

Submission: Pathway to Honoring God (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] We have a lesson tonight that's going to carry over.

! Law enforcement, which touched parts of five decades.

Our lesson tonight is on the biblical requirement to submit to civil authority. We're going to examine some verses from 1 Peter 2.

2, originally this lesson was going to cover about six major points. And as it turned out, we're going to cover two of the six major points tonight and the rest next week, we hope.

In 1 Peter 2, beginning in verse 13, but I will read the entire section I intended to cover, and I'm not going to, submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

[1 : 37] For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people. Act as free people and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondservants of God.

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. That's verses 13 to 17, and we won't come close to covering all that.

I did something tonight that I normally don't do, but on our focus passage there, typically I would read that in the English Standard Version, but I review other versions when I study.

And tonight it made more sense to read this in the New American Standard Bible, which is a very good translation. I believe the language of this translation is consistent with what we hope to achieve in our study this evening and next week.

We live in a time when submitting to human institutions can be difficult. It's easy to grow indifferent, even disdainful toward the world and the world's various governing authorities.

[3 : 11] But the fact is we're all called on to show proper respect and humble submission to legitimate centers of human authority.

One of the greatest examples in the Bible of a man willing to submit to the governing authorities is Stephen.

He became what is described as the first Christian martyr. And this all came about due to a confrontation with the existing Jewish authorities.

We read about this in the book of Acts, chapter 6, starting in verse 8. And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

But some men from what is called a synagogue of the freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen.

[4 : 37] But they were unable to cope with his wisdom and the spirit by whom he was speaking. Then they secretly induced men to say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.

And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes. And they came to him and dragged him away and brought him before the council.

They put forward false witnesses who said, This man does not stop speaking against this holy place and the law.

For we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Jesus, will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses handed down to us.

Now obviously the witnesses that were testifying against him were lying. A lot of witnesses do that. I once was in trial in Tulsa when I was an FBI agent in federal court and this mailman was testifying for the defendant.

[5 : 54] And I caught him in a blatant lie. And his lawyer didn't pick up on it. His lawyer was a good friend of mine. So during a break I told him, I said, We could charge him with perjury right now.

I could put handcuffs on. I said, Please don't. And just blatantly lied to the federal judge and the jury. But those observing him in the council reported that his face looked like the face of an angel. Not sure what that looks like. I've never seen one to my knowledge. Stephen's words to those who had assembled were one of the greatest evangelistic presentations ever recorded in the Bible.

And you can read that in Acts chapter 7 verses 2 to verse 53. It's a great witness.

The words of Stephen's witness concerning the Lord Christ infuriated the Jewish leadership. But we see Stephen exercising godly submission based on what can best be described as his unwavering faith.

[7 : 14] Look at how hostile this crowd reacted. Now when they heard this, they were infuriated and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

But he being full of the Holy Spirit looked intently into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

And he said, Behold, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.

But they shouted with loud voices and covered their ears and rushed at him with one mind.

When they had driven them out of the city, they began stoning him. And the witnesses laid aside their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul. We all know who that is or who he became.

They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Then he fell on his knees and cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

[8 : 28] How would that make you feel? You're stoning this guy to death and he calls out to God, please don't charge this sin to their account. Having said this, he fell asleep.

Now Saul approved of putting Stephen to death. Sometimes we get confused over they laid their coats at the feet of Saul.

I think they had a stronger pitching arm without the encumbrance of layers of clothes. One thing we know for certain, this entire episode was a gross miscarriage of justice.

It's really the second one recorded in Scripture, the first one being of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. And for purposes of our study, tonight and next week, we will see in this example that I've just read, six elements of Christian submission to authority.

my original intent was to cover all those. It ain't going to happen. For purpose of our study tonight, we see these six elements of submission as follows.

[9 : 56] The command for submission, the motive for submission, the extent of submission, submission, the reason for submission, the attitude of submission, and the application of submission.

And the first element we're going to look at this evening is the command for submission. And it's pretty simple because it starts out in two words.

Submit yourselves. That's pretty plain. Those two words are actually one word in the Greek language. It's the word hupotasso.

And it's pronounced just as it appears. It is a military term which means to arrange information under a commander.

And we first read about submission to authority in the Old Testament. We didn't have to wait to the New Testament. It's covered in nearly every book in the Old Testament.

[11 : 16] Let me give you just a sampling of inspired verses that lend support to our submission to authority.

in Deuteronomy chapter 17 verses 14 and 15 we read this.

When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you and you possess it and dwell in it and then say I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose one from among your brothers you shall set a king over you you may not put a foreigner over you who is not your brother.

And then in 1 Samuel chapter 10 verse 24 And Samuel said to all the people Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen?

There is none like him among all the people and the people shouted Long live the king. In 2 Kings chapter 11 verse 12 Then he brought out the king's son and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony and they proclaimed him king and anointed him and they clapped their hands and said Long live the king.

[12 : 52] And in 1 Chronicles chapter 29 verse 24 All the leaders and the mighty men and also the sons of King David pledged their allegiance to King Solomon.

And then in Proverbs chapter 24 verse 21 chapter 22 My son fear the Lord and the king and do not join with those who do otherwise for disaster will arise suddenly from them and who knows the ruin that will come from them both.

There is another very important Old Testament passage which is found in the book of Jeremiah. What follows are the inspired words of the Spirit of God.

Thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon build houses and live in them plant gardens and eat their produce take wives and have sons and daughters take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage that they may bear sons and daughters multiply there and do not decrease but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare for thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you and do not listen to the dreams that they may dream for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name I did not send them declares the Lord for thus says the Lord when 70 years are completed for Babylon

I will visit you and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place for I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord plans for welfare and not for evil to give you a future and a hope then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you you will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart I will be found by you declares the Lord and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you declares the Lord and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile and I think everyone in here knows that I spent much of my adult life involved in law enforcement almost 10 years before Peter wrote his gospel we have the words of the apostle Paul in the book of Romans chapter 13 this is really where I got my authority in law enforcement chapter 13

[16 : 20] Romans verses 1 to 4 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 therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgment for rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad when you have no fear of the one who is in authority then do what is good and you will receive approval for he is God's servant for your good but if you do wrong be afraid for he does not bear the sword in vain for he is the servant of God an avenger who carries out

God's wrath on the wrongdoer more than once in my career I had to sit down with an officer that had killed somebody and it was what we would call a righteous shooting and his question was do I automatically go to hell because the Bible says thou shalt not kill I said actually the Bible says thou shalt not murder it's a different Hebrew word and I said no you are a minister of God when you put that we don't carry swords anymore we carry most of us glocks or other types of weapons but I had to explain to them where they stood with the Lord both Peter and Paul lived lives in an openly sinful society that went by a name it's called the Roman Empire it was a society that was famous or we should say infamous for evil to name just a few of the cesspools in the Roman Empire they had open and rampant homosexuality it was everywhere

Rome practiced infanticide the killing of babies pray you're never in a country that kills babies man that country is under the judgment of God it's called Baal worship there was widespread corruption within the Roman government women were widely abused and treated like second class citizens and in addition to immorality there was widespread violence a close read of Paul and Peter reveals no inspired scripture scripture which allowed followers of Christ to defy civil authority you're not going to find that the only thing that comes close is when the Lord said the Holy Spirit if the government asks you to do something that is clearly a violation of scripture we have to follow scripture but let me add something okay if you do that and you should you also have to be willing to pay the penalty that will be exacted by the government and there will be a penalty to back up this statement we have the very words of the Lord

Jesus himself this is in Matthew's gospel chapter 22 and you'll remember when he said this render to Caesar the things are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's in our country and in most if not all countries there have been examples of civil disobedience there's been out and out insurrections revolutions attempts to overthrow the government and many of those were done historically in the name of Christianity you will not find any support for such actions in the scriptures

in fact if you want a passage that speaks to this look at the verses I just read Romans 13 1 to 4 that's where we are commanded to submit to civil authority

God established civil authority for a reason for a limited reason and for a limited period of time if we examine all types of governments whether democracies or dictatorships and everything in between we find wrongdoing and evil conduct why because governments on earth are led by men who are fallen they are led by men whose heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked same word for sick their heart is sick who can understand the human heart that's Jeremiah 17 9 now we've looked at the command for submission and we are commanded to submit to the civil authorities

[22 : 27] I like that especially when I was police chief not everybody did I can promise you but next we're going to look at the motive for submission why should we submit what motive do we have to submit well in first Peter chapter two the second part of verse 13 it says we submit for the Lord's sake that's pretty plain isn't it that's pretty plain to us we submit for the Lord's sake obedience is the method we employ to honor the Lord the longest chapter in the Bible of course is Psalm 119 I love to read that it takes a while it's 176 verses every verse is a command and it never repeats itself never repeats itself but listen how the words speak to the issue of obedience in

God's word blessed are you O Lord teach me your statutes with my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth teach me O Lord the way of your statutes and I will keep it to the end that's Psalm 119 verses 12 13 and 33 verse 33 can also be rendered from the Hebrew keep it as my reward instead of keep it to the end when we obey earthly!

authorities God's sovereign authority over us when we do so we're honoring Christ's example to us of obedient submission to his father one model of leaving sovereign control to God was written by a fellow I never heard of him before Robert Duncan Culver lived from 1916 to 2015 Dr.

Culver taught at some very good seminaries in his life he said this in a book he wrote he wrote several this one was called A Biblical View of Civil Government published in 1974 this is what Dr. Culver said God alone has sovereign rights democratic theory is no less unscriptural than the divine right of a monarchy by whatever means men come to positions of rulership by dynastic dissent aristocratic family connection or by democratic election but there is no power but God that's Romans 13 1 God's got all the power furthermore civil government is an instrument not an end men are proximate ends but only God is the ultimate end the state owns neither its citizens nor their property minds bodies or children all these belong to their creator

[26 : 23] God who has never given the state rights of eminent domain now every state's got eminent domain eminent domain says if they want to build a missile factory on my farm they can make me an offer if I refuse it they can pay me what they want to followers of Christ submit as an example of submitting to and honoring the father when we get to verse 23 of 1st Peter chapter 2 we're going to read these words 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 and think in terms of Christ's life on this earth he lived under the rulership of the

Jewish state and the Roman Empire both of those systems were unjust and unrighteous and and they just absolutely were corrupt they were corrupt and the Roman Empire was more corrupt both of those systems were unjust and unrighteous but Jesus never questioned or doubted their right to rule both Rome and the Jewish Sanhedrin you know I find it interesting that we got our law from English law they got their law from the Romans and the Jews that's where ultimately our law came from them the Lord did condemn the sins of the

Jewish leaders he is probably the greatest example of that condemnation coming from Christ can you imagine the rebuke that he leveled on these guys this is Matthew 23 pretty lengthy woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte and when he becomes a proselyte you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves I wish Jesus wouldn't coat it there's no reason to sugar coat it woe to you blind guides who say if anyone swears by the temple he is nothing but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple he's bound by his oath

Jesus says you blind fools for which is greater the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred and you say if anyone swears by the altar it is nothing but anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar he's bound by his oath you're blind men for which is greater the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred so whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it and whoever swears

by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it and whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law justice and mercy and faithfulness these you ought to have done without neglecting the others you blind guides straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you clean out the outside of the cup and the plate but inside they are full of greed and self indulgence you blind Pharisee first clean the inside of the cup and the plate that the outside may also be clean woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you are like white wash tombs which outwardly appear beautiful but within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness so you also outwardly appear righteous to others but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness we got one more woe woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous saying if we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets fill up then the measure of your fathers you serpents you brood of vipers how are you to escape being sentenced to hell!

[32 : 24] Christ never challenged their rule or their right to exercise authority! the Lord never tried to overturn the Jewish leaders authority the Lord also never led a demonstration against the Roman Empire he never spoke against their use of slave labor he told the slave be a good slave he told the soldier be a good soldier don't steal money from people go into their homes they give you a meal and then you start robbing them don't do that neither did Jesus object when he was illegally arrested and suffered under the Jews and Rome six illegal trials in the next less than 24 hours six illegal trials three by the Jews three by

Rome and never once did he cry out that he was being illegally crucified and called on to suffer the pain of capital punishment unjustly Jesus was never preoccupied with matters that involved political or social reform think about that I mean we think if he came back now you know he'd either be anti abortion or pro abortion or anti homosexual or pro I mean people have got all these different bins He never spoke of political and social reform!

He was focused on one thing when he was on earth the kingdom of God! That's what he was focused on! Because he told him the kingdom's here!

It's here! He was never interested in mounting some kind of protest against either Rome or the Jewish leadership!

But Jesus is pleased when he sees his children exercising righteousness love grace and especially sharing the good news of salvation that's found only in Christ!

[34 : 45] this is captured in Paul's letter to those living in Philippi chapter 2 do all things without grumbling or disputing that you may be blameless and innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation among whom you shine as lights in the world we are motivated to submit to Christ in matters that pertain to his spiritual and his eternal rule that's what we're motivated about now next time we're going to pick it up with the extent of submission the reason for submission the attitude of submission and the application of submission to the next time!