

Text: 1 Pt 2.21-24a

Last time we talked about Peter's admonition to the slaves. I noted that we are part of a long section where the theme is "submission."

We have the command, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution" in v. 13

Following that, we have an unusual construction that has an imperative sense: "Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect." (18)

We have the same construction in 3.1: "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands"

Throughout we have language calling us to submission to the various authorities in our lives.

The section we move into tonight has an uncertainty about it. The uncertainty is this: who is Peter speaking to?

- Is he continuing to speak to the servants (slaves) of v. 18? [Context suggests, "yes"]
- Or is he speaking more generally to all? [general language and subject matter also suggest, "yes"]

"There is some reason to ask whether this final reminder is consciously addressed only to the slaves in the Christian community or to all Peter's readers. Since it is just as applicable to all as to any, and since many were suffering under persecution who were not necessarily slaves, it seems to me that Peter is consciously broadening his application here in such a way that even though the slaves in particular are addressed so also are all the rest."¹

Others are less definite, but Picirilli's reasoning seems logical to me.

Overall, the general theme has the notion of "bearing up under suffering" rather than "standing up against suffering."

There is particular application to us today as we are faced with government restrictions that we don't like.

Note: you can't demonstrate a submissive spirit when you go along with a command you *like*, only when you submit to one you don't like.

¹ Robert E. Picirilli, *Commentary on the Books of 1 and 2 Peter*, ed. Robert E. Picirilli, The Randall House Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Randall House, 1992), 155.

For us, there is a direct application to the government regulations we face. We don't like them, but they are there.

Read 1 Pt 2.18-24, text 21-24a

Proposition: The Lord Jesus gives us a pattern to follow when we suffer in any way.

I. The calling to suffer

A. The inescapable calling

1. The verb is passive, the action happens to the subject
2. "You have been called"
3. Jesus said:

Jn 15.20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Mt 10.24-25 ¶ "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. ²⁵ "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household!

4. Our context (v. 20) talks about mistreatment of slaves [subordinates] in the natural course of things

Suffering in some way is inescapable. "You have been called to this."

Note: our government restrictions are not persecution, but they are burdensome.

B. The calling to suffer is not just persecution

1. Recall the last part of v. 20: "if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God."
 - a. Notice the italics:
 - 1) *For it*
 - 2) *finds*

- b. Read without italics: “if when you do what is right and suffer, you patiently endure it, this [is] grace with [from] God.”
2. In other words, whatever suffering you might endure, is undeserved suffering
 - a. You may be living right, which could provoke mistreatment out of resentment... or...
 - b. You may be living right, and the mistreatment comes anyway

In the context of vv. 18-20, we are talking about a slave-master relationship gone wrong.

Nevertheless, I think we can expand the understanding of suffering to any kind of suffering we might endure: “you have been called to this”

II. Our pattern for suffering

A. The big word in the passage comes next: “Christ suffered, leaving to you an **example**”

1. The word here is unique in the NT (only usage)
 - a. The word refers to lessons left for students to trace out

Do you remember getting worksheets in elementary school to learn your letters, where the first line might have the letters in a dotted line for you to trace out?

The word is literally, “under-writing,” where the example for the student was written on one sheet of papyri, to be laid beneath and traced out on the student’s sheet.

- b. Other images:

“It means properly *a writing copy*, such as is set for children; or an outline or sketch for a painter to fill up; and then, in general, an example, a pattern for imitation.”²

² Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: James to Jude*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884), 151.

“They were like children who place foot after foot in the prints of their elder brother who walks before them in the snow.”³

“It is also possible that the reference is to an artist’s sketch, the details of which were to be filled in by others. According to each of those views, the example was not left merely to be admired, but to be followed line by line, feature by feature.”⁴

2. Our passage means, the sufferings of Jesus become our lesson plan “to follow in his steps”
 - a. It is as if the Lord traced out our school lesson with the steps of his suffering
 - b. Not that we are to follow the exact path, to a literal cross — Peter proceeds to lay out line by line the lesson we need to learn

B. The Lesson Plan of Disciples (22-23)

1. The first line on our assignment sheet: suffering without sin
 - a. A loose quotation from Isa 53.9
 - b. The focus is on Jesus in his suffering, but several commentators mention Peter’s intimate knowledge of Jesus through the years of his ministry
 - c. “The original word order, ‘Sin not he did,’ as well as the aorist tense verb (*epoiēsen*), stresses that not in a single instance did He succumb to an act of sin.”⁵
2. The second line: suffering without uttering any deceitful thing
 - a. No attempt to shade the truth to avoid suffering
 - b. No attempt to shift the suffering to others

³ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Pt 2.21.

⁴ D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* (Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1997), 182–83.

⁵ Hiebert, 184.

3. The third line: “not reviling back”

- a. Think of the mocking he endured at the hands of the soldiers and priests, “who struck you O Christ”
- b. Through all this he kept silent

4. The fourth line: “uttered no threats”

“Though the linear action of the verbal forms may be understood of His habitual conduct, the Passion scenes seem clearly in view. He was subjected to severe physical sufferings: He was struck in His face, crowned with thorns, beaten with a reed, scourged, forced to bear His own cross, and crucified. Yet through it all He never threatened retaliation on His tormentors, nor even predicted that they would be punished for it. Some of the early Christian martyrs could not resist the natural urge to threaten their executioners with divine punishment. Even the apostle Paul, on one occasion when abused in court, did not resist the temptation (Acts 23:3).”⁶

Ac 23.3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Do you sit to try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?”

5. The final line: trusting God

- a. The word means, “to hand over”
- b. The Lord handed over his whole being to the Father
- c. He committed his own case to God for adjudication (waiting on the final judgement)
- d. Peter speaks to this for us in chapter 4

1 Pt 4.3-5 For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. ⁴ In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them*

⁶ Hiebert, 185.

into the same excesses of dissipation, **and they malign you;**⁵ but **they will give account to Him who is ready to judge** the living and the dead.

Our lesson plan is a difficult one to trace out in our life:

- Refrain from sin during our suffering
- Keep our mouths from any deceit
- Not maligning those who malign
- Uttering no threats of judgement
- Quietly trusting God

III. The power for your success (24a)

A. We will come back to this verse next week and talk about it in isolation on the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement

1. The subject is still the suffering of Christ on the cross
2. The purpose statement in the verse applies to this message

B. How do we get the power to follow our lesson plan?

1. He died so that (purpose) we might die and live
 - a. Dying to sin: reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin
 - b. Alive to righteousness: live to God

Rm 6.11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

KJV Rm 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. Sin no longer reigns, by faith we live to righteousness — even when we suffer

Always, the Christian life comes down to faith.

Conclusion:

Proposition: The Lord Jesus gives us a pattern to follow when we suffer in any way.

To make application to our present circumstances: our sufferings are unpleasant, but light.

I don't personally like the restrictions our government places on us — I don't think they are effective, or necessary.

Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus is giving us a lesson recital time. In our light affliction, can we follow his pattern?

Can we...

- Refrain from sin during our suffering
- Keep our mouths from any deceit
- Not malign those who malign
- Utter no threats of judgement
- Quietly trust God

Can we? Of course we can, if we walk by faith.