

Good morning. The Lord bless you and give you peace. I want to thank Ben for his willingness and faithfulness to jump straight into the pulpit on such short notice, and to thank you for your prayers as I waited for the results from my COVID test.

We are beginning a look at the family structures to which we are called. But we must remember that this fits into a whole spectrum of teaching that Peter is elaborating on. He is focusing our attention on how we should function as Christians in the different callings to which we are called, and that ultimately because of the redemptive work that we are called to proclaim. ***Salvation is glorious not only for what it saves us from, but for what it saves us to!***

Given that we have not been in the text for a couple of weeks, I think it would be profitable to review where we have been, and to consider texts of scripture that really bind us to be faithful to what we have been called to as Christians.

.I. The basis for Peter's exhortation. Chapter 1 highlights the exorbitant plan of God that accomplished and guarantees our salvation. The climax of this little section in chapter 1, I believe, comes in the statement that we are not redeemed by the value system of this world: money, power, prestige, or piety. We are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ who stands as the one who fulfills the anticipation of the O.T.; that someone would come from God who would be a perfect lamb that would truly take away our sin. But Jesus not only took our sins, that is, in the form of paying for the penalty of our sins before God, but Jesus rose again the third day, in accordance to the scriptures, that we who have believed in Him might also be raised from the dead, and that in the time of our sojourning in this world we may reflect that power of God's redemption through an observably transformed life(1:18-21).

Peter's reasoning for calling us to faithfulness because of the redemptive work of Christ is also part of Peter being faithful to the broader teaching of scripture. The authors of scripture do not work against one another. There is no new revelation that outdoes another. Notice this in the following verses and also let us be aware of this one thing, ***the reason that we are shocked at Peter's teaching is that we are ignorant, or intolerant, of the life that Jesus Christ really calls us to as Christians.*** As Peter begins to apply these things to our lives in a way that seems like he is meddling, I think it would be helpful to see how the scriptures are full of exhortations that we have a proper response to the glorious provision of salvation.

Philippians 1:27-28

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction

1 John 2:3-6

³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Thessalonians 4:1

Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.

We are called to a pattern of life as Christians that affects every aspect of our life. It is a pattern of life that displays the holiness of God more and more. If we don't accept that calling, we will reject the teaching of scripture outrightly, or with subtle arguments that appease our conscience but disregard the Word of God.

We've considered the **basis** for Peter's exhortation. Now let's consider the **details** of Peter's exhortation.

.II. The Details of Peter's Exhortation. Peter begins with instructions to the Christian wife, and lest we are frustrated with the length of the exhortation in comparison to husbands, please remember that Paul does the inverse in **Ephesians 5**, and both Peter and Paul address the ultimate responsibility of reflection Jesus Christ in His pattern of life towards the Church as the husbands responsibility. Though there is a significant level of weight and vulnerability that God has called a Christian wife to, the standard to which the husband is called and will be judged upon is the standard that Jesus sets with His actions towards His Church. We all have a calling within our specific spheres and stations of life, and we will all be held accountable for what God has called us to irrespective of what others do or do not do. He is the perfect and unmovable judge. It's best not to compare one another's roles lest we get distracted from what we are supposed to do before God.

Peter ties in his exhortation with the word "likewise."

3:1 "Likewise." This word could be translated, "in the same way." It connects the underlying themes of coming under authorities that are distinguished in the previous texts concerning government and masters. In the same way we honor and come under the authority of these other offices in society and see them as stations through which we can magnify the redemptive work of Christ, so in the station of marriage a Christian wife is called to come under the authority of her husband. Who assigns that authority? God assigns this because of the way He designed and created this world. We are again reminded of the created order in **Genesis 1-3**, and of the recapitulation of the distinction of marriage and its structure all the way throughout scripture. I hope to bring that out in other messages. But the teaching from Peter is clear. ***Biblically speaking, a Christian woman who refuses to come under the authority of her husband, whether Christian or not, is not only unfaithful to her calling as a wife but is also limiting her ability to display the redemptive and transforming power of the gospel in her life.***

3:1 So Peter includes the full concept in the phrase, "Likewise...be subject." This is the same word that modifies our relationship to human institutions and governments, and it is the same word that modifies the relationship with masters. The word is "hypotasso" (ὑποτάσσω). The idea is to be subordinate to someone, or something. The "something" is first human institutions, then masters, then here wives to husbands. ***This is an important distinction because subordination speaks not to the value of something but to how it functions.*** There is no greater example of this than that of Jesus Christ. He comes under to this world at the behest of the Father. He speaks only and all that the Father desires Him to speak, to the point that He can tell the disciples that to see Him is to see the Father (**John 14**). Peter has already elevated the Christian, male or female, to the same level of identity and inheritance. We are God's children. We are a nation of priests. In **verse 7** he underscores the co-inheritance a Christian wife has with her husband. But until we reach heaven and the consummation of our salvation in which an eternal era of glory is experienced, God has a design He wants followed here if we are called to a marriage relationship. The marriage

relationship should be as much a beautiful friendship as it is a cellular structure of society where the concepts of authority are not only recognized and distinguished, but the means through which we model what it looks like in the broader scope of society. **How can we decry the lawlessness in society that we are seeing now, or the abuse of power, when we have not been vigilant in decrying the abuse and disintegration of the nuclear family as God has designed it?** Do not let the culture, or the evil one, rob you of the beauty of this calling by defining submission as a way to devalue a Christian wife.

Further, submission in the sense of subordination is never a license to sin. We are called to holiness. We are called to distinguish the gospel in whatever station we find ourselves in. A person in authority who calls us to sinful behavior is not to be obeyed or submitted to whatsoever. **What's more, subordination, or submission to authority does not preclude us from seeking to change the environment we are in. But it demands that the propagation of the gospel be the primary means of change.** We see this in the life of Christ. If that were the case then what was the purpose of Christ's coming and submitting to the cross? He came to this world, subordinated to the Father's will, and is transforming us. Peter reminds us in 3:1 that the act of submission by a Christian woman is the vehicle of redemption for an unbelieving husband. This is the only place in scripture where the gospel is said to have power without speaking it.

But allow me to submit another thought to the biblical parameters of subordination or submission. Peter limits its scope.

3:1 "to your own husbands." This is important because biblical Christianity does not demand that all women be subject to all men. This kind of relationship of submission is buttressed within the care and affection of the covenant relationship of one's husband. This protects women from the abuse of careless and domineering men. Further, as one commentator astutely notes, Peter does not detail what that subordination, or submission looks like. He simply lays some foundational elements that we will consider in the next message, that of respect and obedience. A Husband and wife need to work that out what that looks like within their own marriage.

We will continue this exposition next week, but today allow me simply to challenge all the wives represented here in this community, and those who one day want to experience that mantle of responsibility. How much of what you do in your marriage reflects this one simple command to be subordinate to your husbands in the way the scriptures teach this, and in the way that Christ reflected it? These are the things that make us really look at Christianity as more than a get-out-of-hell-free card. These are the kinds of things that lead Jesus to tell all those who followed Him around to count the cost of really being a disciple of Christ.

And husbands, we will spend an appropriate amount of time hammering at our neglect in our own calling. Let me challenge you with this. Considering the level of vulnerability that God places upon the shoulders of His Christian women in the office of marriage, how easy are you making it for your wife to fulfill her duty? Jesus Christ was so loved and cared for by the Father that He cherished the opportunity to express all the beauty God wanted to reveal, especially within the parameters of submission to His authority. We will be held accountable for how we've stewarded God's daughters and our wives. If we were held in account today, what would God say to us?

Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us be found faithful to all that God has called us to without fear of the world. And through that may God add abundantly to His Kingdom. Amen.