

Living Righteous in a Hostile World: Submission to Governing Authorities (Part 2)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 March 2011

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] The Bible says in 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 24, He Himself, that's Christ, bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that's the cross, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.

Might live for righteousness. Now, my wife, my favorite singer by the way, has just sung about the blood of Jesus Christ, pointing us to the cross.

And all of the marvelous, unspeakable, unfathomable benefits and blessings that we receive as a result of what Jesus did for us.

We could not speak of them all. Not in any one space of time. But we can speak of how that applies to our lives right now, because that's what Peter is doing here in the second chapter of 1 Peter. I've chosen to kind of introduce the sermon in this way because I just, I want to tie what we've been singing about and what Sherry just sang about.

[1:52] Tie that in with what Peter's teaching us here in chapter 2. Because if you have trusted in that Jesus Christ who wrote His love in red for you, if you've trusted in Him, then that ought to make a difference in the way you live your life here.

And that's the idea in this passage. The passage that I'm going to read right now. So if you have found 1 Peter chapter 2, I read a verse later on in the chapter, but we're focusing right now on verses 13 through 17.

So I want to read that passage. We looked at this last week and we'll finish this up this morning. Listen as I read it.

As free. Or you can insert the word submit because that's the idea.

Submit as free. We're free people, free men, free women. Submit as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

[3:36] Honoring all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. That's the passage that we're focusing on.

And Peter's emphasis, if I might remind you again. His emphasis is practical Christianity. That is connecting who we are in Christ.

Connecting that with how we are to live in this world. In this world right now, right here. In the, as one preacher put it, the nasty now and nows.

How we're to live who we are in this world. Because, again, I would remind you. That is, remind believers. That we are citizens of two worlds.

We really are. Primarily, we are citizens of heaven. We are eternal citizens of the world to come. But we are also, at the same time, citizens or temporary citizens, temporal citizens of the world here and now.

[4:45] That is, this earth. And so we're citizens of both worlds. And Peter's focus here, in this particular passage that I just read, is our temporal citizen.

That is, our citizenship right here and now. And his focus, of course, is how we're to live as citizens of this world. And this is very important, very key for us to understand.

This is the ethical teaching of God's word. And Peter points us to three contexts of life. First, civil government.

Our government. The civil authorities. That context. And then second, and we're going to get into this next Sunday. The workplace.

That context of life. We're very familiar with that particular context of life. And then third and finally, the home. Or specifically, the married life. Now again, and I want to point this out to you once again.

[5:46] The way we are to conduct ourselves in each of these three contexts is qualified by the word submission. In each of the three. That's the qualification.

Submission. Done. And now, as you have noticed from that portion of the text that I read a moment ago. And if you were here last Sunday. Then you know that we're dealing with the first of these three contexts of life.

The governing authorities. The governing authorities. Now I've divided the text, this portion of the chapter, into three parts. We've already seen two of them. Let me remind you of them.

We covered this one a few weeks ago. There is in this text. A sovereign principle to observe here. Now I started there. Really starting with the last couple of verses. This is really next to the last verse. Verse 16. I started there several weeks ago.

[6:48] Because we needed to get this principle squarely in our minds. Before we could then go forward. And understand all that Peter is teaching us here. As he applies that principle to our lives.

We need to get the principle first. What is the principle? It's the principle of authority. We need to get that. Really. As citizens of this world. As members of this particular culture.

A culture that seems to be quite against submitting to any level of authority. Any context of authority. And that's very sad and very dangerous.

Because the ultimate end of that is anarchy. And we don't want to live in a culture like that. And so we need to get that square first. And verse 16 is where that principle is suggested.

I won't say that Peter is being explicit about it. But it's suggested there. And then as you remember several weeks ago. I had us turn to Luke chapter 7. To see the principle displayed for us.

[7:51] Described for us. But in verse 16. He says. As free. Now when I was reading the text. I mentioned that you need to add the word submit. Peter doesn't put a verb in here.

And you can't have the sentence or the phrase without a verb. And so we need to supply it. And what is the word that ought to go there? Well the context is submission.

So the idea is submit as free. Yet not using liberty as a cloak of vice. For vice. For sin. But as bondservants of God.

Now we have two concepts there. Put before is very clear. And the principle of authority. Is there. You see. Listen. Our freedom. He says.

We're free people. And we are. As born again believers. Our freedom. Is derived. From our slavery. Do you understand that?

[8:52] Our freedom. Is based upon our bondage. See. We are free. Because we're slaves. We're not just slaves to anybody.

We're slaves to the Lord. You see. And that is what gives us our freedom. See. And that's what Peter is saying here. He's teaching us here. This principle of authority. Or submission to authority. Peter says that we are. To submit as free people. Because we are under authority. Whose authority? God.

As bondservants. Of God. See. And so the principle is really quite clear. And it's taught in a number of places in the Bible. And that's why I had us turn to Luke 7. Several weeks ago.

We are only over. When we are willing to be under. And that's the principle. We can't have authority in our own lives.

[9:49] Not even authority over our own lives. Case in point. The authority to tell our bodies to submit to the governing authorities. And that's what's commanded of us here.

We have no power to do so. So long as we. Or until we are willing to submit to our authority. And be bondservants of Christ. Number two. And this is what we looked at last week. Not only is there a sovereign principle to observe.

But there is a sovereign precept to obey. And maybe it goes without saying. But as we analyze the text. And pick it apart. This is certainly where Peter begins. He begins with a command. And he identifies the precept. The law for us. And what is it? It is submit yourselves to your governing authorities. That's the law.

[10:43] The precept. That Peter identifies here for us. And then he applies it further. By saying that our submission. Must be applied to every ordinance of man.

Those are the words that appear in the New King James translation. But a full blown understanding of the wording here. Means literally this. That we are to submit ourselves to every institution designed by God for man's well being.

That's the idea here. And specifically. Peter is referring to our governing authorities. Because he specifies that. Doesn't he? As you go on there in verse 13, 14.

We are to submit to the king as supreme. Or in our context. The president as supreme. And to his governors. His governors.

That includes everyone serving in place of governing authority under the president. All the way down to the police chief. And not the sheriff.

[11 : 45] Okay. I have caught more grief about that this week. About calling Tom Holland the sheriff. I tell you. And people just keep reminding me of it. Well. Okay.

So we understand then. Don't we? This precept. That is to be obeyed. He identified it for us. He applied it for us. There's no way for us to wiggle out of that.

It's very clear. For Peter we are to obey. Every institution. Designed by God for man's well being. And that includes our governing authorities. And then finally.

As we looked at it last week. Peter motivated us. To obey this precept. And what's the motivation? It's a grand motivation.

Not the only one. But it's the supreme one. And what is it? He says. For the Lord's sake. We're to do it for him. For our Lord.

[12 : 44] Because it honors him. It brings glory to him. All right. So now we're ready to move forward. With one other important truth. To see in this text.

Not only the sovereign principle to observe. Not only a sovereign precept to obey. But there is. A sovereign purpose. To oblige.

A sovereign purpose to oblige. And that's what we have in verse 15. And this is very interesting. Verse 15. For this is the will of God.

This is the will of God. Now if you have a King James. It says in your copy of the word. It says this. For so is the will of God.

Or if you have a new American standard. As many of you do. It says. For such is. The will of God. Some of you have a NIV.

[13 : 43] And I don't normally come down on the side of the NIV. But they have it. Even more accurate. It says. For it is God's will that.

And then he goes on with the verse. They say. I don't understand. What's the point here? Pastor. Well. The point is. What exactly is the will of God here?

You say. Well. It's pretty clear. Isn't it? But. But listen. Now there's. There's something to notice here. This is very important. What exactly is the will of God?

Is. The will of God. Of which. Peter. Refers to here. Is it. What precedes. Is this verse. Namely. Submit. Yourself. To every ordinance of man. Is that what it is? Well. Certainly. That is the will of God. There's no debate about that. We've already. Covered that. We. Looked at that last week. When Peter says.

[14 : 45] Do it for the Lord's sake. That means it's his will. And so. We are to submit to our governing authorities. Because. It is the will of God. To do so. Certainly. It is the will of God. But is that what. Peter's getting at here.

By this phrase. In the first part of verse 15. Where it says. For this. Is. The will of God. Is that what he's getting at? Is he looking back. To verse 14. Or 13 and 14.

Or. Now follow me here. Because this is important. Or. Is. The will of God. Of which Peter refers. Is it what follows. You're looking at me like. A cow looking at a new gate.

I never understood what that expression meant. But I thought I'd use it. Is Peter being retrospective. Or is he being prospective.

[15 : 44] Here. And does it matter. Well the outcome may be the same. Is the same. But the distinction is important.

Because. You see. It is the difference between. Pointing to or emphasizing. Possible results of our submission. Or. Pointing to.

Emphasizing. The sovereign. Purpose. Of our submission. To our governing authorities. There's a difference between those two things. Though the outcome may be the same.

You say. I still don't get it. Well. I'm going to tell you. That. Grammatically. It is the latter of the two. That is. Peter's pointing forward here.

To the very. Very next thing. He says. And so. If I might expand it. This is what he says. Here in verse 15. We. Are tying it in with verse 13.

[16 : 44] We are to submit. To the governing authorities. Because. It is the will of God. To silence. The ignorance. Of foolish men. That's his will.

Here. Or. Better yet. His purpose. His. His sovereign purpose. That he. Wants to accomplish. That's his sovereign purpose. That you and I. As born again believers. As followers of Christ. Are obliged. To fulfill. Through. Our submission. To our governing authorities.

Whether we like it or not. Without any qualification. Of the governing authorities. Whether they're good or bad. Moral or immoral. Oppressive.

Oppressive. Or. Or. Full of freedom. No qualification. It is the sovereign purpose of God. That we. Obey. Submit.

[17 : 41] To our governing authorities. Because through our submission. God is going to silence. The ignorance. Of foolish men. You say. Well what does that mean? Well that's what we're going to get to.

Here eventually. So the question is. How does submission. To my governing authorities. Serve. That sovereign purpose. Well it does so.

In three. Very profound ways. And this is. What we're going to be looking at today. Number one. Submission.

To our governing authorities. Serves. The sovereign purpose of God. By contrasting. Evil. With good.

Good. Now just get it down. Just like that. By contrasting. Evil. With good. Or.

[18 : 35] We might put it this way. By. Highlighting. Bringing to light. Exposing. Evil. With good.

Now. See. Peter makes this point. Multiple times. Here in this. In the larger passage. In fact. We can go all the way back. To verse 12. In fact. Look at your copy. Of God's word.

And look at verse 12. He's speaking to believers. Having your conduct. Honorable. Among the Gentiles. By the way. Gentiles. Just code word. For unbelievers.

Have your conduct. Honorable. Even among unbelievers. Especially among unbelievers. That. When they speak. Against you. As evil doers.

And they will. They may. By your good works. Now. There it is. They may. By your good works. Which they observe.

[19 : 32] Implication being. That. Pagans. Unbelievers. Can. Tell the difference. Between evil works. And good works. And as a believer.

Lives. His. His. Or her. Life. We. The believer. Is to conduct. His. Her. Life. In a way. That's honorable. Even among unbelievers.

So that even. Though. A segment of them. May be. Speaking. Evil. Against you. Or even. Identifying you. As evil doers. They may.

At the same time. Observe. That. Really. Your life. Is characterized. By good works. And. Glorify. By. The father.

On the day. Of visitation. Do you see the distinction? They can see the difference. They can make the distinction. Evil. Good. Let's go on.

[20 : 24] And then we'll. Define this. Further. Look at. Verse 14. The governors. He's speaking. Smitten to governors. As to those. Who are sent. By him. That is.

By the. King. As supreme. Sent by him. For the punishment. Of. What kind of person. Evil doers. The punishment.

Of evil doers. And. For the praise. Of those. Who do. What? Good. Good. Now.

Now. Listen. It's very clear. The clear. Distinction. Between evil. And good. And. In. Both. Cases. Not.

Speaking. Of. Believers. Being. Being. Able. To. Tell. The difference. Between. The two. But. He's. Talking. About. Unbelievers. Who. Can. See. The difference.

[21 : 19] Between. Evil. And. Good. Now. If you. Take. Good. Out. Of. The equation. Then. What's. Left. Just. Evil. But.

When. We. Live. Our. Lives. And. Conduct. Our. Lives. In. A. Good. Way. And. The. Context.

Of. The. Passage. Here. In. Verse. Fifteen. As. Good. Citizens. Who. Do. Good. Who. Live. Right. Then. Evil. Stands. In. Bold. Relief. To. Good. Verse. Fifteen.

Now. I've. Already. Read. This. Passage. But. There. It is. Again. For. This. Is. The. Will. Of. God. That. By. Doing. Good. You. May. Put. The. Silence. Put. To. Silence. The. Ignorance. Of. Foolish.

[22:18] Man. Now. Now. You. Need. To. Need. To. Get. This. Squarely. In. Your. Mind. The. Authorities. Our. Governing. Authorities. Know. The. I. Don't. Care. Who. They. Are. Or. What. Kind. Of. Form. Of. Government. It. Is. Or. How. Morally. Morally. May. Be. At. A. Certain. Level. An. Important. Level. At. A. Significant. Level. All. Authorities. Can. Distinguish. The. Difference. Between. Evil. And. Good. Evildoers. And. Good. Doers. Law. Obeying. People. And. Law. Breakers. They. Can. See. The. Difference. Between. The. Two. And. A. Fourth. And. Let me. Bring. A. Support. Passage. The. One. That. I. Brought. In. Last. Week. Romans. Chapter. Thirteen. Where. Paul. Says. In. Verse. Three. Let me. Just. Remind. You. Of. It. He. Says. For. Rulers. Are. Not. A. Terror. To. Good. Works. They. Are. Not. A. Terror. To. Good. Works. But. To. Evil.

[23:12] Do. You. Want. To. Be. Unafraid. Of. The. Authority. Is. That. What. You. Want. Certainly. Do. What. Is. Good. And. You. Will. Have. Praise. From. The. Same. And. All. Four. Instances. Evil. Is. Contrasted. By. Good. There. No. Mistaking. That. They. Are. Put. Side. By. Side. Evil. And. Good. Evil. And. Good. Evil. And. Good. They. Are. Contrasted. There. Now. Let me ask you a simple question. Well. It may not be a simple question. It takes some thought. But. That's okay. We need to think. Don't we? Let me ask you this question. Is. Good. Defined. By. Evil. I don't answer that. Not out loud anyway.

[24:07] Is. Evil. Or. Good. Rather. Defined. By. Evil. Or. Is. Evil. Defined. By. Good. Well. Which came first? Good. Or. Evil. Good. Good. Good. Good. Evil. Dear people. Is. Defined. By. Good. It's. Defined. By. The. Good. Evil. Is. A. Violation. Of. Good. Right. Not. The. Other. Way. Around. Let me. Use. A. Different. Analogy. And. Make. A. Slightly. Different. Point. Often. In. Scripture. Light. And. Dark. Are. Used. As. Metaphors. Of. Good. And. Evil. And. So. Is. Light. Defined. By. The. Absence. Of. Darkness. I mean.

[25:02] You. Walk. Into. A. Brightly. Light. In. Room. Do you. Say. Well. Who. Turned. Off. The. Dark. In. Here. No. I. See. Darkness. Is. Defined. By. The. Absence. Of. Light. Darkness. Exists. By. The. Absence. Of. Light. Light. Is. The. Answer. To. Darkness. Light. Reveals. What's. In. The. Darkness. And. The. Substance. Of. What's. In. The. Darkness. Light. Does. That. Good. Is. The. Remedy. For. Evil. How. About. This. Familiar. Kind. Of. Image. I. Was. Sitting. In. Our. Front. Living. Room. My. Wife. Is. Going. To. Hate. Me. For. This. And.

[25:59] I. Was. Sitting. There. Early. This. Morning. Praying. Looking. Over. Some. Things. For. This. Sermon. And. I. Was. Sitting. There. And. I. Looked. Over. At. The. Coffee. Table. There. In. The. Center. Of. The. Room. And. I. Looked. At. It. And. I. Thought. To. Myself. That. Coffee. Table. Is. Clean. No. Dust. On. That. Thing. And. So. I. Got. Over. There. And. Got. Up. And. Went. Over. To. The. Coffee. Table. And. Just. Touched. One. Corner. Of. It. With. My. Finger. And. Guess. What? I. Haven't. Dusted. I. Do. A. Lot. Of. Things. Around. The. House. But. Dusting. Is. Not. One. Of. Them. It. Didn't. Look. Like. It. Was. Dirty. But. As. Soon. As. I. Cleaned. Off. A. Part. Of. It. The. Rest. Of. It. Look. Filthy. Dirty. Oh.

[26:57] It. Really. Wasn't. Much. Dust. I. Mean. Really. After. The. Big. Snow. That. We. Had. And. You. Know. After. A. Couple. Of. Days. You. Know. You. You. Driving. Around. In. That. Slush. And. Muck. And. Such. And. Your. Cars. All. The. Cars. Get. Pretty. Filthy. Don't. They. And. I. Was. Driving. One. Of. Those. Days. Came. Up. To. The. Intersection. Out. Here. And. To. Make. The. Turn. To. Come. Over. Here. To. Church. And. I. Looking. All. Around. And. Amongst. All. Of. The. Dirty. Filthy. Cars. There. Was. This. I. Mean. Sparkling. Clean. Car. And. Thought. This. Guy. Must. Have. Just. Washed. His. Car. Or. He. Maybe. What. My. Point. Is. God's. Purpose. For. You. Me. Is. Born. Again. Believers. Not.

[28:03] Just. In. The. Context. Of. Obeying. Our. Governing. Authorities. But. Really. In. Every. Context. Of. Life. Our. Purpose. His. Purpose. For. Us. As.

Followers. Of. Christ. Is. That. Our. Good. Works. Would. Stand. Always. Stand. In. Start. Contrast. Evil. And.

In. Sense. God's. Purpose. Goes. Further. To. Reveal. The. Utter. Wickedness. Of. Evil. Magnifying.

It. And. Somehow. In. The. Course. Of. Our. Obeying. Our. Laws. And. Our. Governing. Authorities. Without.

Qualification. Being. Stellar. Citizens. Of. Our. Nation. Somehow. To. The. Governing. Authorities. And. Into. Unbelievers. And.

[28 : 58] Even. Those. And. Especially. Those. Who. Would. Speak. Evil. Against. Us. Our. Lives. Stand. In. Such. Stark. Contrast. To. Evil. that there's no denying it and not only that but take it a step further it makes the evil look even more evil now let's get back to the context then or continue with that context doing good in verse 15 is defined by obedience to our laws and submission to the civil authorities who have been ordained to uphold those laws that's what Peter's talking about when he says doing good it's clear and to do so without qualification let me add a fifth passage a reference

Titus chapter 2 in verse 11 listen to this and we'll just kind of follow this along in the text and go on into chapter 3 because it all goes together for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age insert and including our obedience to our civil authorities that's the way we're to live looking all the time looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ so the duration of this doing good and being being a righteous living righteous lives in this world the duration of that continues until Jesus comes who and this Jesus gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for himself his own special people zealous for good works by the way the good works not just simply good works you do in the church or gospel work it includes all good works zealous for those things that's the kind of people he has called and saved and is making us into zealous for good works and then what are these good works specifically in verse 1 of chapter 3 he mentions one of them remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities to obey to be ready for every good work to speak evil of no one to be peaceable gentle showing all humility to all men see that's God's purpose God's see listen there are two types of human conduct that stand in bold relief in our society bad and good and there are two types of citizens in any form of government ours any form on this planet today two types of citizens law breaking and law abiding and even pagans can make the distinction between the two and God is commanding us to be law abiding citizens it's the purpose of God it's the purpose of righteousness to expose and to ultimately expel the darkness with light evil with good who among the billions of citizens living on this planet at this very moment should be leading the way when it comes to good works who the Mormons

Christian God's people who among the countless multitudes living on this earth right now today should stand out when it comes to civil obedience ought to be God's people ought to be God's people now we're talking about how our submission to the governing authorities serves God's purpose number one by contrasting evil with good number two by conquering lies with truth by conquering lies with truth verse 15 for this is the will of God what is that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men what what is all that we need to define some words here and there are at least three very significant words in this phrase latter part of this verse that I need to define let's take the last one first or the last of the three foolish that's the way it's translated in my particular version foolish men foolish what does that word mean well the root of the word means wisdom means wisdom discernment understanding insight now that's the root of the word the primary part of the word but there's just one problem there there is one Greek letter put on the front of the word that changes everything it's one simple letter alpha and when you put a alpha on the front it is a negative prefix and so then the lexical meaning of the word means to be without wisdom duh without wisdom but let me read the rest of the words that the

[35 : 20] Greek dictionary gives us give us the without wisdom senseless foolish stupid that's right in the dictionary I know your mother told you never to say that word that's what it means stupid now now listen they're not stupid because they are ignorant this is where the text is a little bit confusing not stupid out of some lack of knowledge that's not the idea here the problem is how these particular people process the knowledge what they do with it and to better understand that we need to go to a second word and that's the word ignorance the ignorance of foolish men or people who

are foolish that's very interesting our English word is really misleading because the English language is really you know so limited compared to the Greek language so ignorance means one thing usually to us but the word here agnosian agnosian is the Greek word and we get our word agnostic from it what is an agnostic an agnostic is a fool well that's what Peter called agnostic is a fool why because of the lack of knowledge an agnostic is not a fool because he lacks knowledge or that he's ignorant because the agnostic knows the truth the truth about God the truth about his word the truth about the Lord Jesus and the claims of the gospel the agnostic knows these things not for lack of knowledge it's not an intellectual problem the agnostic or the foolish man as

Peter puts it he he he has the knowledge but instead of embracing that knowledge he or she willfully rejects that knowledge or that truth they say that again willfully rejects it the knowledge is right there the truth is right there and you couldn't live in this country and not be confronted with the truth of God the truth of his word the truth of the gospel and so the agnostic is faced with the truth the truth is right there and yet the agnostic willfully rejects that truth and worse than that takes a position of hostility toward that truth and even worse than that position of hostility toward those who live it and proclaim it that's the kind of person that Peter is describing here the definitive passage in the

Old Testament for agnosticism is Psalm 14 and verse 1 where the Bible says the fool has said in his heart there is no God that's the agnostic I think may have been one of my first sermons when I got here that's where I took the opportunity to tell you I hate tuna fish remember that David said the fool the foolish man the foolish woman has said in his her heart there is no God but the words there is are not in the text that's been added by the translator and I think wrongly so the word in the original text is the fool has said in his heart no God that is no God for me that's the foolish man here and so what are these fools that's the word Peter used okay what are these fools doing attacking Christians that's what they're doing attacking Christians they speak against you as evil doers that's what they're doing attacking and listen you know Christians have had to deal with lies about the faith their faith our faith the lies about our faith and our practice we've been having to do that since the birth of the church there's nothing new

[40:51] I'll just give you a few examples in fact early on maybe one of the first lies lie used against Jesus was insurrection that Christians are insurrectionists trying to overthrow the government that's what they used against Jesus among some other things brought false witnesses to make accusation against him atheism too by the way early on in the early years and centuries of the church especially the first century the charge of atheism was directed toward Christians and how in the world could anyone make that kind of claim well because Christians in the first century refused to bow down and worship Rome's pantheon of gods and so these Christians must be atheists lies cannibalism by the way was one of the claims one of the lies against

Christians how in the world could they come up with something like that well the Lord's Supper Jesus instituted eat my body drink my blood and so the lies were being propagated about these these wacko Christians they believe in cannibalism otherwise like immorality and incest directed toward Christians because we call one another brothers and sisters call my wife my sister in Christ no I don't but but in that level she's my sister in Christ and so you know those on the outside because they're hostile toward Christianity they're fabricating lies and coming over things where those Christians down there they're not to be trusted they are scourged in our society because they believe in incest and all kinds of gross immorality which was of course a lie and today Christians are portrayed in our country portrayed as uneducated much uneducated superstitious people those are the lies

Christians are against science right Christians are intolerant Christians are homophobes guilty of hate crimes they ought to be put in jail that pastor down there ought to be abusers and oppressors of women these are some of the lies being propagated about Christianity fundamental biblical Christianity today are those lies founded to any degree among some professing Christians yeah! but that's not true Christianity those are lies Christians are racists that Christians are just over the top moralists kill joys they think any kind of enjoyment or entertainment or fun is somehow inherently sinful anti everything that's who we are we're anti everything those are the lies being propagated and worse of course and ultimately the conclusion or the desire through these lies is to convince the unbelieving public that Christians are a scourge that Christians are a danger to our country and so that brings us to the third word and that's the word silence and the word that Peter

used here is a word that means to close the mouth with a muzzle literally that's what the word means though it's not used literally here it's used in a figurative sense

Peter is not saying that God's purpose is that we physically stop the mouths of those who are lying against us it's a figurative thing and you know you can silence detractors by exposing their lies can't you expose the the the fallacious nature of the things they're saying about us to expose that and so to expose it then is to take their voice away in a figurative sense either either in this way that nobody will listen to them anymore that they're not credible anymore these lies that they're telling about Christians it's not true it's not credible so nobody's listening to them anymore that's how you muzzle or that's the meaning of the word so how how do we silence our critics how do we silence these liars how do we do that by anger you can just jot these down they all begin with the letter a and they're all wrong to a point anger is that how we respond to those who lie we just get angry no not at all if anybody's going to get angry let it be them not you so how then do we do it by argument no I will admit to you that there is a legitimate time when we have opportunity to defend the faith to be apologists defend the faith through peaceful debate with unbelievers maybe there are some foreign forums where that ought to take place and it's permissible to take place but it's been my observation that very little is usually accomplished by that and why is that because the two sides come from poles opposite poles they don't define anything the same way they don't believe anything the same way how are you going to bring those two together just by sake of argument it's probably not going to happen but certainly on another level we're not to argue with those who lie against us those who perpetrate these lies against us that's not going to do it that's certainly not what

[47:19] Peter's advocating how about activism if not anger and argument then how about activism well certainly Christians have the same responsibility rights and duties to be involved in the political process I advocate that for all believers to vote be informed be a part of the process Christians are not to opt out of that so in that sense there is a form of activism isn't it and absolutely we ought to be activists when it comes to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ we're to be activists in that sense and if the law of the land tells us we can't do that then that's a law we can disobey we're to be activists in those sense but beyond that we really tread on very dangerous ground biblically like the

Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka Kansas protesters protesting outside of a funeral for a dead American soldier holding up signs that say thank God for dead soldiers holding up signs that say thank God for IEDs I've got a son going into that theater of war Afghanistan I'm praying that he will not be blown apart or parts of his body blown away by an IED it's wicked thank God for IED or a sign that says God hates the United States hates USA and worse

I'm not going to mention that's activism isn't it is that right the Supreme Court said they have the right by the law of our land so they're not breaking a law per se I tell you really one of the lies we Baptists have to deal with is that all Baptists are like those kooks in Topeka we're not getting real quiet in here how then do we do it by anger lash out in anger or argument or activism or maybe anarchy I tell you Christians just need to band together rise up against these unbelievers and take arms that's the last one how about by arms arm force absolutely not how then well what did Peter say we are to silence the ignorance of foolish men with a virtuous life oh brother Don that's no fun I'd rather listen to one of the talking heads on the talking radio stations and get all energized to rise up and rebel I'd rather do that that's a whole lot more fun and if not in an overt way at least in my kind of own silent covert way to just allow the anger to stir up inside of me be careful about that how do we do it then we do it with a virtuous life a noble character pure living impeccable conduct good citizenship that's the way see listen it is the purity and honesty of a spirit filled christian's life that the enemies of the faith just cannot and it's so hard to deal with and the only way we muzzle them is to remove from our lives any substance for the lies any occasion for these accusations so that if they're going to come up with them they have to make them up they have to make them up we conquer lies with truth we contrast evil with good one more submission to my governing authority serves the sovereign purpose of

God by converting unbelief into faith that's God's purpose and believe it or not obedience and submission to our governing authorities has an evangelistic element to it MacArthur once said how you live as a Christian is the greatest apologetic for the evidence of the transforming power of the gospel he said there is really no greater way for people to see the transforming power of the gospel than to see the life of a transformed person see civil disobedience the breaking of the laws of the

land rebellion at any measure in any measure at any level rebellion against the governing authorities makes our witness of

[53:47] Christ and hypocrisy and we have no right to be believed for it to be believed several years ago Josh McDowell wrote a book entitled evidence that demands a verdict and his basic premise was that when unbelievers consider the evidence that Jesus and all he claimed is true historically and other ways that when that evidence is presented it demands a verdict is it true or is it not and I would agree with it it does call upon the reader to make a decision but let me tell you of another body of evidence that demands a verdict from the unbelieving world and it is the evidence of your transformed life as a follower of Christ that is a great body of evidence that is on display and a part of that is the way you relate to the law and to the governing authorities who have been sent and ordained by God to uphold those laws how you relate to that based upon that evidence that body of evidence then in your life as people observe you what will the unbelieving citizenry of this world of this country what will they what will be their verdict concerning

Christ based upon the evidence they see presented through your life Peter said in verse 12 live honorably among unbelievers that when they speak against you as evildoers and they will they may by your good works which they observe glorify God on the day of visitation that visitation for some will come in this life like it did for Paul on the day on the road to Damascus it may come for countless millions at the judgment either way they'll glorify God you see the evangelistic element in our obedience our submission to our governing authority in

Acts chapter 7 we have the story of a deacon by the name of Stephen godly Stephen spirit filled Stephen and he was brought before the authorities Jewish authorities of his day was given a voice they made several accusations against him but he was given a voice and he preached the gospel and what did they do with Stephen they hauled him out some appointed spot and took up rocks and they stoned him to death Stephen submitted to the governing authorities of his day there was a man there watching over the coats of the men throwing the rocks the man there by the name of Saul who observed all this and consented with this went on from there to be a bold persecutor of the church but as he traveled on the road to Damascus he met Jesus and he was gloriously saved I don't think that Luke as he wrote Acts just inserted that little blurb about Saul being there at Stephen's execution I don't think it was inserted there for no reason there was something about that event about Stephen godly Stephen his godly life that god used to prepare the heart of Saul for his day of visitation and Saul was gloriously saved I tell you we have an evangelistic opportunity through our submission to our governing authorities to him to to him to!