. It says, So verse 18 calls these people servants.
And the word used is kind of similar to the word for household. And so these would be slaves or servants in people's houses. And now the question we need to ask is, does the Bible support slavery?

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Does the Bible support slavery? This is a question that has been asked many times throughout many different centuries of the Bible. Does the Bible support slavery?
Some people would argue that the Bible does support slavery. And many of you, if you go off to college or maybe even in your high school, if you have a history course or something, they'll say, Well, the Bible supports what happened in the South in our nation's history.
[5:18] The Bible supports that fully. People will make that claim. People will even look at this passage and say, You know, verse 13 talks about Christians as citizens submitting to the government.

The passage after this in chapter 3 talks about wives submitting to their husbands. And right in between this conversation about government and marriage is slavery.
And so it seems like the Bible is supporting slavery. But let's think about this a little bit more closely. Marriage in chapter 3 is something that God created in the beginning before sin even entered the world.
Marriage was something that God instituted between one man and one woman before there was any sin at all in the world. If you think about government, government came into the world after sin, but it was set up and created directly by God in Genesis 9.
And so government was created by God as well. Slavery is an invention of man. Slavery is a result of sin, and it's a creation of man.
[6:30] And so while it's in the context of talking about being subject to rulers and being subject to husbands, the Bible is not supporting slavery.

The Bible does regulate slavery, but the Bible does not recommend it. The Bible does not recommend slavery. And we think about slavery in the Bible, whether it's the Old Testament or the New Testament, slavery in the Bible is not the same thing that slavery in America was.
If you look at slavery in the Old Testament in particular, it was typically voluntary and temporary. It shouldn't have lasted more than six years.
And in the seventh year, they would be free to go live on their own. The Bible also condemns man-stealing, is what it calls it, or stealing someone from their homeland to enslave them, or to buy someone who's been stolen from their homeland.
And so when you think about slavery in our nation's history, the Bible actually condemns that practice because of how it was conducted.
[7:38] And I've actually, there's a helpful article. We don't have a ton of time to deal with this. There's a helpful article on the back table. If you have more questions about what the Old Testament teaches regarding slavery and slavery in our nation's history, really good article on the back table.

Feel free to grab a copy, read it on your own. If you think about slavery in our country, it was based almost exclusively on race, and slaveholders did not allow their slaves to be educated or to ever be released for the rest of their lives.
Slavery in the Bible is much different from that, but slavery in Rome was still a very evil practice. Slaves were still horribly mistreated, and as I said, they had no rights.
They weren't treated as human beings even. And so Peter, in writing these instructions, his intention is not to completely overhaul the culture with one letter. His desire is that the gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done for sinners, would shape the way that Christians live, regardless of what situation they find themselves in.
And so he writes to these servants, not saying slavery is good, not saying their situation is good, but how can they honor God in that situation that they've been placed in?
[8:55] How can they live a life that's pleasing to him in that circumstance? So he says, be subject to your masters with all respect.

And that word be subject showed up last time in chapter 2, verse 13, in being submissive to the government. It'll show up again next time in chapter 3 of wives being submissive toward their husbands.
And so these are three people groups that are very likely to suffer, very likely to be mistreated, very likely to suffer wrongdoing at the hands of someone in authority over them.
And Peter's instructing them on how to suffer well. And so that's our first point is suffer well. Suffer well. This has to be subject to your masters with all respect, or literally with all fear.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now who is this fear of? Is this fear of the masters themselves? The answer is no. If you look back last week, it says to honor the emperor, but to only fear God.
[10:12] And so God is the only person we are commanded to fear. And so this fear here is not for the earthly masters, but really of God. And if you see in verse 19, it talks about suffering while being mindful of God, or while thinking about faithfulness to God.

And so a servant should be submissive toward his master, but he has a higher master over him. He has a higher authority that he ultimately must submit to, and that is God.
And so if these earthly men in authority over them, ask them to do something against God's word, ask them to commit sin, they have every right to refuse to do that because they're trying to be obedient to God.
And slave masters in the ancient world would ask their slaves to do many grotesque things, many very sinful things. And if they refuse to do them, there would be horrible consequences.
Peter says, be fearful toward God, honor God as your subject to your masters. Masters, as I said, would treat them horribly.
[11:23] They would beat them, brand them, abuse them. Aristotle, an ancient philosopher, said, a slave is a living tool. So you've got your hammer, an inanimate object, that's a tool.

You've got your slave, who you can also use to get stuff done. Just a tool at your disposal. That's how the ancient world viewed these slaves. They're reliable to terrible treatment, but just as he calls citizens to submit to an unjust government, he also tells these servants to be submissive even to their unjust masters.
He says, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. And why would anyone submit to an unjust master?
Well, Peter explains in verse 19, for or because this is a gracious thing, or literally, this is grace. When mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.
And so why would someone submit to an unjust earthly master? Because this unjust, patient suffering is pleasing in God's sight.
[12:40] And he says, mindful of God or conscious of God. And so this isn't just suffering in general that's called good here. This is suffering for being a Christian.

This is suffering for trying to live a life that honors God by living a life that's trying to be pleasing to what God has commanded. So this would be like if your boss asks you to lie or a boss asks you to steal.
A boss asks you as a Christian to do something that goes against what God says in his word. If you refuse to do that as you should, there may be some consequences.
And Peter is saying that as you suffer those consequences for doing what's right, for being mindful of God, it's a gracious thing in God's sight.
And he explains his reasoning in verse 20. For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure. And so Peter is saying you don't get any points with God for receiving consequences for your bad actions.
[13:53] You don't get any credit for rebelling and then suffering the consequences for your rebellion when you're just sinning blatantly. So you can't just be an absolute jerk to someone.

And then when they yell at you, just be like, well, they yelled at Jesus too. You know, they hated Jesus too. I'm just, they hate me because I'm a Christian. You can't be known for lying and then when no one really listens to you anymore, you can't just be like, well, they didn't believe Jesus either, right?
No, there are consequences for your actions. And if you were sinfully rebellious, there are going to be consequences that you'll suffer. And you don't get credit, you don't get a reward for suffering the consequences of your sin.
And so Peter's just laying this out. If you do wrong and endure the suffering, there's no reward for you in that. It says, but if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.
And now obviously the punishment received by these slaves was more severe than getting a pay cut or losing hours or getting a bad grade on an assignment or losing social capital with your friends because of your weird beliefs.
[15:13] But Peter's point still stands. If you do wrong and suffer for it, you don't get a reward for that. But if you suffer wrong because you've done what's right, that's a gracious thing in God's sight.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

If you do wrong and suffer consequences for it, you don't get any credit. There are no awards given out for failures except in Little League Soccer.
Am I right? Sorry if you play Little League Soccer. But my baseball team when I was in third grade, actually when I was in fourth grade, had a perfect season. We went 0-19.
Didn't win a single game. Rough, rough year. And I was very competitive, still am, and I wanted to quit so badly because my team just didn't care and I was just stuck with these guys.
And my parents wouldn't let me quit because they're trying to build character and stuff. And went 0-19. Didn't win a game. And at the end of the season, you know what I got? A trophy.
[16:15] Just as big as the first place trophy. And I was like, this is sickening. Like, what am I? I don't deserve this. I wanted to throw it away, but I didn't. And so, like, you shouldn't get rewards for doing badly.

And Peter's just kind of spilling that out. He's like, if you do wrong and suffer for it, you can't be, proclaim that as righteous suffering. That's just the consequences of your actions.
He says, but when you do good and suffer, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. This is a good thing. This does lead to reward from God.
And if you look back at chapter 2, verse 4, it's talking about Jesus, and it says that he, in the sight of God, was chosen and precious. But how did men treat him?
He was rejected by them. And so, in God's sight, he was chosen and precious, but in the sight of man, he was rejected and persecuted, and he suffered at the hands of men.
[17:18] And so here, Peter is saying, remember, in God's sight, this is a gracious thing when you suffer unjustly. Don't worry about what other people think.

Don't worry about the rejection you're suffering. This is a gracious thing in God's sight. And secondly, follow Jesus.
So suffer well and follow Jesus. Why is this a gracious thing in God's sight?
Why would anyone suffer unjustly and then proclaim it as something that's gracious in God's sight? Verse 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. To this you've been called.
[18:24] This is what you've been called to as a Christian. If you're a believer in Jesus, you have to embrace suffering that will come from that.

What did Peter call them in the beginning of this letter? Peter, he called them elect exiles. Chosen by God, exiled by man.
Precious in God's sight, rejected by men. And he's saying, this is what you were called to. When Jesus calls you, you're denying yourself and following him through any suffering that that will lead to.
The calling of God in salvation leads to suffering. And so what this means is that suffering is not a detour or an accident on the road to glory.
Suffering is the road itself to glory. Suffering itself is the path that Jesus walked into glory.
[19:39] Suffering is the road we must travel as Christians. There's a guy in Germany named Dietrich Bonhoeffer, very German name.

And he lived in the era of Hitler during World War II. And he was a Christian and he was a theologian and a pastor in Germany while all of the atrocities were being committed by Hitler.
And he said, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said this, when Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die. When Christ calls a man, he bids him to come and die.
And you're thinking on statements that Jesus makes like in Luke 9, 23, that if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
Jesus was calling people to salvation and saying, carry your own cross, carry your own casket behind you because this is going to lead to your death. You need to deny yourself.
[20:46] You need to forget yourself and your reputation and just keep your eyes on me. Just follow in my steps. And so why are we called to suffering?

We're called to suffering because we're called to follow Jesus and that is the path he walked. And Peter says, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.
And so he says that Jesus is an example to us. Now, as Christians, we believe that Jesus is much more than just an example to us. He's our savior.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

He saved us from death. He brought us life. But he is still an example that we should imitate, that we should follow after. And the word for example here literally means to like write under.
And so in the ancient world, when kids were learning how to write, they'd have like this little tablet, I guess, but not digital, but it had all the letters of the alphabet kind of stamped onto it.
[21:53] And you'd place a piece of paper over it and the letters would come through visibly and they'd be able to trace the letters of their alphabet. And that's how they'd learn to write their letters.

Maybe you've used something similar in the past, you know, back in sixth grade when you were learning the alphabet. But the just kidding, sixth graders, it's okay. I know you're smart and stuff. But this is the word that Peter uses to describe the example of Jesus.
He's that example your life is laid on top of and you just do what he did. You walk the road that he walked, which was the road of suffering.
And as he describes Jesus here, he borrows heavily from Isaiah 53, which Kagan read beautifully earlier.
Peter alludes to Isaiah 53 five to ten times here in these few verses. And what does he mean that Jesus suffered for you?
[22:54] Well, the example he left for us is unjust suffering, but that suffering was for us. And he says in verse 22, he committed no sin.

Neither was deceit found in his mouth. And as Peter is describing Jesus, he's primarily thinking about his death, so the events of the cross and leading up to the cross.
But the things he says here are also true of Jesus' entire life. life. Jesus never sinned. Jesus never lied.
Isn't he so different from us? He never once committed a single sin. And yet he's crucified in such a gruesome way.
His suffering was unjust. And not only did he suffer physically, but he would have suffered mentally and emotionally and spiritually as well as the people crucifying him were mocking him and reviling him.
[24:02] And they're punching him and like, hey, if you're a prophet, tell us who punched you. If you claim to be God, let God save you now. And Peter says that, verse 23, when he was reviled or insulted, he did not revile in return.

When he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. As you read the accounts of Jesus' death and the events leading up to his crucifixion as he's being beaten and tortured, he did not utter a single threat.
He didn't even say something like, God is going to judge you for this. There was nothing threatening or aggressive that came out of his mouth. He was silent.
He was like a lamb led silently to the slaughter. And even if you can't use physical force against someone, it's still tempting to use your words to tear them down or try to intimidate them.
So any younger siblings in here? Younger sibling? Yeah. So you guys know what I'm talking about. Like, you know, you're not bigger than your older sibling, but you can talk a big game sometimes. So even if you can't get back at them physically, you can try to cut them down with an insult or something like that.
[25:32] And if you've seen the video, there was this guy, I assume the backstory is he's kind of getting picked on, but there's a video and he's like, you're disrespecting a future U.S. Army soldier. Have you guys seen that?

Okay. All right. Good. Thank you. So anyway, he couldn't get back at them, so he's trying to cut them down with intimidation. I used to play football a long time ago and before I tore my Achilles, rest in peace.
And there's this thing, I don't even know if it's legal now, but it was called Tulsa Team Camp at the University of Tulsa, and we would have three a days in July. And so it was just three practices a day, full pads, like full contact.
It was brutal. So just getting dehydrated, zapped for three or four days. And we'd be staying in the dorms and we'd be just kind of sitting around like suffering together, like no energy to even talk really.
We're just sitting in the same room together. And one of my friends like cramps up in his legs, which leg cramps are super, super painful. And if you know that just a little anatomy lesson, the top part of your leg is called your quad.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

[26:37] And so the way you stretch that is by pulling your foot back. That's how you stretch that. So you get a cramp there. The back part of your leg is called your hamstring. And so if you get a cramp there, you've got to kind of stretch it out, straighten it, try to touch your toe to get cramps, get rid of cramps that way.

Well, my friends, like again, were super tired. He, his legs just both lock up, like hamstrings and quads. He was going to stand up from his chair, just locked up.
So it's like, you can't stretch either way. And so he's just standing there like screaming. He's like, and he's like, help me. He's like crying because he's in so much pain. And one of my friends comes up and just pushed him over.
So, and so in that pain and that suffering, he's like, I'm going to kill you. I'm going to kill you. Everyone lived. But anyway, that suffering produced some threats from him pretty quickly.
Like, I don't think murder had ever crossed his mind, at least not that I know of. But as soon as he starts suffering physically at someone else's hands, he starts breathing out threats. And Jesus here suffers to death and he's being insulted and reviled.
[27:51] And not a single threat left his lips. He was quiet. But not quiet to the point where he said nothing because he was still talking.

But the words that came out of his mouth were, Father, forgive them. They don't know what they do. And Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
And it is finished. Even in his intense pain and suffering, he's speaking words that are not threatening but are filled with grace and hope.
how was it that he was able to do this? He continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. Jesus was able to keep his mouth shut because he trusted a God who would settle everything in the end.
He trusted God with his life. He trusted God with his death. He knew that God was a righteous judge who would not let sin go unpunished in the end.
[29:00] He quietly trusted God and kept his mouth shut while threats were breathed out against him. In verse 24, it says, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

He, even though he was sinless, had never even told a little lie, had never sinned with his speech or his actions or his thoughts, had all of our sin put on him.
And he received the curse of God. He was killed on a tree. He was killed on a cross. And Deuteronomy 21 says that anyone who hangs on a tree is cursed.
And so here, Jesus, the sinless one, is suffering unjustly at the hand of men and at the hand of God because our sins, which he did not commit, are placed on him and he's suffering for them in our place.
Why did he do this? What's the result of him doing this? That we might die to sin and live to righteousness. He died so that we could live a life of freedom.
[30:16] Not freedom to do whatever we want, but freedom to do what is right. Freedom to be obedient. Freedom to resist sin and to fight temptation and to follow in his steps.

And so friends, do you believe in Jesus? Is your life lived according to his word? That's the sign. His death leads to our life.
And in his death, we die to our old self. We die to our sin and live this new life to righteousness. We are not perfect. We will still struggle with sin, so don't misunderstand me, but would people around you be surprised if they found out you were a Christian?
Would anyone be like, oh, you're a Christian? Well, you cuss just like the rest of us. You do this just like the rest of us. I didn't know you were a Christian. Does your life reflect what you believe or claim to believe?
According to the Bible, the death of Jesus secures our freedom from sin. And we will not be perfect in this life. We will still battle against sin to be sure.
[31:26] But what direction are you headed? Are you becoming more like Jesus? And in 1 John 1, 9, it says, if anyone does sin, which we all do, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.

Cry out to Jesus, and he will advocate for you in your place because he died for the sins of his people. And it says, by his wounds, you have been healed.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host

Now, the wounds would have been a trigger word for these slaves. They'd received wounds before. They'd been beaten before.
They'd been punched before. They'd been abused before. And Jesus suffered similar wounds.
And it's through his wounds that we are healed. It's through his bloody death that he heals us. His broken body heals our sinful souls.
[32:37] And the healing here, I think, is primarily spiritual. It cleanses us. It makes us right. It heals us. It brings us health to our souls.

But this includes physical healing as well. One day, four believers, we'll have brand new bodies in heaven with no more sickness, no more pain, no more imperfections, no more flaws, no more insecurities, perfection because of his wounds.
His wounds heal us spiritually and one day physically as well. But why do we need healing? Verse 25, for you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.
disciples. And so we were lost and dead in sin like helpless little sheep without a shepherd. And if you're outside of Christ, that describes you today.
You are lost. You're dead in your sin. You have no hope. There's no one leading you. There's no shepherd over you. But if you're in Christ, this describes how you were.
[34:00] You were straying like sheep but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Who's the shepherd?

Who's the overseer? It's Jesus. Because he became like a lamb led to the slaughter, he is now our shepherd.
Because he laid down his life, he now looks over our lives because he lives forever. He's not still dead but he is risen indeed.
And so these servants need to keep this in mind. These citizens need to keep this in mind. These wives need to keep this in mind that as they're suffering unjustly, as they're submitting themselves, even opening themselves up to abuse in some cases, their ultimate ruler was not the government. Their ultimate ruler was not their unbelieving husbands. Their ultimate ruler were not their earthly masters. Their ruler is the Lord Jesus Christ who lives forever. He is the overseer.
[35:07] He is the shepherd. He's the one they must obey. He's the one they ultimately submit to. So suffer well, follow Jesus.

I use this song to conclude a sermon I preached on Sunday night a couple of weeks ago, but I'll use it again because it speaks of suffering. But this song is called Christ is mine forevermore.
And the second verse addresses this problem of suffering. It says, mine are tears in times of sorrow, darkness not yet understood.
Through the valley I must travel where I see no earthly good. But mine is peace that flows from heaven and strength in times of need.
I know my pain will not be wasted. Christ completes his work in me. And if you flip over to 1 Peter chapter 5, some of the last phrases of this book.
[36:18] Verse 10. After you have suffered a little while, a little while in comparison to eternal glory.

But after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.
To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. So follow Jesus and suffer well. Let me pray for us. Our Father, we praise you for the example you've given us in Jesus.
Certainly he's more than our example. He died to set us free from our sins. He saved us, but he's left us an example that we should follow in his steps. And so I pray that we, as your people, would be obedient to Christ, be obedient to your word, even when it leads to suffering.
And I pray we do this for your glory. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host