

Submit, even in the midst of unfair suffering, like Christ (I Peter 2:11-25)

Prayer

O God, in this letter written by Peter, we got to know you as the sovereign God, who has all power, and also the merciful God, who has mercy on us. You are also the holy God. Knowing this gives us hope. Yes, a firm assurance that in the future we will be with You forever and ever. That hope flows into a grateful, holy life. It helps us to have joy, even in adversity.

When we open Your Word, lead us through Your Spirit to understand what living a holy life filled with gratitude means in practice. Change our lives that we may follow in the footsteps of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen

Scripture

1. Behave well...for the sake of the gentiles, to glorify God

11 *Beloved, I urge you*

as sojourners and exiles

*to abstain from the passions of the flesh,
which wage war against your soul.*

12 *Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable,
so that*

*when they speak against you as evildoers,
they may see your good deeds and
glorify God on the day of visitation.*

Yesterday's teaching showed us how to grow spiritually through the Word and how it overflows to sharing the spiritual milk to the glory of God. Today Peter gives us practical examples of how our holy behaviour and our good deeds will bring others to glorify God. Verses 11 and 12 give the framework for today and tomorrow's teaching. All the examples we will work through, stand under the umbrella of verses 11 and 12. Let us work through it.

What is the purpose of the two verses?

so that...they ... glorify God

We see that the word "they" refers back to the Gentiles. Let us look at what needs to happen, that they may glorify God.

Peter gives a command here. He addresses them as beloved and speaks with urgency:

I urge you

to abstain from the passions of the flesh

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable,

so that...they ...glorify God

He again emphasizes that we are **exiles and outcasts, aliens on earth**, because we are citizens of God's Kingdom. Here on earth we are in a battle. Our passions and desires fight against **our soul**. It is like a war. Satan wants to get us to go back to our old lives and our old desires. He wants us to become like lost sheep again.

The chapter ends in verse 25 with: *For you were straying like sheep, **but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.***

We saw God's mercy and sovereign power and that made us turn back to God. Now we have to fight against the desires that want to lure us away again. The way to do this is to return to the Shepherd who watches over us and guards our souls. When he speaks here of our soul it refers to man in his total existence. Sensual desires only ruin one's life.

In verse 12 the gentiles are described as people who **speak against** believers as evildoers. Verse 19 also refers to unjust suffering. Thus, we need to behave well among people who might not treat us well. And the reason: *so that they may...glorify God on the day of visitation*. The day of visitation most likely refers to when they come to salvation. In the rest of this letter where Peter refers to the return of Jesus, he speaks about the day Jesus Christ will be revealed (e.g. 1:7).

In the next passages we will work through tomorrow, we will see that the good deeds of the believer are supposed to bring the unbeliever to salvation. This passage ends where we see that they come to salvation because they **saw the good deeds** of believers.

In the rest of the passage we are going to discuss today, he focuses on being submissive to people who are placed above you. Tomorrow we will discuss submission in marriage and submission to all people.

2. Do good: Be submissive and by doing so stop ignorance

13 Be subject

for the Lord's sake

to every human institution,

whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

14 or to governors

as sent by him

to punish those who do evil

and to praise those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God,

that by doing good

you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. (1 Pet 2:13-15, ESV)

Peter teaches us about submission to people who are placed above us. The reason we find in verse 15:

For this is the will of God, that you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

In verse 12 we saw that the starting point for salvation for the gentile is to see the good deeds of believers. Yesterday we also read that our minds first need the knowledge of God

before our hearts start to hope. Our behaviour leads these people to knowledge. It brings them in line with the will of God.

Thus, for His sake, we need to submit to every human institution. Yes, to the emperor, the governor and everyone in a position of authority.

3. Live free as people who serve God

16 Live as people who are free,
not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but
living as servants of God.

17 Honour everyone.

Love the brotherhood.

Fear God.

Honour the emperor.

Just when we think, now our freedom is limited, we read... 16 Live as people who are free... Even though we have authority over us, to whom we submit, we can still live as people who are free. After all, we are made free from our meaningless past!

Free people are people who serve God. It is not the kind of freedom that allows you to surrender to sinful deeds, but one in which you act as follows:

The people with authority above you, you should treat with respect, your fellow believers with love, but the most important is fear for God. Reverence for God helps you to be submissive in your freedom as Paul gives the reason in Rom 13: 1

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (Romans 13:1)

Peter himself, showed us that if the authorities' command is in direct opposition to God's commands, then you must obey God:

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:27-29)

4. Submission, even in unfair suffering is grace

18 Servants,
be subject to your masters with all respect,
not only to the good and gentle
but also to the unjust.

19 For this is a gracious thing,
when, mindful of God,
one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

20 For what credit is it if, when you sin

and are beaten for it, you endure?
But if when you *do good and suffer for it you endure,*
this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. (1 Pet 2:18-20, ESV)

Peter then goes one step further. In the previous verses it was the submissiveness of all people. Here he focuses on the submissiveness of servants. They get the command:

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect,

They must be submissive. And not only submissive, but in respect. We see, in verse 19, the reason for the behaviour: *when, mindful of God.* We can only be submissive out of respect to people above us out of the fear, the reverence, the respect of God.

He teaches that submissiveness applies, not only to *kind people,* but also to people who are set above you, who are *unreasonable.* Perseverance in *doing good,* while suffering, is *grace.*

5. Do it all in the footsteps of Christ

21 For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example,

so that you might follow in his steps.

22 He committed no sin,

neither was deceit found in his mouth. (Isaiah 53:9)

23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return;

when he suffered, he did not threaten,

but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (Isaiah 53:7)

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, (Isaiah 53:4,12)

that we

might die to sin

and live to righteousness. (Romans 6:2,11)

By his wounds you have been healed.

25 For you were straying like sheep, (Isaiah 53:6, Ezekiel 34:5-6)

but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Peter begins, this last part of the chapter, with the words: *For to this you have been called,* It refers back to the previous verses, where Peter called us to a life of *good deeds,* of submission, love of believers, fear of God, *even in suffering.* Because, when the Gentiles *see* it, it leads them to *repentance.* Here he says we are *called* to it.

The reason? *because Christ also suffered for you,*
His wounds *healed* us.

Notice that this passage started with *you have been.* In verse 25 he puts it in contrast with *you were.* Then he writes *but have now...*

We were **stray sheep**, but now we **have returned** to the Shepherd and Overseer (the guardian) of our souls.

He is now calling us to follow Him. Yes, **Jesus Christ is our example**. His footprints are the footprints in which **we must walk**. He then shows us seven “footprints” that he quotes from **Isaiah 53**. Please read Isaiah 53 yourself. There we see:

- He did not sin
- There was no deceit in His mouth
- He did not revile
- He did not threaten when He suffered
- He entrusted Himself to God
- He died for us
- His wounds healed us

The underlying principle, that makes it possible to follow these seven footprints, is: ***but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly***; Jesus did this even on the cross. If we follow His example, follow in His footsteps, we don't take vengeance ourselves if we are treated unfairly.

What are the reason that He did all of these things?

So that we might also **die to sin** and live to **righteousness** with reverence for God (verse 17)

so that (as verse 15 shows) unbelievers stop their foolishness

And as verse 12 showed that they will glorify God

Conclusion

We worked through four points:

1. **Keep your conduct honourable, be submissive**

For the salvation of the Gentiles

To the glory of God

2. **God wants you to**

make an end to

the foolishness of ignorant people

3. **Servants, submission,**

even in unjust suffering

is grace

How do we do that?

4. **The Shepherd suffered on your behalf**

That you might follow in His footsteps

Peter's advice to keep your conduct honourable:

Fight against the desires and stay close to the Shepherd and Guardian of your soul

And then he showed us:

Seeing good deeds is God's way to bring the gentiles to salvation and glorify Him

The way to put an end to the ignorance of foolish people is to
For the sake of the Lord (to His glory), be submissive to every human institution

Even if you submit

Live as people who are free, who serves God with reverence

But is obedient to God rather than to people

We can do it because our Sheperd suffered for us and now we can walk in His footsteps.

We were sheep that went astray, but were called and returned to the Shepherd

The footprints are not sin, but entrusted to Him who judges righteously.

His example causes us to die to sin and live for righteousness

So, our theme: Be submissive, even in unjust suffering, like Christ

and with that we can say: so that the Gentiles repent and give glory to God.

6. Reflection

In your reflection today, you need to focus on the interaction between God and Jesus Christ, for your sake. Put on those glasses and read through the passage again and write down what you learned.

7. Thanksgiving

Today's passage provided many principles and practical examples of submissiveness. What is the Holy Spirit urging you to do today? Think carefully about this and write down at least one, very specific, intention in which your joy will overflow today.

8. Praise

Use what you wrote in your reflection and thanksgiving and end this session in prayer as the Spirit leads you.

Peace to you.