



Old Testament Reading: Exodus 34:1-12
New Testament Reading: Matthew 26:36-56

A Living Hope – Preparing for Persecution “Heavenly Citizens – Earthly Servants” 1 Peter 2:13-17

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The main theme of 1st Peter 2:11-25 is found in verse 15: ***“For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”***

- The first readers of this letter were suffering severe persecution because of their expressed faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.
- Rather than sympathize with their suffering, Peter reminded them of their calling to be the people of God and the price that Jesus paid for their salvation.
- In Chapter 4, Peter assured them that it was God’s will for them to suffer persecution for their faith.
- In Chapter 2, Peter exhorted them not to cause more suffering by disobeying those in authority but to willingly submit to their demands, for their submission would silence their persecutors.

STEPS TO REMOVE THE UNWANTED FROM SOCIETY

- **Identification** – marking those who are at odds with the new society.
- **Marginalization** – minimizing their value to the success of the new society.
- **Castigation** – criticizing them for opposing the new society.
- **Elimination** – the removal of those who will not embrace the new society.

The Apostle Peter said the only way Christians can prepare for such persecution is to:

- Recognize God has given us the greatest gift of life – our eternal salvation.
- Recognize that God called us to suffer to demonstrate our faith, including martyrdom.
- Recognize God has put us under human authority to reveal our true submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

1. The Exhortation to Submission – 1 Pt. 2:13-15

- **13 – “Submit to every ordinance of men for the Lord’s sake!”**

Peter exhorts Christians to live in such submission unto God that their behavior would silence those who criticize their faith.

- Without the Word of God, our testimony is not sufficient to lead someone to genuine salvation.
- Without our testimony/witness, the unbeliever may doubt the power of God to change their life.
- Lifestyle evangelism is the most effective method of witnessing, because the evidence is there.

To have that kind of witness on people, Peter said Christians should change their “mindset”, and be willing to live as:

- **Strangers** – *it is not our purpose to condemn society, but we are not to become absorbed by it.*
- **Pilgrims** – *we make the best out of what we have or have been called to do, but we always live with our minds firmly fixed on the kingdom of God.*
- **Citizens** – *we invest our lives as His witnesses, doing all we can to bring glory to His name.*
- **Servants** – *we manifest the love of Christ by our willingness to serve others unconditionally!*

In verse 11, we “abstain” from fleshly lusts by not participating in those things that would give people reason to criticize our testimony.

In verses 13-15, we “accept” our responsibility to be good citizens by submitting to those in authority over us, as evidence that we have surrendered unto the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. The Limitation of Submission – 1 Pt. 2:16-17

– Vs. 16 – *“As free...but as servants of God.”*

- **“Submit”** – not under duress, but willingly
- **“To every ordinance”** – whatever human authority
- **“For the Lord’s sake”** – to honor His Holy Name
- **“To silence ignorant men”** – to not give them cause to question the power of God to change their life

***Don’t forfeit by your selfishness
that which Jesus Christ earned for you
by His sacrifice!***

Five Commands to Those Suffering Persecution:

- **“Live as servants of God”** – Christians are free from the law of sin, but while we are on earth, we are to obey the laws of the land, to prove our submission to God’s authority.
- **“Honor all men”** – every person, regardless of their position or condition in life, deserves our honor and respect, and Christians should be the first to express that, in gratitude for the grace God has expressed to us.
- **“Love the brotherhood”** – this is not as easy as it seems because even the best of us “fall in the flesh” at times. But that’s when we love them “even though” as God loves us.

- **“Fear God”** – a healthy fear of a holy God keeps us from doing those things that would shame His name and bring us shame when we stand before Him.
- **“Honor the King”** – obey those in authority over us, for God has put them there for His purpose, and our benefit!

***The greatest freedom we will ever know
is to be in bondage to the call of God,
and know we are in the center of His will.***
