

Studies in 1 Peter-10 1 Peter 2:18-25

by Dwight Pentecost

The sermon emphasizes the importance of submission to authority, using Christ's example of patient endurance and obedience to God as a model for our lives.

Duration: 33:26

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:18

Topics: "Submission To Authority", "Suffering For Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the scripture from 1 Peter 2:18-25, which talks about the importance of servants being subject to their masters with fear and patience, even when suffering wrongfully. The preacher emphasizes that it is commendable to endure suffering for doing good, just as Christ suffered for us as an example. Jesus, who committed no sin and spoke no guile, endured immense suffering without retaliation or self-defense. The preacher highlights the significance of Christ's submission to God's authority and how it serves as an example for believers to submit to all forms of constituted authority.

Transcript

Our scripture for this morning is found in 1 Peter, chapter 2, and verses 18 through 25. Servant, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the frail. For this is thankworthy, if a man pour conscience toward God, and do a grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, if ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even here unto where ye called, ye called Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.

Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously. Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.

For you were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. Natural man by nature is lawless, and his lawlessness manifests itself by rebellion against the law of God, and the law of the state, the law of the home. In any sphere where God constitutes authority, man may be a rebel.

All law that was imposed by God, and all authority that has been established by God, has been established to put curbs and restraints upon the lawlessness of the human heart. And while law told man that he should not be lawless, while penalty for broken law gave a lesson on the peril of lawlessness, man had never seen one who was law-abiding. The law of Moses commanded obedience and subjection to the authority of the law, and condemned lawlessness, but the law of Moses could provide no examples of one who was law-abiding.

For even Moses, the lawgiver, became lawless, and before the whole nation disobeyed God and brought down judgment upon him. The priests and the prophets of the Old Testament condemned lawlessness, and the priests offered sacrifices on behalf of lawless men. The prophets warned of judgment upon lawlessness, but the priests and the prophets were themselves lawless.

Those to whom they ministered saw no examples of a man who abided by law. The Pharisees of our Lord's day multiplied traditions in order to impress upon the nation Israel the necessity of obedience to the law, but the Pharisees were themselves lawless men, and those who lived in our Lord's day saw no examples or evidences of a life that was subject to the authority of God lived before them. The people did not need more teachers to tell them to be lawful.

They needed an example of submission to authority so that they could see what it was to live a life of submission to the authority of God. But that example was not provided by Moses, nor by the priests, nor by the prophets, nor by the Pharisees. It was not until the Lord Jesus Christ changed and lived among men and walked before men that men for the first time in the history of lawlessness had an example of submission of obedience to authority, of meekness, of humility, lived before them.

The Apostle Peter, in this portion of the epistle in which we find ourselves, is emphasizing God's requirement and subjection to constituted authority. Authority in the home, authority in the state, authority in the religious realm, authority in the business world. And right in the middle of Peter's teaching on submission to duly constituted authority, he tells us in verse 21 that Christ left us an example.

That to which Peter points is not the example of Christ's godly life. It is not the example of Christ's sacrificial death. The example that Peter has in mind is the example of Christ's patient submission to suffering for righteousness' sake.

This verse has been lifted out of its context, and has been used to say that we ought to try to emulate the life of Christ, and the false doctrine of salvation by doing good is based to a large degree on this one verse. As though it taught that Christ lived a good life, and we ought to follow his steps, and if we live a good life as he lived a good life, we will obtain eternal salvation and the forgiveness of sin. Others have used this verse to show that Christ faced death quietly, confidently, assuredly, in the hope of the resurrection from the dead, and that Christ showed man how they ought to die.

But such are foreign to Peter's thinking, for back in verse 20 he has asked the question, What glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. That which was acceptable with God was the attitude and the characterization of patient endurance under the testing that come because one is subject to the authority of God. And then he moves right on to tell us, For even hereunto, or unto such patient endurance in the face of testing, ye were called.

Because Christ, for the first time in the history of man, gave us an example of perfect submission to the authority of God in the face of testings that come for righteousness' sake. Christ left us an example of such patient endurance that ye should follow in his steps. The entire life of Christ, from the manger to the cross, was a sinless life.

But Peter is not asking us to emulate the sinlessness of Christ. Such is utterly impossible, for we were born as sinners, and no one born as a sinner can live a sinless life. And so, Peter is concentrating on that one aspect of the sufferings of Christ, the sufferings that came because he was subject to the authority of God, and consequently subject to the authority of the state, to the authority of constituted religious leaders as an evidence of his submission to God.

Now, when Peter reminds us that we were called to submission, and that Christ has given us God's example of submission to authority, in verse 22 and 23, he points out what characterized the sinlessness of Christ when he was subject to sufferings for righteousness' sake. Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.

When he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judges righteously. Peter was a witness to the trials of Christ. You will recall that the trial of Christ was divided into two parts.

First, our Lord was put on trial before the religious authority as Christ, after his arrest in Gethsemane, was led away to the house of Caiaphas, where in the presence of the Sanhedrin, the duly constituted religious authority of our Lord's day, Christ was examined concerning his influence, his doctrine, and his disciples. When I turn back to the 26th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, I read in verse 59, the chief priests and elders in all the council, those represented the constituted religious authorities of our Lord's day, sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none. Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.

At the last came two false witnesses, and said, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days. The high priest arose and said unto him, answerest thou nothing? What is it that these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. Here was one who was charged with a crime punishable by death, and should a sentence of guilty be pronounced upon him because of this accusation, a death sentence must ensue.

Yet in the face of this accusation, our Lord stood before this assembled group of religious leaders and before his accusers, and opened not his mouth, he held his peace. And after sentence had been pronounced upon Christ for the crime of blasphemy, Christ was transferred to the authority of the Roman court, and he was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor. And I read in Matthew chapter 27 and verse 11, Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. Once again surrounded by accusers in the presence of the one who had the authority of Rome behind him to condemn Christ to a cross death, our Lord stood with his lips sealed.

It is that which Peter witnessed, to which he bears testimony now in his epistle as he refers to the example of Christ, who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again.

When he suffered, he threatened not. When our Lord was threatened with death by the Sanhedrin, no word of reply came from his lips in self-defense.

He did not call judgment of God up down upon those godless men who were sitting in judgment upon the godly one. No word of warning proceeded as to the judgment that would come upon them if they persisted in their lawlessness. Our Lord did not assert his rights as the Creator, as the Savior, as the Judge of all men who one day would sit in judgment upon their souls to threaten them with judgment unless they released him.

He was silent before his accusers. It was this that was so singular in the prophet's portrayal of the Messiah who would come. For when Isaiah pictures to us the Savior, an outstanding characteristic of that Savior which in truth would become an identifying sign to the nation Israel that he was God's Savior, was that he was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is done, so he openedeth not his mouth. And out of all the identifying signs that the prophet Isaiah might have recorded to give to the nation Israel, signs which they might identify Messiah, he chose this one sign. He will be silent before his accusers.

Isaiah did not say to the nation Israel, you will recognize your Messiah when he comes to work miracles. You will not recognize your Messiah when he turns water into wine, when he turns stones into bread, when he heals the blind and the lame and the dumb. He did not even say, you will recognize your Messiah when he raises men from the dead.

The outstanding evidence that Jesus was the Messiah was that he could receive false accusation against himself, and receive it with sealed lips. As a lamb before her shearers is done, so he opened not his mouth. Multitudes of Messiahs came to offer themselves to Israel, but there was only one Messiah who, when he stood before accusers who condemned him to death, stood with no word of self-defense, stood with no judgment, no oath, no curse, no warning of divine judgment upon them.

He stood done. Now, Peter wants to remind his readers, and to remind us that Christ stood with sealed lips, verse 23, because he had committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Now, you will remember that Peter has reminded his readers in the previous portion of this chapter that submission to any duly constituted authority is itself submission to God.

He said in verse 13, submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Verse 15, so is the will of God, and Peter's whole thesis is that we submit to constituted authority, whether in the political, the religious, the social realm, because God has ordained that authority, and submission to that authority is submission to God. And Jesus Christ could not open his lips in self-defense, nor could he open his lips to call down judgment upon his accusers as he well might have done, because he is subject to the authority of God, and God's authority put a seal on his lips so that he endured patiently the wrong heaped upon him.

When men bared his back, and with a Roman scourge lacerated his flesh, no cry of rebellion came from his lips. When they tangled their fingers in his beard and plucked the beard from his face, no cry came from the lips of the Lord Jesus. When they pressed a crown of thorns upon his brow, and mocked him and scoffed him, no word came from him.

When they robed him in purple, and pressed a reed into his hand to bow in mockery before him, and to cry, Hail King of the Jews, they could bring no word from him. And try as they may, they could not cause the Lord Jesus to sin with his lips. Why? Because he was totally subject to the authority of God, and to this kind of submission to God you and I are called.

For even unto this were ye called, that we should follow the example of Jesus Christ in perfect and absolute submission to the authority of God. Now, what was the result of Christ's submission? What did Christ's submission entail? In verse 24, Peter tells us, "...who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness. Thy whose stripes we were his." The will of God for Jesus Christ.

It entails Christ's physical death on the cross, and Christ's separation from the Father in spiritual death. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God.

Jesus Christ on the cross, lifted up his voice to the Father and said, "...my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" With that cry, he testified that he had entered into spiritual death, the separation of the soul from God. And when Christ, by an act of his will, dismissed his soul from his body, he entered into the experience of physical death. Christ died for our sins physically, spiritually, and Christ well knew when he subjected himself to the authority of God, that the will of God for him included physical and spiritual death.

Christ told the disciples repeatedly that he must go to Jerusalem to die. He was not ignorant to what submission to God entailed. When he came into the Garden of Gethsemane and bowed in prayer before God, he knew what submission to God entailed, for he cried, "...Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass through me.

Nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." When Christ turned aside Peter's sword, when Peter sought to defend Christ from arrest, he said to Peter, "...the cup that the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Put away your sword. I could have called for legions of angels, and they would have delivered me." He was subject to the authority of God. Jesus Christ went to the cross not because he was overpowered by Roman legions who pinned him to a cross until nails could hold him there.

Jesus Christ went to the cross because he was obedient, subject to the authority of God. The physical sufferings of Christ were only a small portion of that which he endured in obedience to the will of God, for when Jesus Christ went to the cross, he went as a lamb, he went as a substitute, he went as a sacrifice, and God placed on Jesus Christ your sins and mine. All we like sheep had gone astray, we had turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God hath made him to be sin for us, he who will no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. The holy, sinless, undefiled Son of God bore the full weight of our sins upon himself when he went to the cross, yet he went silently, he went obediently, because he was subject to the will of God. It is this to which Peter calls our attention in verse 24 when he says, his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree.

The word bear means to carry as a substitute for another, just as in the old testament on the day of atonement, the high priest put his hands on the head of the scapegoat and confessed the sins of the nation Israel, and then the nation watched as that scapegoat were led away into the wilderness. So, Jesus Christ had placed upon him the sins of the world, and as the sins in Israel were borne away by the

scapegoat, so your sins and mine were borne by one who took our place, who died in our stead, who became our substitute. He bore our sins with no word of recrimination or rebellion against God who had put him the holy one in the place of sinners.

Silently, he accepted our sins upon himself, and bore them in order that through his death he might offer a sacrifice to God. Submission to the authority of God entailed Jesus Christ's death as a substitutionary last. What does the death of Christ and the submission of Christ to the authority of God mean for us? Verse 25, We were a sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your soul.

Once again, Peter is going back into that prophetic portion of the word, Isaiah 53, where sinners were pictured as sheep without a shepherd going astray. Uncontrolled, undisciplined, lawless, rebels against authority, but Jesus Christ, as a faithful and obedient shepherd, reaches out to the straying sheep. He brings them to himself.

That's what salvation is. Salvation is God's work by which, through the death of Jesus Christ, he brings straying rebels to himself. The sheep who have followed their own path are brought back and put under the shepherd's care.

How is this possible? Because Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Would you know what God demands of you as his child? Then will you look to the example of Jesus Christ? God demands absolute submission to the authority of Jesus Christ, and submission to Christ's authority no matter in what realm that authority is exercised, whether by governors in the civil realm, whether by elders in the religious realm, whether by parents or husbands in the realm of the hall, whether by employers in the realm of business. God asks and demands submission on the part of his children.

But as we look at these words this morning, as we approach the table of our Lord, we are reminded again, because Jesus Christ said to the Father, not my will be done. Because Jesus Christ silently offered himself to physical death and spiritual death. Because Jesus Christ became the Lamb that was our substitute.

Because Jesus Christ took our sins upon himself, bore them away. Because Jesus Christ offered his blood as the covering for our uncleanness, we have salvation. We have eternal life.

We become God's sheep who were wandering and straying, but have been returned to the shepherd bishop of ourselves. We come to fellowship with the one who said to the Father, not my will but thine be done. Have you ever personally received the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? He is a Savior.

He is the Savior, but he is not your Savior until you personally accept him and trust him for salvation. If you have never done this, we invite you to do this right now. Pray, our Father, that the Spirit of God may direct us to the truth of the Word of God, that Jesus Christ, demonstrated by his perfect obedience and submission, without his act of us thy children, may the Spirit of God curb and control our lawlessness, that we might be obedient sheep to our shepherd.

May that one who has never received Christ personally, in the quietness of this moment, trust him and entrust themselves to him for eternal salvation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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