

## "The Believer's Duty"

### Part 4

#### 1 Peter 2:11-3:12

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of 1 Peter we were looking at the believer's responsibility to submit to governmental authorities.

#### **Notice 1 Peter 2:13-17**

Tonight as we move on, we are going to see Peter's exhortation to believing slaves within the Roman Empire. Before we get into the verses before us, we need some historical background on slavery in the Roman Empire.

Notice the words of Barclay on slaves;

*"To understand the real meaning of what Peter is saying we must understand something of the nature of slavery in the time of the early church. In the Roman Empire there were as many as 60,000,000 slaves, Slavery began with Roman conquests, slaves being originally mainly prisoners taken in war, and in very early times Rome had few slaves but by New Testament times slaves were counted by the million.*

*It was by no means only menial tasks which were performed by slaves. Doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, secretaries, stewards were slaves. In fact, all the work of Rome was done by slaves. Roman attitude was that there was no point in being master of the world and doing one's own work. Let the slaves do that and let the citizens live in pampered idleness. The supply of slaves would never run out.*

*Slaves were not allowed to marry; but they cohabited; and the children born of such a partnership were the property of the master, not of the parents, just as the lambs born to the sheep belonged to the owner of the flock, and not to the sheep.*

*It would be wrong to think that the lot of slaves was always wretched and unhappy, and that they were always treated with cruelty. Many slaves were loved and trusted members of the family; but one great inescapable fact dominated the whole situation. In Roman law a slave was not a person but a thing; and he had absolutely no legal rights whatsoever. For that reason there could be no such thing as justice where a slave was concerned. Aristotle writes, "There can be no friendship nor justice towards inanimate things; indeed, not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as a slave. For master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave." Varro divides the instruments of agriculture into three classes--the articulate, the inarticulate and the mute, "the articulate comprising the slaves, the inarticulate comprising the cattle, and the*

*mute comprising the vehicles." The only difference between a slave and a beast or a farmyard cart was that a slave happened to be able to speak. Peter Chrysologus sums the matter up: "Whatever a master does to a slave, undeservedly, in anger, willingly, unwillingly, in forgetfulness, after careful thought, knowingly, unknowingly, is judgment, justice and law." In regard to a slave, his master's will, and even his master's caprice, was the only law."*

With this Roman view of slaves we would expect Peter to call for an uprising of the slaves so that they might fight for their rights, but that is not the case.

## I. The Exhortation

### Notice 1 Peter 2:18

Here we see that servants/slaves were to be subject to their masters with all fear and this applied if the master/owner was kind and gentle or if he was unfair and harsh. There were some slaves that were treated very well and there were others who were treated as animals. In either situation Peter calls on the servant to submit to the authority of his or her owner.

#### **Application:**

Now, many would look at this and reach the conclusion that it does not apply to us today because we are not in slavery. That is correct, we are not slaves in the sense of the people that Peter was writing to. But there is an application. This can be applied to where a person works and the relationship they have with their boss. It can apply to the self-employed and the customers which they deal with. If they work under a man or woman that is very harsh and difficult to get along with the temptation is to resist their authority over us. Let us all be reminded that whosoever we are given to deal with it is our responsibility to glorify God in that very situation no matter how difficult it may be. I believe there is an application here for moms who are at times overwhelmed as they raise their children. There are times when moms feel like they are slaves at home. There is also an application here for someone who is confined to a wheel chair or a hospital bed. They feel as though they are slaves to their health and are trapped in a situation which they cannot get out of.

Whatever the situation maybe we as believers are to submit as unto the Lord.

### Colossians 3:22-24

<sup>22</sup> *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;*

<sup>23</sup> *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

<sup>24</sup> *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*

Whoever is placed in authority over us we are to submit and walk in obedience to their instructions. We are to obey them just as we would the Lord. When we serve them, we are actually serving the Lord.

### **Colossians 3:17**

<sup>17</sup> *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

We are not to complain and murmur when we are in a trying situation. But we are to submit to the authority over us and if it is a situation where there is no authority involved such as a hospital bed or at home with the children, then we must recognize God as the Authority and submit to the path He has placed before us. We are not to complain or murmur but we are to take it patiently.

### **1 Peter 5:5-7**

<sup>5</sup> *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

<sup>6</sup> *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

<sup>7</sup> *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

### **Notice 1 Peter 2:19**

The word "thankworthy" literally means "GRACE". What Peter is saying here is that when we submit even to those who are harsh, following our conscience toward God that convicts us to practice self-control, then this is honoring to God. When we are treated unfairly and we refuse to retaliate but instead accept it and just submit, we are showing grace in that situation just as Jesus did when He was mistreated for doing what was right.

### **Application:**

To show grace in such a circumstance is to magnify Jesus to those who are harsh and unfair.

## **Philippians 1:12-14, 20-21**

*<sup>12</sup> But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*

*<sup>13</sup> So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places:*

*<sup>14</sup> And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.*

*<sup>20</sup> According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

*<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

Paul was under house arrest and in that situation his desire was to magnify Jesus Christ to all he came in contact with. Paul too was suffering for doing what he was called to do.

### **Notice 1 Peter 2:20a**

In the first part of this verse Peter points out that if do wrong and suffer for it there is no glory in that. We are expected to patiently take chastisement when we get out of line.

### **Romans 13:2-5**

*<sup>2</sup> Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [punishment].*

*<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

*<sup>4</sup> For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

*<sup>5</sup> Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

When we break the law, we can expect to be punished by the authorities and when it happens, we are to take it patiently. But this does not bring glory to God.

### **Notice 1 Peter 2:20b**

Here we see that God is pleased when we do what is right and PATIENTLY suffer for that. Now let me be very clear that it is not because God loves to see us suffer. That is not what we are to take from this verse.

**Notice 1 Peter 2:19 again.**

Here we see that when a person suffers wrong when they do right that it is for CONSCIENCE toward God that he or she patiently takes it. This means that the person who suffers punishment for doing what is right is someone who is more concerned about pleasing God than they are standing for their own rights. This is what is pleasing to God. The patience in suffering wrongfully manifests his or her devotion to God.

Notice the words of MacDonald;

*'When we suffer unjustly, we win God's approval. He is pleased when He finds us so conscious of our relation to Him that we endure undeserved pain without vindicating self or fighting back. When we meekly take unjust treatment, we display Christ; this supernatural life gains God's "Well done.'*

Notice the words of Wiersbe;

*"Anybody, including an unbeliever, can "take it patiently" when he is in the wrong! It takes a dedicated Christian to "take it" when he is in the right. "This is grace [acceptable] with God." God can give us the grace to submit and "take it" and in this way glorify God. Of course, the human tendency is to fight back and to demand our rights. But that is the natural response of the unsaved person, and we must do much more than they do. Anybody can fight back; it takes a Spirit-filled Christian to submit and let God fight his battles."*

**Notice 1 Peter 2:21a**

Here is a verse that would be a shock to many believers in America. Peter reminds all believers that they were called to suffer in order to glorify God. I want to take a few minutes to walk us through several reminders from the Bible.

- 1. As believers our lives are not our own. We have been purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and we are here to glorify God.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

*<sup>20</sup> For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

2. It has been granted as a gift to suffer for Jesus Christ.

**Philippians 1:29**

*<sup>29</sup> For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;*

3. As believers when we live for Jesus we will suffer.

**2 Timothy 3:12**

*<sup>12</sup> Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

4. There is a supernatural power that works in us when we submit to these Biblical Truths.

**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

*<sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

5. The suffering of the believer is used by God for the sake of the church.

**Colossians 1:24**

*<sup>24</sup> Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

The afflictions of Christ mentioned here have nothing to do with His suffering on the cross. His work on the cross was completed and nothing can be added. The sufferings spoken of here by Paul refers to the sufferings in His ministry. These sufferings are still going on in His church today and we believers suffer they fill the sufferings up. The suffering of the believer for living righteously is for the sake of the body of Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion:**

Let us rest in God's sustaining grace and let us live Godly and when suffering comes, we can count on His grace to keep us. This will bring glory to our God, and it will strengthen the body of Jesus Christ.