

## **1 Peter 2.21-25 Proclaiming God's Excellence Through Honoring Authority Part D WWC 08.30.20**

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Good morning. The Lord bless you and give you peace. The text of our sermon today is continuing under the theme of proclaiming God's excellence through honoring authority. We saw last week that we were called to follow the example of Christ's suffering. This week I want to focus upon **verse 22** and **verse 23**. There is a purity of Christ that we must follow, and there is a trust Christ's displays that we must follow. Now throughout the course of this series we have been trying to tie many of these teachings back to the instruction that the disciples received while following Jesus. These two points most certainly were weaved into Christ's instruction of these men through their time together, but two stories stick out from Matthew that will help us as a back drop to our content today. The first is rather telling. Matthew 14 begins with a look at the death of John the Baptist. We are told that when Jesus found out about it he departed to a place of isolation, but before long the crowds found Jesus. The text says that Jesus had compassion upon them. That compassion led to the story of the feeding of the 5000. That story is followed by Peter walking on water at the command of Christ, miraculous healings, and the healing of the 4000. It culminates in a question that is presented by the Pharisees and Sadducees, and that is that Jesus should show them a sign from heaven. They wanted Jesus to perform for them to prove who He was. It is a phrase of incredible willful ignorance. When Jesus is alone with the disciples, He takes time to warn them of the teaching of these people. Just consider what has taken place before the eyes of the disciples, and yet, bad teaching, erroneous teaching, is so dangerous that we can completely ignore the things we know that are true. Here in our text in Peter, we are instructed to follow the example of Jesus Christ in exemplifying a life of truth.

Hold that thought and let's consider another story that happened to Peter that would have been informative to Peter's teaching in this letter. In the series of stories that I just highlighted I passed over quite quickly the story of Peter walking on water at the command of Jesus Christ. Jesus had sent the disciples to cross over the Sea of Galilee as He wanted some alone time. As it got late, and Jesus saw the disciples struggling to cross, He walked out on the water. The story is telling because the disciples didn't believe it. They were also terrified at what they were seeing, which gives credence to this story as these men responded as anyone would have. Peter calls out to Jesus to prove to himself that it was Jesus really out on the water, "Jesus, if it is you, command that I come out with you." Jesus did command, and Peter came. So long as Peter kept his eyes on Christ he was able to participate in this miracle. When he took his eyes off Christ Peter began to sink and Christ had to rescue him. The pertinent point of this story to the things that Peter is saying in 1 Peter is this, in the face of storms and dangers to us the safety is found in complete trust and focus upon Christ. Peter uses Christ's success with this same tenant of truth that in the face of suffering Christ displayed complete trust in God.

So one example is one dealing with truth, and the other is an example dealing with trust. Let's look first at the teaching on truth.

**First, the purity that we must follow -- truth.** **Verse 22**, "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." In context of the gospel accounts of the crucifixion of Christ, the text is saying that Christ was found guiltless before His accusers. Surely Peter remembers the statement from Pilate, "I find no guilt in Him." Which, of course we know, was followed by Christ's crucifixion. Essentially it is that Jesus experienced the ultimate suffering for doing good. This stands as an example for the Christian. We are to be as committed to the act of reflecting the goodness of Christ in our pattern of life and pattern of speech that even death would not deter us. Remember, our ultimate goal is to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into marvelous light, **2:9**. Every aspect of the Christian life must be somehow tethered to this. Willingness to suffer for doing good so that we might reflect the example of Christ is a tool that is unparalleled in its effectiveness over the heart and mind of those who reject Christianity. For those that remain in unbelief, it will be a reference point in their judgment when they stand before the presence of God to give account of their life. Truthfulness will never be unfruitful.

But there is more that this text intends regarding the person and nature of Christ. We saw last week some connection with **Isaiah 53** which identifies the Servant of the Lord as a lamb upon whom God laid our iniquities. About a thousand years later John the Baptist would publicly declare Jesus to be the Lamb of God who takes away

the sins of the World. This theme of the Lamb of God reaches back to the Old Testament teaching regarding the need for sacrifice to atone for our sin. God's people were to select a perfect lamb that would be sacrificed upon the altar of the Tabernacle, and then the Temple, so that God's wrath against sin would be appeased. But, as the epistle of Hebrews takes pains to teach, this act of sacrifice could never take away sin. We've always been waiting for the One whom God would send to accomplish this task of deliverance.

**What this text intends to teach is where we can follow Christ, and where we must worship Christ.** We can follow Christ's example for suffering for doing good. But we worship Christ for suffering for our good, because only Christ can satisfy the need for a sinless person to advocate with a sinless God by paying for my sinful life, and yours, with their own. Jesus Christ paid the penalty of our sins, and He is the only one that could do this because our sin is eternal in its scope, and we are but finite. Jesus is not showing us a way to pay for our sins. He is not an example that we can follow in this way. We could never do that. Jesus is showing us where we can follow and where we must worship. We cannot **compete** with Christ, He is God with us. His sacrifice is the penultimate expression of faithfulness, love, and purity. Further, we cannot **complete** Christ's work. Jesus Christ has already declared it done. He uttered those beautiful and glorious words on the cross, "**Tetelestai,**" **IT IS FINISHED!**

There is an example of suffering that we are to follow as Christians, we saw that last week. There is a purity that we must follow, that we live truth and speak truth regardless of the cost. **There is also a trust that Jesus displays that we must follow – entrusted to God. This is our second consideration from this text.** We see this in **verse 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.**" Here we see first that Christ's trust in God motivated and drove his commitment to stay his response to suffering. "**When he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he suffered, he did not threaten.**" The word translated "**revile**" has the **lexical use in Greek of heaping abuse upon someone or railing against someone.** Again, the scene surrounding the crucifixion of Christ is enlightening. Matthew and Mark recount the mocking Pilate's soldiers directed towards Christ. They stripped Him naked, dressed him up in a robe and a crown of thorns and hailed Him as the Jewish king. Luke tells us that Jesus suffered this shame under the hands of Herod and Herod's soldiers as well. We are told of the mocking voices of those who looked upon Christ and dared him to save Himself. Even the criminals hanging next to Jesus on their own crosses mocked Christ. Thought Luke only focuses upon the jeering of the criminal that didn't repent. John records the callousness of the Roman soldiers who gambled over Christ's robe in the presence of Mary, Christ's mother. In all of this Jesus never sinned in His speech towards those who abused Him. In fact, instead of reviling we are told of one last act of kindness Jesus displayed towards these who cruelly treated Him. Jesus prayed, "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do**" (Luke 23:34) I can't imagine a more appropriate time to let people have it. When we are mistreated, or spoken against, how do we respond? Do we have some real zinger comebacks tucked away in our back pockets for a mic drop verbal shellacking? **Christ never did.** Peter is applying this to slaves, some of whom most certainly would have suffered violence of the tongue and body. He is reminding those who have a cause to be upset that Christ didn't respond in kind.

Here is the danger with our thinking as people, and as Christians knowing we need to be sanctified, we will struggle with this, to be sure. We presume that because we don't level the same charges against people as others who are not governed by biblical ethic that somehow, we are not sinning. The problem is that other people's level of failure is not the means through which we measure our success. **Jesus is our standard as Christians.**

We are also told that Jesus Christ did not threaten in his language. This is incredible. It underscores as well that Christ's preaching of, "**repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,**" **is not a threat, but an appeal.** We do not threaten people with the consummation of justice, which for the unbeliever is hell. Christ never did. We appeal for them to turn to Jesus and away from hell because hell is so perfect in its exacting of justice. On a social note, what would our society look like if this were the driving emotion behind correction?

But to be sure, Christ isn't ignoring justice. Christ doesn't overlook the evil that is done to us. What He does do is show us how to satisfy our need for just retribution for sin. Peter has already talked about governmental means of justice in the early section. Notice that in **2:14** that government is meant in part to keep order by punishing evil and honoring good. But what happens, as in the case of Christ, when the governments are actually perpetrating evil, when those meant to establish justice are diminishing justice? Peter says that Jesus facing those circumstances continued entrusting Himself to the one who judges justly. The verb and its usage is important as is the action that Christ performed. The verb and its usage is this, **paradidomi**, meaning to hand over and entrust for care and preservation to commit. It is an imperfect tense but active voice. One commentator notes that this **tense usage implies repeated action in the past** (Wayne Grudem, 1 Peter. T (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2009) 138). We seek justice first and foremost through our continued commitment to bring these things to God who is a perfect judge. Just consider what is going on there. Jesus Christ is experiencing the sinful expressions of mankind towards Him. But He is also acutely aware of the just character of God because He is about to experience it on our behalf. But He also knows what will happen on the other side of this sacrificial and obedient act. Jesus Christ would be resurrected from the dead and God would direct that all things come under his feet. **Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession."** **Psalm 110:1, "The LORD said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."** **Philippians 2:9-10 "Therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."** My friends, the cross of Christ which included the physical punishment and the spiritual expiation of sin, is a fearful vision of the breadth of power and scope of judgement from this perfect Judge. He cannot be bought off. He will not overlook an offense. He is all knowing, all powerful, and holy. He is worthy of our petition for justice, and He will see it through.

But consider as well that Jesus took our sorrows and became the means of our healing, as we see in **verse 24**. Our judge is not simply requiring recompense for the active crimes of intelligent beings. Our Judge is requiring recompense of all that enslaves, endangers, embarks against the soul of a person. So, as we consider these things, we consider that our cry and petition to this Judge for deliverance and justice is not simply for sins that have been done against us, but for the destruction of disease and pain that destroys and brings death. In God's economy of what needs to be judged, the physical is included in that. We come to God and ask for justice for the life of a loved one that is broken from cancer, or immune disorders. We come to God and ask for justice for the pain that so many live with day, after day, after day. We entrust ourselves to God in a world that is full of violence against the innocent either because they are unwanted in the womb, hated in the home, or despised in society. God is making a new heaven and a new earth as Judge. The pain you experience that is birthed through the brokenness of this world, that pain we entrust to this God and know that He sees this as a gracious thing. In the midst of pain, in how we suffer, we show the world the excellencies of Christ's power. Dear brother and sister in Christ, follow and worship Christ's example of truthfulness, and follow Christ's example of committing Himself to the one who judges justly.

Amen.