

# Enduring Faith | 1 Peter 2 13-25 | 7/26/14

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- Introduction
  - Today's lesson is focuses on last half of Chapter 2 in 1 Peter.
  - Peter continues his encouragement for the Christians, we left off with what a Christian life should look like when we are to live holy as God is holy.
  - Here peter speaks of out we are to act and behave even when we are being persecuted by our worldly authorities.
  - He wanted Christians to know and understand that even though we do report ultimately to someone higher than all the rulers of the earth this does not negate our obedience to our worldly authority.
  - Peter will also addresses how we are to handle ourselves when we suffer under these rulers.
- Submitting ourselves to worldly authority| 1 Peter 2:13-17
  - As we have been studying Peter we know that the Christians that Peter was writing to were under persecution.
  - The Christians here were certainly being persecuted, not only by the people but also the government and their rulers.
    - A great portion of Rome had burned to the ground and Nero decided that he would blame the Christians even though they were not the cause.
    - So one could imagine that if our governor was blaming us a Christians for something and causing us persecution there would certainly be some animosity.
    - In fact we might just get down right angry and mad.
  - They may need to be reminded of this so they would not treat their worldly authority with complete disregard.
    - We are children of God and our eternal citizenship is with God in heaven.
    - Christians could think hey I don't like the way I'm being treated here and since ultimately I answer to God then I'm going to completely disregard the authority here on earth.
    - We see this is not what God desires for us, for the Christian.
  - So Peter here instead of telling them to curse and disobey their rulers, they needed to submit to them.
    - This can be hard to do, that if we are persecuted and blamed for something that we didn't do by our leaders that we are not supposed to retaliate, because naturally that is what we would want to do.
    - But this is not what Peter is telling us, in fact it is quite the opposite.
  - Peter says we are to submit to every human authority because of the Lord.
    - God's people are called to live in a humble and submissive way to those that have authority over us even though our citizenship is truly in Heaven.
      - Philippians 3:20
        - "but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."
        - Yes we are children of God and our true citizenship for eternity is in Heaven, but that doesn't mean that we treat the world we are in today as one that has not authority over us.
      - We are called to obey and to come under civil law and authority.
      - God does not want Christians to be anarchist to disobey the rulers of the world and go our own way.
        - He doesn't want us to defy every law and to cause problems in society.

- **In fact our obedience to the laws and authority here on earth will bring honor and glory to God because we are acting in a way that pleases God.**
- To have governing authority was given to us by God.
  - Romans 13:1-4
  - God provided earthly authority to bring order.
    - No one wants to live in anarchy.
    - The purpose is to punish the bad.
      - Those that steal, kill and destroy.
  - God intention is for authority to be for good.
    - Although we have seen man use something that was supposed to be good to be used for evil.
  - Therefore we must obey because disobedience to the governing authority is disobedience to God.
    - God commanded our obedience.
  - We are justly punished if we disobey the laws of those that govern us **(with an exception)**
  - **Do you find it difficult to be submissive to leaders that we disagree with?**
- However we must not forget that God's laws trump mans.
  - With this thought one might think, well if I'm supposed to obey and be submissive to those that are in authority over me, what do I do if they command me to sin?
  - This is where disobedience to the authority of man is perfectly acceptable, because the law of God trumps any law of man.
  - If the law of man commands us to sin against God or worse even denounce our faith, we can stand firm and disobey.
  - Peter and John are a good example of this
    - Acts 4:18-20
      - "So they called for them and ordered them not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."
    - The Jewish leadership command Peter and John to stop preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and we can see that their response that it is clear that they would listen to God before man.
    - God has called us to obey the law of man, but not when it violates God's laws.
    - Acts 5:25-29
    - **We MUST obey God when there is conflict between the commands of man and God.**
  - **Have you seen where man's law contradicts God's?**
- If we are put in a position where we have to disobey the law of man we must still show true Christian character and not sin in the process.
  - When the time comes where we have to obey God over our authority, because that time will come if not already, we still must handle ourselves with a Christian character.
  - If a Christian must disobey earthly authority, we must not do it in a way to where we commit another sin in the process.

- It is all too easy to let our emotions get the best of us when our beliefs are criticized.
- If we are not careful in our act of disobeying to not break God's laws, that we in that process break another one.
- We must treat those situations and Paul and Peter and most importantly as Jesus did.
- **How we handle those situations should always reflect our Christian character and integrity.**
- We silence those that criticize us as believers by showing true Christian character and having integrity.
  - 1 Peter 2:15
    - "For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good."
  - God desires that we show true Christian character in our obedience to the authority of man.
  - Even when we are treated unfairly we must never treat them or act in an un-Christian way.
  - Even when they are attacking our faith and our beliefs we can never lash out or act in a sinful manor.
  - When we respond with a Christ like attitude with integrity, it is difficult for them to continue criticizing us when there is nothing to criticize.
    - Look what happened with Peter and John, the Jewish leaders tried to punish them but they people found no fault in them because of their actions, because of their character and integrity.
    - We to must act in such a way.
  - If we act with Christian character our good works can be an example to the unbeliever.
    - 1 Peter 2:11-12
- We must never use our freedom in Christ to conceal evil nor to disobey civic law.
  - 1 Peter 2:16
    - "As God's slaves, live as free people, but don't use your freedom as a way to conceal evil."
  - Just because we are Christians does not mean that we are free from worldly or civic law.
  - We must obey they laws as God has commanded us too.
- Submission to masters | 1 Peter 2:18
  - **Read 1 Peter 2:18**
  - Not only are we to have respect and obedience to our civil laws and authority figures, but also we are to do the same to our employers.
    - Peter recognized household slaves, which could cover anyone who was a true slave to one who was merely and employee
      - It was common in those times for one to work of their debt. They may have been considered a slave but someone else did not own them.
    - For us today this is an employee and employer perspective.
      - We must treat our employer with respect and be obedient even to those that are cruel.
      - So even if we have a boss that is a major pain, we are not to lash our or treat that person in a way that one from the world would, certainly to not sin.
      - We still uphold our Christian character and attitude in our employment.
      - Ephesians 6:5-9

- **What do these verses say about our work ethic?**
    - We are to respect and do a good work for our employer.
    - We must not treat our jobs as lazy people only working when our boss is there.
    - But instead we must work to do the best that we can for them, because this pleases God.
    - In fact God will even reward us for this.
  - We must not let the cruelty of our earthly authority cause us to sin and disobey God.
    - Just because we may work for someone who is not a Christian and who may be cruel in some way, we cannot let their actions cause us to act in a way that God would not like.
    - We may desire to retaliate or to work poorly for our employer if they are cruel and unfair.
      - **In other words we do not act out “Office Space”**
      - **Just because we do not like our TPO reports does not mean that we should beat the copier with a sledgehammer and write a program to steal money ;)**
    - However this is not how a Christian is supposed to act, while we are there we still must treat them and work in a manner worthy of God.
    - It is critical that the world see our Christian example and character.
  - God’s laws trump our employers’
    - The same goes here with our obedience, that God’s laws still trump man’s.
    - If your employer demands that you do something unethical that you know to be a sin, you should not do it.
    - The Christian must not lose their integrity even when they are put in a tough position at work.
    - We must remain with God no matter our situation
      - 1 Corinthians 7:24
        - “Brothers, each person should remain with God in whatever situation he was called.”
      - No matter the situation we must always remain with God both in Spirit and in our actions.
  - **How can we still maintain our Christian character and walk when we work for someone that may be cruel? An employer that is disobedient to God?**
- God favors us when (because of our obedience) we unjustly suffer. | 1 Peter 1:19-20
  - ***Read 1 Peter 2:19-20***
  - God has called us to maintain our Christian character by our obedience to our authorities even if they are cruel, even if we suffer.
  - In fact it even brings favor to us from God when we do this.
  - Peter explains that there isn’t much favor or reward for one who endures the suffering that he deserved.
    - So if you are suffering because you well deserved it, like you broke the law.
    - What credit is there for you to endure this? Because you deserved it.
  - But for one to suffer because they did nothing wrong is quite the opposite.
    - As in our prior employee example, if you work for a boss that is cruel and makes you suffer even though you are doing “good”.
    - Or perhaps you are punished because you made a “good” or “right” decision then you will have favor with God.
    - Making the right decision and getting punished

- So let's say that your employer has asked you to do something unethical that you know is wrong.
  - You then knowing what you are supposed to do you refuse this request in some way.
  - So now instead of being rewarded for making the true "right" decision your employer demotes you and docks your pay.
  - **You are now suffering because of making a "right" decision.**
  - While we may think well if I would have just done this one wrong thing I would have been better off.
  - We need to remember that God honors those that make the "right" decisions and suffers for it.
  - God will reward that "right" decision that you made.
  - This goes for our civil authority relationship as well.
    - If our government commands us to do something that we know to be wrong and would cause us to sin, if we disobey there is likely suffering that we can endure.
    - However if we make the righteous decision God will show us favor.
    - In fact should look upon this with joy as Peter and the apostle had done.
      - Acts 5:40-42
        - "And when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, **rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.** And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus."
        - How often have you rejoiced when you suffered for Christ?
    - Let this be our attitude and our hope when we have to endure similar injustice and persecution for our faith.
    - This is where a true test of our faith comes in.
      - How is our faith when we have to endure persecution from under our worldly authority?
      - Do we give in and sin against God because man commands us to, or do we keep God's commands?
      - Let us not worry if we have to suffer because of our beliefs, but instead let us rejoice that we were counted worth to suffer for the name of Jesus.
  - Because of our suffering we can lead others to Christ.
    - 2 Timothy 2:8-10
      - "Keep your attention on Jesus Christ as risen from the dead and descended from David. This is according to my gospel. I suffered for it to the point of being bound like a criminal, but God's message is not bound. This is why I endure all things for the elect: so that they also may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. "
    - **Have you ever suffered because of your faith?**
    - **How can we maintain our Christian character and attitude when our authorities persecute us? When we are forced to suffer because we chose to obey God.**
- The perfect example of Christ | 1 Peter 2:21-25
  - ***Read 1 Peter 2:21-25***
  - Here Peter gives us the perfect reason as to why we are to behave in this way, why as Christians we may have to suffer in the name of Jesus.

- We are called to this because Christ suffered for us.
  - A Christian who has been called into the family of God may at times have to endure suffering and unfair treatment because of Jesus.
  - Jesus wasn't exempt from suffering and the Bible is clear that neither are we.
  - There were those that persecuted and caused Christ to suffer, and there will also be those that treat us the same way.
- Christ did not sin even in his suffering and when he received injustice.
  - No matter how much Jesus suffered for living the perfect sinless life, he never sinned.
  - This is the example that we are to follow
    - No matter our treatment from our worldly authority from the government to our employer, we are to never sin.
- Christ never retaliated
  - When Christ was reviled which is to be despised he didn't return it to those that persecuted him.
  - He never threatened in his suffering.
    - Now Christ of all people if he wanted to so could have made all of those that hurt him pay.
    - He is God, he could have caused them suffering beyond anything we could image, but he did NOT do this.
    - This is not the example that Christ wants us to follow by retaliating against others.
- Christ entrusted himself to God
  - As Christ entrusted himself to God the Father, we also must do this.
  - No matter our unjust treatment or unfairness we MUST give it all over to God.
- Closing
  - God has called us to be obedient to our worldly authorities and civic laws.
  - However we must never forget the law of God and that it trumps the laws of man.
  - We must always have the attitude of Christ in any suffering that we may encounter because of our beliefs.
  - Knowing that our obedience to Christ bring great joy to God.