

Submission in the Workplace, Part 2

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:19-23

Code: 60-27

As we study the Word of God tonight, let's open our Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 2...1 Peter 2 and we are looking at the section really that begins in verse 11 and flows on through the end of the chapter. Most particularly for us tonight, looking at verses 18 and following which we began last time. Let me give you a little bit of an introduction.

I think it's obvious to everybody who is a Christian, certainly to those of us who know the Word of God, that the world is a battleground. That goes without saying. And I know there are many ways to define the battle of the world but let me look at it from a spiritual viewpoint and say the world is the arena of a spiritual battle. From Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 where there will be conflict between Satan the serpent and the seed of the woman, there has been an unending spiritual battle, an immense pervasive conflict. As you read through the prophet Daniel you find that the demons are engaged in warfare in heaven against the angels of God. As you come all the way down to earth you find out from the Apostle Paul that we do not wrestle flesh and blood but we wrestle fallen demons and fallen angels called principalities and powers. There is then a pervasive conflict between the people of God and the people of Satan...the children of God and the children of the devil.

Now this whole spiritual warfare came into bold relief and clear focus in the time of Jesus Christ. When He came into the world, for one thing, what He did was specifically identify the two sides. He talked about the children of God and He talked about the children of the devil in John chapter 8. Jesus said very clearly in chapter 15 of John that there would be a battle and that it would be waged from the children of Satan against the children of God, those who belong to God through Christ. In John 15:18, listen to this, it says, "Jesus said, If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world the world would love its own, but because you're not of the world but I chose you out of the world therefore the world hates you." That's the basic battle. The children of God are defending themselves against the children of the devil who hate them. It's not that we hate the world, that is the people in the world, it's that they hate us because we are associated with God, with Christ, we are a threat to the system and the system is predicated on sin.

In John 16 as Jesus continues this same speech, He says, "An hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think he is offering service to God." In other words, some people have killed the people of God in the name of God. In other words, in the name of their god, or their assessment of who God is they have killed the true children of God. To put it simply, one of the greatest persecutors of the people of God has been false religion. And He says they do these things because they have not known the Father or Me.

So you have a society a people, the world they're called, who do not know the true God or Christ, they have a false religion and they hate the children of God. We are in a war then all the time. It's not new, it's very old. It has gone on since God's people were first begun. The people of Satan resent, resist the people of God. And Satan energizes them in an effort to overthrow the work of God and overthrow the people of God. So we are constantly under attack. Now I just want you to fix that in your mind. And Satan attacks us many many ways, many ways. Everything from religious persecution that causes people to lose their lives to threats, to innuendo, to alienation, to ostracizing people from society and the culture, many many ways the church has been and is persecuted.

But listen, one of Satan's favorite weapons to devastate the work of God, to wound the Kingdom, as it were, to debilitate the church, to cripple our message is to find the failures of the people who say they belong to God, identify those failures and then parade them before the world. You understand that? One of Satan's favorite weapons is to dig up dirt on the people who say they know God and then parade the scandal before the watching world. Inevitably that discredits us in a major way. Scandals over sex, scandals over money, scandals over power and authority, all of those kinds of things and many more are the tools of Satan by which he discredits the church. Now let me take it a step further. Satan also plants people in the church, he plants people in the environment of Christianity, has them take the label "Christian" and then live such totally non-Christian lives that they can be used to destroy the credibility and the integrity of Christianity.

So he not only uses the real failures of real Christians, but he uses the failure of hypocrites who are planted in the church as tares among the wheat for no other purpose than to scandalize the church and discredit its testimony. So the church because it is under attack by Satan, because it is under attack by the world's system, the church is under constant scrutiny and Satan wants to expose our failures. Do you know that the world loves to see the church exposed as sinful, wicked, money hungry, power hungry, sexually deviated? And every time a scandal comes up it is front-page news so people can justify their unbelief by saying they're all corrupt, the church is a sham, all those so-called Christians are phonies. So it is essential to Christian testimony that we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation Godly lives. That is the heart and soul of the church's integrity. That is the heart and soul of the church's credibility. Much more important than what we say is how we live. Much more important than what we affirm in our theology is how we act because we can scandalize the church with our unholy life. To put it into very bold relief for you and me it means that how you live every day is essential to the testimony of Christianity...to the testimony of Christ...to the believability of the gospel and the transforming power that it has in one's life.

This very issue, and stick with me on this thought, unlocks the whole epistle of 1 Peter. Spiritual conflict, one of the great weapons discredit the church by the failure of its own members. Therefore the high calling of the church "live godly lives" so that there is nothing that discredits us or Christ. And that is deeply set into Peter's heart as he writes this epistle. He is calling the church to virtue.

Back in chapter 1, let me give you a quick run through so you can see this, we'll start in chapter 1 verse 7. He talks about the proof of your faith being more precious than gold. Boy, what a statement! When you live a godly life, when you verify the reality of your faith, that is more precious than gold.

That is priceless because that's the credibility of Christianity. Chapter 1 verse 14, as obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance but like the holy one who called you be holy yourselves, also in all your behavior. And again it's the same idea. Be obedient children. Don't behave like you used to when you walked in lust and ignorance. Your testimony is at stake.

Chapter 2 verse 1, "Put aside all evil and guile and hypocrisy and envy and slander and long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word that you may grow in respect to salvation." It is essential that you live a godly life, hunger for the Word, let the Word shape you. Verse 9, "Because you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession...here it comes...in order that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." You are to live a certain kind of life, a holy life, a life that desires the Word and grows by the Word. Why? Because you are to show forth the excellencies of the one who saved you. That's basic.

Chapter 2 verse 12, "Beloved...in verse 11 he says...you are aliens and strangers in the world...but verse 12...keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles. And as you live a godly life they will not be able to slander you as evil doers...is the idea...but rather when they see nothing but good deeds they will glorify God in the day of visitation." What does he mean by that last phrase? He means that they'll get saved. And when the day of judgment comes they'll glorify God with the rest of the redeemed. You want to lead someone to Christ? It's a matter of how you live. Not a matter of what you say, it's a matter of how you live. Keep your behavior excellent because this is how you lead people to the knowledge of Christ. And then you remember, don't you, verse 15, "It is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men." The way you live your life will silence the critics and even bring them to salvation.

Look at chapter 3 verse 1, here you have a Christian wife with an unsaved husband. What's she going to do? Preach the gospel to him all the time? It says, "You wives, you want to win your husband, be submissive to your own husbands." That's how, be what a wife ought to be so that even if any of them are disobedient to the Word, that is they're unsaved, they may be one without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. How does a saved wife win an unsaved husband to Christ? By her conduct, by letting her adornment, verse 3, not be merely external, braiding the hair, wearing gold jewelry, putting on dresses, but the hidden person of the heart, the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God, for in this way in former times the holy women also who hoped in God used to adorn themselves being submissive to their own husbands such as Sarah who obeyed Abraham calling him lord. In other words, a wife wins her husband by her conduct, not her words, without a word, godly virtuous conduct.

Look down at verse 13 chapter 3, "And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? The world may attack you all the time but if you're zealous for what is good, how are they going to be justified in harming you? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you're blessed. And do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled, but sanctify, or set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to

give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." You can shame your critics because they come after you with a vicious attack and they scrutinize your life and they can't find anything to discredit you. That's a powerful testimony...that's a powerful testimony.

You see, Peter is over and over hitting this same theme. You're in a persecuted environment, they were scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia and Bithynia and they were in a hostile world. And Peter says if you want to win that world, it isn't by what you say it's by your holy virtuous life. It's by being obedient to the Word of God that you silence the critics. It's by being obedient and living an excellent life that you bring them to the knowledge of Christ and salvation.

In chapter 4 verse 2 he says that we are to live the rest of the time no longer for the lusts of men but for the will of God. Now that we've been saved we live for the will of God, not our own desires. The time already is past when we were carrying out the desire of the Gentiles and pursuing a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. That's past. That is past, he says. We have to live a different kind of life...totally different kind of life in the present.

Look at verse 12 of chapter 4, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you...that's persecution, that's the spiritual battle...which comes upon you for your testing as though some strange thing were happening to you." Don't think it's strange when the world hates you. "But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exaltation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you but by no means let anyone of you suffer as a murderer or thief or evil doer or a troublesome meddler. But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed but in that name let him glorify God." So you're going to suffer, but don't be suffering for sin. Be suffering for righteousness.

Chapter 5 verse 8 tells us more about this. "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert." Why? "Your adversary the devil prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour but resist him firm in your faith knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to His eternal glory in Christ will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." No matter how tough it gets, no matter how hot it gets, no matter how vicious the roaring lion is, resist him, stay firm in your faith...stay true to Christ.

There you have it. Chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, chapter 4, chapter 5, all the same theme, we are constantly exposed to a hostile hating world energized by Satan and his demons and their effort is to discredit the church, destroy its believability, destroy its credibility, destroy its integrity. And the way they do that is by finding Christians in the church whose lives are not consistent with the Word of God and parading them before the unbelievers to show what a sham the church is and that is an effective tool. The only way we can silence the critics, the only way we can stand against the enemy is by the power of a holy life. That is why what we have seen in the church in the last couple of years, the

church in America with all of the terrible sex and money scandals is the worst conceivable thing that can happen to the church because it discredits us at the very foundation of our existence and that is the gospel that says Jesus transforms people into holy people. And the world is saying..."Ha, what a joke that is." And thus the church is discredited. So we must live godly lives.

Now as we come to our text, Peter lays that out for us beginning in verse 11. He starts out by saying we are aliens in the world, we're strangers, we live on a different level, we live on a supernatural plain, a spiritual level. We transcend this world by the divine life that is in us. That's assured in verses 11 and 12. But then in verse 13 we are not only aliens we are citizens...we are citizens. And we went through that down to verse 17, we are citizens. And as long as we're in the world even though there's a sense in which we live at another level, we live in the heavenlies, we must live submissive to every human institution. Verse 13, "We must submit for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether the king as one in authority or governors and so forth." We have a responsibility within the social order to bow to those in authority over us. So a Christian is an alien. We live on another level but we are to be model citizens. Why? So they don't discredit us. We pointed out to you the fact that all of the Christian protests and all of the marches and the sit ins and the flop ins and the lay down in the street kind of things and all the way through to operation rescue, all of that civil disobedience by Christians discredits Christianity. And the end does not justify the means. As I have told you in the past, we are using carnal weapons to fight a spiritual battle. And that is not God's design. We are to be model citizens so we are not discredited for our lawlessness. And we do not have the world accusing us of not only being not transformed on a spiritual level but not even transformed on a carnal level because we cannot even abide by the rules and laws of man.

Now he adds a third dimension in verse 18. Aliens in verse 11, citizens in verse 13, and now servants in verse 18. Now he is going to describe the role of the Christian as a worker, as an employee. That too is a very important part of society. And let me read you, starting in verse 18, "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." Now here Peter moves from governmental authority, national authority, federal authority, state authority, police to the social order in which we work...the labor environment. And he is saying it is very important how you conduct yourself there as well if you're going to silence the critics and lead people to Christ and if you're going to avoid discrediting Christianity.

And verse 18, I told you last time, he gives the mandate for submission...the mandate. The mandate for submission is simply this, be submissive to your masters. If you are working for someone, submit to him. And do it with all respect. Literally, with all fear and the fear is the fear of God because God ordained this social order. God has designed that some people are the employer and some the employee. That's why 1 Corinthians 7 says if you are a slave and become saved, stay a slave. That doesn't change that role at all. We as Christians, as we saw last time, are to submit to the authorities that are over us in terms of our work. The slaves, you'll remember, there were about 60 million of them in the Roman Empire, some of them would come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and say..."Hey, now that I'm a Christian I don't need to be a slave any more." Peter is saying not so. Paul said, as I quoted for you a moment ago, 1 Corinthians 7, not so. Christianity does not free slaves.

Christianity does not give equal social rights. Christianity does not guarantee to you that you no longer have to submit to any earthly employer or leader. That's just not so. It does not upset the social order. Jesus did not propound equal rights and He did not upset the social order, neither did Peter, neither did Paul, neither did John, neither did any New Testament writer. Rather they all affirmed that with great fear of God and great respect you are to be submissive to your masters, whether they're good and gentle or whether they are unreasonable, you are to submit. The Christian's conduct is the same in either case. And by your submission you will set a testimony.

Now listen to this very carefully. It is more important to God that you maintain a faithful Christian testimony than that you get what you think you have coming to you in this life. You understand that? It is more important that you provide a platform for the integrity of Christianity than that you have equal rights. It is more important for you to uphold the credibility of the church than it is for you to get a raise. It is more important for you to show that you submit to God in everything and you give your life to His control than that you protest against your employer by a sit in, a walk out, or a strike. Your Christian conduct is what matters to God because the only reason you're in this world is in order that God might use you to bring someone else to Christ. It is not significant that you get what you think you're due in the human realm.

Jesus, Paul and Peter and John could have led the greatest-- the greatest insurrection the world ever knew in terms of employee strikes. All they would have had to say was..."Now that you're a Christian you're equal with everybody else, in fact you're superior to everybody else because you're a child of God, now take your rights." And there would have been a rebellion across the Christian community that would have been unbelievable, and it also would have been devastating to the Christian's testimony.

It is of little consequence to us what happens in this world, it is of little consequence whether you are a manager or a vice-president, it is of little consequence whether you get another fifty cents raise or not if it means that in the process of protesting your condition you lose your testimony. Then it becomes of major consequence. Now I'm not saying that you shouldn't do everything that is provided within the employee proper channels to gain whatever would be fair. What I am saying is you never violate the standards, you never go outside of those things, you never disobey your employer, you submit. And it says it, be submissive to your masters with all fear and the fear is to God who put you there and you should fear ever to discredit Him. It doesn't matter whether your master is good and gentle, or whether he is utterly unreasonable.

In Ephesians chapter 5 the Apostle Paul said that the believer is to be obedient to his master. He is to be obedient to him with the right kind of behavior, that is doing exactly what he says. He says that you are to do it with fear and trembling because you hold God in awe who will punish your disobedience. He says you are to do it with singleness of heart. What does that mean? Loyalty. You are to be a loyal employee, conscientious. He says in Ephesians 6 you are to do it as unto Christ. You are to do it with the right motive. He says you are to do it not with eye service as men pleasers. In other words, not doing it just when the manager is looking and seeing you work but doing it all the time knowing God always sees you. And then he says in Ephesians 6 you're to do it with a ready mind. What does

that mean? Anxious, willing, eager. You're there early you're so anxious to get to work. You see, let me give it to you bottom line...not one person in this place has a secular job. You understand that? You do not have a secular job. All you have is a mission field. That's all you have. You don't have a secular job. You have a spiritual calling and your calling is to reach the people where God has placed you and you never do anything to demonstrate anger, hostility, dissatisfaction, discontent, pride, ego, ambition, selfishness. We all offer every day spiritual sacrifices to God in our work and we are called to evangelize and so we must submit and show that we are dutiful and faithful and loyal and obedient and conscientious and anxious and willing and that we serve our employer as if we were serving Christ.

And you know what happens? As a result, your testimony overwhelms them. You silence the critics. They have no way to discredit Christianity and you'll bring some of the critics to Christ.

Now let's go to the second point. The mandate to the motive, verse 19, this is so simple, we just introduced it last time, so simple. "For this finds favor," that's it. That's the motive. Why should we do that? For this finds favor. Literally the Greek says "This is a grace...this is a grace." What does that mean? An act which is intrinsically attractive to God. This finds favor with God. This pleases God. Look at the end of verse 20, again the same phrase, "This finds favor with God." This is a grace. The idea is that when you work like that it is admirable, it is worthy of gratitude, it is worthy of thanks. To whom? To God...to God. It is an act which makes...can you believe this?...God grateful. It makes God grateful. And what is it that makes Him grateful? Verse 19, "If for the sake of consciousness of God," is the better way to translate that, "If for the sake of consciousness of God a man bears up or endures under sorrows when suffering unjustly."

Now here's a guy in the work place and he's a slave. And in the Roman world he might be getting whipped unjustly. He might be getting deprived of his food unjustly. He might be working long hours beyond what is reasonable unjustly. He might be punished in a number of ways unjustly. But if for the sake of his consciousness of God he endures all of those sorrows, God is thankful. Did you get that? What pleases God? When you protest? When you strike? When you picket? When you walk out? No, what pleases God, what finds favor with Him is when you bear up under the sorrows that come when you suffer unjustly. That pleases God.

You notice "if for the sake of consciousness of God" the use of suneidesis here in the construction with the genitive makes it better to say "consciousness of God," that's what it means because you're aware of God's presence, because you're aware God is watching, because you're aware God is there. It is used in a similar construction for you Bible students in Hebrews 10:2. But your action is prompted by a conscious sense of God's presence. You know He's there. You know He's watching. And so you endure, the word sorrow implies pain, you are suffering unjustly but you never falter in your witness, you accept it, you accept it in humility, in patience, trusting God, confident of His total control, you accept it. That pleases God. God wants to see that. He is pleased to see that.

Now painful unjust beatings were being endured, no doubt, by some of the people reading this epistle or hearing it read. And they were being beaten as slaves by those who were taking advantage of them. And this is very practical and it was far worse than anything you have ever known. They owned

these slaves. There was no such thing as freedom. They couldn't change jobs. They had no labor union. There was no recourse. There were no employee counselors. There was no one to go to. There was no Better Business Bureau. There was no government standard that they could plea for or appeal to. There were no civil lawsuits open to them against employers. And so they had to take it, but they did. Peter says you did right if you did because you kept the testimony of the power of salvation to give a man an unquenchable peace and faith in God no matter what happens. You see, what they have to see is that you're unflappable, that you're immovable, that your faith is strong and your courage is great and no matter what happens in that environment, you stand in the peace of God totally trusting Him in a quiet spirit with a patient heart, loyal, dutiful, faithful, diligent, willing anxious to be the best employee you can be.

Then Peter expands the thought with a negative and positive statement in verse 20. He says, "For what credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated you endure it with patience?" Well there's no credit, I mean that's the implied answer. What credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated you endure it with patience? You deserve it. You ought to endure it with patience. There's no particular virtue in that. If you sinned and you're being punished because of something you did, then there's no virtue in taking it patiently. But on the other hand, "If when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it...here's the statement again...this is a grace to God, this finds favor with God." God isn't particularly pleased when you're patient and you deserve the pain, God is very pleased when you're patient and you don't deserve it.

Some of you have employment situations that are not fair. Some of you are enduring suffering. The Greek here literally says you are harshly treated, and it uses a verb kolaphizane(?) which means to punch with the fist. It sometimes means to cuff, to slap or to fist around, not just once but to beat roughly, so used in Mark 14:65. Beating of slaves was common. And he says if you're being fisted, slapped, cuffed, battered, beaten up roughly and you deserve it, then your patience is no virtue. But if you don't, your patience pleases God.

Just a thought on the word "right" in verse 20, when you do what is noble, when you do what is excellent. All bound up in that word. What is excellent? What is noble? It's the same word in verse 12, your behavior excellent.

So the reason, the motive for endurance...what's the motive for us? It pleases God to see us accept the earthly difficulty with complete faith in Him. That is a testimony beyond all testimonies. You want to have a testimony at work? That's how. And he is speaking of very severe treatment as we shall see in a moment, very severe treatment.

This thought, by the way, is repeatedly in Peter's mind. Look at chapter 3 verse 14. "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear their intimidation and do not be troubled." If they beat you up and you're doing what is right and noble and excellent, you're blessed. Look at chapter 4 verse 14, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed...you are blessed." Verse 16, "If you suffer as a Christian, don't be ashamed but in that name let him glorify God. You're blessed." Why? Because it pleases God and when God is pleased what does He do? He blesses. Now if you want to short circuit the blessing then retaliate, threaten, react, stop being

submissive to your employer and you'll cut off the blessing of God. Oh, you may get what you want in the natural, but you will forfeit what God would give you in the supernatural.

This isn't new. This isn't new at all. Where did Peter learn this? Well, how about Matthew 5:11, "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely on account of Me, rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is...what's the word?...great...great." Can you have a heavenly view or do you have to have it all now? You say, "I want that promotion, I want that wage, I want what I want, I want my employee rights." You want it now or you want it forever? No, Jesus laid it out as marvelously and simply as He could..."Great will your reward be in heaven." God does not forget, He does not forget.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4, "To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed, we are roughly treated, we are homeless and we toil, working with our own hands, when we are reviled we bless, when we are persecuted we endure, when we are slandered we try to conciliate." Wow...amazing, that's the way to live. You say, "Why do you live like that, Paul, why don't you demand your rights? Why don't you say you can't do that to me?" I don't want to demand my rights. I want to show how I trust God. I want to show that there's nothing that people can do to me to make me break my trust in God. I want to show that there's nothing people can do to me to make me lose my peace and my joy and my confidence and my hope in God. And when people see that I live that transcendent life, then Christianity becomes believable.

And then an amazing statement comes in verse 21, absolutely amazing, verse 21, "For you have been called for this purpose." Whoa...you have been called for this purpose? What does he mean "called"? Salvation call, salvation call is exactly what he means. Go back to verse 9, "Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light," that's salvation. So when you were saved you were saved to this purpose. What do you mean? What are you talking about? Well, you've been called...by the way, he uses the same term in chapter 5 verse 10, it says God who called you to His eternal glory, so Peter uses it in the reference of salvation, in fact, I believe in every epistle in the New Testament whenever you see the word "call" it has to do with the efficacious call to salvation...but he is saying when you were saved you were saved for this purpose. What purpose? What purpose? Here it is, "To patiently endure suffering you do not deserve." That's right, you were called to that...you were called to that. You say, "How come?" Because as soon as you became a Christian you became the enemy of the world. And so you will as you live out your Christian life be unjustly and unfairly attacked. You live out your Christian life in your environment, the system will resent you and come against you. But they will look to you as the model employee, so they're trapped. You should be better than anybody else. And in the process some critics will be silenced and some critics will be saved. That's what you've been called to...that's what you've been called to.

This isn't anything that should surprise you. When I was in college as a student studying...and I was an athlete in college involved in all the athletics of my college and I wanted a summer job one summer and so I applied to the YMCA of Glendale to run one of their youth programs in an elementary school playground. And I passed all of the athletic skill tests without any kind of a problem and they brought me in to a board of six people in the Glendale City Hall and sat me down for the

psychological evaluation. They asked me, "What is the most important value in your life?" I said, "My personal relationship to Jesus Christ." And everybody just sort of gasped. And they asked me some question along the line, "Is this something you feel you have to propagate?" My response was, "I am...I live to propagate this. I don't have any other purpose than to propagate this." Needless to say I flunked the psychological evaluation. The last thing they wanted was somebody evangelizing the kids, and we're talking, folks, about 1960's. It isn't really any different now, maybe worse. But when you're out there...and I'm sure if I were to leave the ministry and try to get a job any place and tell them what I really believe, I would be unemployed permanently cause I would pose such a threat. I would have to work for a Christian company and I would probably drive them nuts trying to straighten out their theology.

You see, you were saved to this end. You were saved to this purpose. And what happens if Christians rebel? What happens if Christians retaliate? What happens if they fight and strike and demand their rights? You know what that says to the lost world? Hey, we care about this life, we live for this life and we resent you and you're not treating us right and we're going to fight you. Is that what we should do? And it would also say, "Hey, God hasn't done anything to get us this deal so we're going after it ourselves." We wouldn't be any different than them, would we? I hate to hostile angry Christians trying to get their square inch in this society. Who cares? You were called to this, to suffer undeservedly and to endure it with patience. Second Timothy 3:12 says, "All that live godly in this present age shall suffer persecution." It goes with the territory, that's how it is and you don't want to cave in to it. The motive? It pleases God...it pleases God who will bless you.

Thirdly, the model, and I'm just going to introduce this and then next week we're really going to discuss these great truths. Who is the model? "Since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth and while being reviled He didn't revile in return, while suffering He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." What did Christ do? He was reviled. He was persecuted. He was slandered. He suffered. What did He do? Did He retaliate? Not at all. He answered not a word at His trial, in meekness and humility committed Himself to God.

And so, Peter says Christ suffered for you not only redemptively but in an exemplary way. Not only did He suffer to redeem, but He suffered to set the model for how you're to live. Beyond the redemptive work of the cross is the pattern of the suffering of Christ. The word "example," *hupogrammos*, it means a copy, it's the model for the letters that a children...that the children write, the pattern. He set the pattern for you to follow in His steps...the word steps is footprint. He left a line of footprints, a line of tracks in the dirt for you to walk in...same way. When He was reviled, He didn't revile back. When He was slandered He didn't slander back. When He suffered He uttered no threats, He just committed Himself to God.

You think you have rights? Ha...they couldn't touch the rights that He had and He asked for none of them. That's how we're to live as servants in the world. Let's pray.

Thank You, Father, for this time tonight, for the testimony of Christ who brings everything in to such bold relief. How we love Him. How we honor His name. And help us, O God, to follow His pattern.

May we give testimony to His power. And that we live on a different plain, little in this world concerns us at all, and we trust ourselves to You and wait for Your eternal blessing. Make us submissive, motivated because it pleases You in following the footprints of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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