

The Conduct of God's People

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[0:00] 1 Peter chapter 2, we begin reading at verse 4. We'll read through the end of the chapter. For in Scripture it says, See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone, and a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.

They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

[1:56] Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king as the supreme authority or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

For it is God's will that by doing good, you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.

Live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the brotherhood of believers. Fear God. Honor the king. Slaves, submit yourself to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you are called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

[3:14] He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats.

Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds, you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

I ask you to keep your Bibles open this morning to 1 Peter 2. 1 Peter 2.

As we look into this passage, I want you to come back with me for a moment to an age when the Roman Empire was the superpower in the world.

[4:21] The rulers of the empire, the Caesars, were great. They had great power, but they did not acknowledge the power of the one true and living God. The Caesars had governors who were scattered throughout the land that represented them, that ruled for them.

One of those governors, Pilate, had a hand in the death of our Savior, Jesus. There was some level of religious toleration in the Roman Empire.

Various cults were allowed to various gods and accepted in the empire. There were temples in different cities for these different gods, and that was allowed to go on. Christians, a relatively new addition to all of the religious people, eventually began to be viewed with suspicion, mistreatment, and even death.

And so when Emperor Nero, ruling at the time when Peter is writing, needed a scapegoat for a destructive fire that hit Rome, a fire that he was likely responsible for, he turned to the Christians and persecuted them.

Also in this Roman Empire, under Roman rule, all living in the empire were expected to pay taxes. And so as a Christian in the early church, you had to answer the question, how do I live as a Christian in this wicked Roman Empire?

[5:45] How am I to carry out my life before all of these pagans and under this authority? You couldn't bury your head in the sand and pretend like they weren't there, like the emperor, the Caesar, the governors that he installed weren't there, like all of the citizens around you.

You couldn't do that because they were, and that was the situation in which you lived. So how do you relate to them? How do you live your life before them? I'm glad that people back then asked those questions, and I'm glad that God, through his apostles, give us good answers to those questions.

You know why I'm glad? Because we live in the superpower in the world today, where many of our leaders don't acknowledge God.

In our country, there is religious freedom. Gods of all sorts are tolerated and embraced. Christianity, however, by some, not by all, but by some, is increasingly viewed with suspicion and even mistreatment.

And of course, if you live in the United States of America, you pay taxes. In some ways, our situation is not so different from that of Christians in the first century.

[7:02] Except as a church, we have the advantage of some 2,000 years now of experience to draw on and to learn from, but in many ways, we are quite similar. We have the same questions.

How do we live our lives under this authority with these people all around us that don't worship our God? And Peter's answers are as relevant today as they were the day he wrote them to those first century Christians in a pagan land.

He's writing to Christians. We read of them in the first verse. We're going to be focusing on 13-17 today. But before we get there, he's writing to living stones.

Those who have been saved by God and built into a spiritual house. A holy nation, even. What great blessing that we have Christ, the cornerstone and foundation that binds us all together.

We have all of this. And then again, we're this holy nation, but what do we do with that? What do you mean, Peter? Because we've got the Roman Empire over here, and now you tell us that we're a holy nation, so how as members of a holy nation do we live as members of the Roman Empire?

[8:10] How's that work, Peter? Well, look at verses 11 and 12 again. Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world. They're not going to fit in in the Roman Empire.

They're different. They're aliens. They're strangers there. To abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul, live such good lives, among the pagans, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us.

How do we live in a wicked world, in an empire that doesn't love and serve the God that we love and serve? Well, we live such good lives. Not in our own strength, only by the power of Christ, but lives that are so different that people can't help but glorify God on the day He visits us.

Well, what will that look like? What will that good behavior that draws the attention of the world around us look like? And that's what we see in the verses that follow. And we want to see three things today.

Submission to authority, proper treatment of others, and then we'll see what our behavior says about us. So, what kind of behavior will draw the attention of the world around and cause them to glorify God?

[9:21] Submission to authority, proper treatment of others, and then we'll see what our behavior says about us. So, we begin with submission to authority. Now, maybe some thought, some early Christians looked around and said, this is a wicked world we live in.

So, surely we shouldn't have to obey these wicked rulers because their laws are wicked, everything about them is wicked, so we don't want to do anything to do with them. But not so fast.

Peter says that we should obey them. Look at verses 13 and 14. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king as the supreme authority or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right, or to willingly put ourselves under their rule and obey the laws of the land.

But Peter, this is the Roman Empire. They're corrupt. They're evil. Surely you haven't really thought through what you're saying. And I wonder if some of us in revulsion at the snide, or in revulsion at the politics and leadership in our land, sometimes by our snide comments and complaints and outright slander, have forgotten that we're to obey those authorities and to submit ourselves to them.

But this isn't just Peter's word, it's God's word, remember? And before we get in a huff about paying taxes to corrupt politicians who will use them to further their own cause, remember what Jesus said in reply to the question, is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

[11:04] What does he say? Luke 20, 25. Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's. And to God, what is God. So are you going to say, but Jesus, Caesar is corrupt.

Well, nobody would talk back to him that way. Not verbally. But when we see Peter say this, submit yourselves to every authority instituted among men, we wonder. But Paul too says this, Romans 13, everyone must submit themselves to the governing authorities for there's no authority except that which God has established.

The authorities that exist have been established by God. Paul repeats himself there. He says the same thing twice so you don't miss it. The authorities that are here are from God.

Now, of course, we understand that we obey God above men. And so if there's conflict between what our government tells us to do and what God tells us to do, then we only obey God.

As Peter himself did. You remember, he was arrested for preaching the Gospel. And the authorities told him to stop. And you know what he said? He said, judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God, for we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

[12:14] Now, it's not just talking about laws you don't like. I don't like your law, government, so I'm going to obey God instead of you. No, it's when the laws of the land make you disobey God's laws. That's when you obey God above men.

Not when you just don't like the laws of the land. You say, I'm going to go obey God instead. That's not how it works. Only when the laws contradict. But Peter doesn't even qualify it here. He just says, you submit yourselves to the authorities instituted among men.

If we want people to look at our lives and to glorify God, which is the goal here, remember verse 12, do you think they'll be inclined to do that? If we're known as a band of lawless, rebellious, rabble-rousing Christians that disregard authority.

Does that adorn the gospel of Christ? No. So what kind of authorities are we talking about here, Peter? Surely Peter doesn't mean corrupt rulers like Nero.

Surely he couldn't mean our president. Well, let's check. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men.

[13:31] Oh, yep. He does mean our president. He does mean Nero. But you say, he didn't know how bad things were going to get in the United States.

He was living under Nero. Nero burned Christians. And he says, you submit to the authorities that be. Calvin says, obedience is due to all who rule because they have been raised to that honor not by chance but by God's providence.

So that's kings, Caesars, presidents, but it's more. It's the governors that Caesar put into power. And our governors aren't like Pilate who were appointed by the ruling Caesar, the ruling emperor. But we do have authorities in government who are lower than the president to whom we still owe our obedience, our submission. We have lawmakers and judges and the governors of our states. But the principles carry beyond government to any human institution of authority.

Kids, this is your parents. You are to submit yourselves to the authorities that are instituted among men. That's your parents. Teachers have that authority over students and so it's not right to whine and complain about all the homework and how unfair the teacher is.

[14:47] Will whining about authority make you attractive, make God attractive to the people around you? Will they look at you and go, oh, I want to serve their God? It turns them into whining, complaining people.

Well, of course not. If that's what Christianity does, I don't want their God. It's police officers when the blue lights start flashing and your indignation and disgust are stirred up.

Remember that God gave them their authority. We could go on. Coaches, employers, principals were to submit to authority. They're there for our good.

They're there to punish those who do wrong and to reward those who do right for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of good doers. We say, man, they get it wrong an awful lot.

A lot of people think what's evil is good and what's good is evil and so sometimes the government praises the evildoer and they punish the one who does good. So we don't have to listen to them, right? Well, let me ask you parents and as a parent I know the answer to this question.

[15 : 49] Have you ever punished the innocent one in your house? Have you ever punished the one that didn't do anything wrong? The one who actually did something good and praised the evildoer?

Either in ignorance or you're just lazy and so you didn't punish the evildoer. You didn't want to have to deal with it. And you didn't praise the one who does good. Sure we have. We've all made mistakes like that.

Does that mean that your children now can disregard your authority? You've made a mistake in who you praise and who you punish and so your authority is nil. No, of course it doesn't mean that. Neither does it mean it with those who are in authority over us. And you see why it is? It's for the Lord's sake. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority.

Paul tells us that these authorities are instituted by God. Peter says to obey for the sake of or because of the Lord. Yes, we obey because it's instituted by God but also because it reflects poorly on Him if we don't.

[16 : 50] Do it for His sake. Remember the context. Behavior that's befitting God's people in a pagan land. And rebellion against authority will not cause people to glorify God.

We live in a pagan land. And the way you respond to authority reflects on your God. So obey for His sake. Even when it's hard. Even when it would be easier to disobey.

Remember who you represent. Remember what your parents used to say to you when they sent you off to somebody's house for a sleepover or on a church camp or some other trip. You're not just representing yourself.

You're representing our family. Representing mom and dad. Our name is at stake here. Well, you know what? You represent God too. In this world you live in, the way you live reflects on God.

People know you're a Christian and how you respond to authority will influence for good or ill what they think about our great God. Well, maybe some say, Peter, you forgot.

[17 : 54] Jesus says we're free. We're free. We're free in Christ. Well, verse 16, live as free men, but don't use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.

Live as servants of God. Some Christians then and some today take what Jesus said about freedom too far. They thought they were free from everything.

All rules, laws, human authority, and using their freedom as a covering or a disguise for evil. Even slaves of evil masters, though, were to remain as they were.

And so the next verses that we won't be looking at today, the next verses have directions for such slaves. How are they to live with evil masters? And to obey them. Freedom in Christ does not always mean immediate earthly freedom, nor does it give us a license for rebellion and disobedience.

Freedom in Christ is freedom from slavery to sin and guilt and Satan. It's freedom to follow Christ and walk in newness of life. Freedom to be a servant of God.

[19 : 00] Freedom from the fear and sting of death, from the victory of the grave. Free access to God. All of this freedom, though, notwithstanding, we're not without a master.

Verse 16 almost seems to contradict itself. At the beginning it says, live as free men, and at the end it says, live as servants of God. So which is it? Do we live as free men or servants of God? Yes.

We're free to serve a new master, a glorious one, a gracious master, not like our old master sin.

God, who is faithful to us. And part of what God requires of His followers is that they submit to those who are in authority. Are you a servant of God?

Then it should show by the way you obey those over you. Well, how is it by our submission to authority that that, how is that going to bring glory to God?

What about that? Are people going to look at and say, oh, well, that's attractive. I see something there that can bring honor to God. Or what will bring good in this world from our submission to authority?

[20 : 07] Peter works it out for us a bit in verse 15. For it's God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. He talks about God's will here.

How do we bring glory to God? Well, we do it by doing God's will. And lots of people want to know what God's will for their life is. What's God's will for my life? Well, the Bible tells us what God's will for your life is.

It's right here in this verse. And I know, you want to know who you're going to marry and what job you should pursue and where you're going to be five years from now and how to deal with this particular problem with your particular child.

That's the kind of will that you want to know. Or many people want to know. You want to know things that God hasn't yet revealed to you. Well, the Bible does tell us what God's will is for you. It might not tell you what job you should have or who you're going to marry, but it can guide you down that path. 1 Thessalonians 4.3 It is the will of God that you should be sanctified.

[21:08] This is God's will, your sanctification. You want to know what He wants for you? He wants you to be holy. He wants you to be like Him. And so pursue that. You might not know who you should pursue to get married, but you pursue holiness.

Or here, in verse 15, it is God's will that by doing good, you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. What's God's will for you? It's for you to do good.

And in doing that, you'll silence all of this clamor against the authorities, the ignorance that comes out of foolish men's mouths. And just a bit of an aside here, it's not the main point of the text.

Some people sit around and moan and groan that God still hasn't made His will known to them. They want to know. They want it written in the sky for them what they should do.

Other people are pursuing God's revealed will like sanctification, like doing good. And in that process of pursuing God and becoming more like Him, we learn more about Him and more about ourselves.

[22:10] And He guides us down the path that He wants us to take, showing us only as much as He wants us to see at a time. So quit sitting around and waiting for God to show you His will.

He has. You need to start walking in it if you're not. That's just an aside about the will of God. But come back, how is doing God's will going to bring glory to God?

Well, it silences the ignorance of foolish men. How does it do that? Well, Jesus did this with His teaching. He silenced the Pharisees and their foolishness.

Maybe the guys are standing around at work complaining about taxes and the idiots in Washington who don't know what they're doing. And they see you and they ask you why you're not complaining. Why you're not joining in. Don't you care? Aren't you upset with what's happening? This is assuming you haven't been joining in already.

[23:10] And you say that you don't particularly like taxes either. But you're thankful that God has given us a free country and people to lead that country.

It's simple. It's plain. But you've submitted to the King and to God. And you've dropped a bombshell that may for a moment silence some of their ignorance that's coming out of their mouths.

Then maybe laughter follows and they all head back to work. But maybe one of them at least is thinking about what you said. Maybe they'll make fun of you. Later Peter says sometimes when you do good you suffer for it.

But maybe it will silence the ignorance of foolish men around you. Or maybe it's students or players bad mouthing a teacher or coach and you just say maybe we shouldn't talk that way about the teacher.

What? Why not? Well the Bible says God has given us authorities and we're to submit to them. And it doesn't distinguish between good ones or bad ones.

[24:20] So we submit to those who are in authority over us. Or maybe some of the students have noticed that you never participate when they're ripping on the principal or teachers and they want to know why and you tell them what the Bible says about submitting to authority.

You notice that we're to silence. We're to muzzle. We're to put a muzzle on the ignorance of foolish men. The ignorance that pours out of their mouths. We're not to participate in it. And much of the slander that's directed towards those in authority is just that.

It's ignorance. And I think too often and I speak to myself in this whole sermon we participate in the very thing that we should be silencing.

We're to silence the ignorance of foolish men. We're not to be a part of it. Is the shoe squeezing your foot yet? Maybe you're thinking, yeah, those young people, they need to learn some respect for authority, some submission.

They do. What about you? What do they learn about people in authority by watching you? When they see a response to a speech by the president, what are you teaching them?

[25 : 31] when they hear you muttering about the stupid cop and his speed trap, what have they learned about submission to all human institutions of authority?

What about when they hear you often speak about the corrupt, dirty politicians but they never hear you pray for them? When you talk about how unfair your boss is and how he doesn't know the first thing about how to run a business, they're learning how to talk about mom and dad and how they don't know the first thing about parenting?

And the tone of voice that you hate so much to hear from your children towards you, they likely learned from you. I'm talking to myself, okay? You ever thought about not just letting your light shine out in the world but right in your own home or to live such good deeds that those around us may see those good deeds and glorify God?

Are you doing that right under your own roof? You've got people right in your own home that need to hear the truth and need to see it lived out in your life. Are you living in such a way that one day your children might be a glory to God?

They need to hear it just like the rest of the world. Their foolish ignorance needs to be silenced like everyone else's. We are free brothers and sisters but we're not free to disregard God's commands.

[26 : 56] So may God make us faithful to submit to the authorities around us. That's one way our behavior will stand out in a world of unbelievers who don't love God.

But the second thing we want to see this morning is proper treatment of others. And it's in verse 17. How do we treat not just authorities now, let's talk about everybody. Let's broaden it out to people that don't have authority.

Maybe people that we have authority over. People that are under us, around us, above us. Four simple, plain, direct commands on interacting with the world all around us and they're found in verse 17.

Show proper respect to everyone. Love the brotherhood of believers. Fear God. Honor the King. Show respect to everyone.

Show proper respect. And the word is honor. It's the same word that's used at the end of the verse for King. Honor the King. And really it's just two words. Honor all. Honor everyone. Very simple.

[27 : 58] Honor everyone. Well, what in the world does that mean, honor everyone? There's no qualifiers on it. We're to honor all kinds of people. We're good at honoring A, honor roll students. They used to pass out bumper stickers.

My child is an honor student at. We honor our children. We're good at honoring athletes with trophies and smart kids and athletes with scholarships and brave soldiers with medals of honor. Many people deserving of honor and we should give it to them. But it doesn't stop there. It doesn't just say honor people who deserve it. It says honor everyone. All people are deserving of some honor for they're made in the image of God.

It might not merit the same sort of honor that we give to a student or an athlete or a soldier, but they deserve to be treated with respect. Do you honor the bank teller and the checkout clerk and the drive through person by the way you talk to her?

Or do you treat her like a servant? Honor all. Do you honor your children in the way you talk to them? Or treat them like second class citizens?

[29 : 05] Honor all. Do you honor sinners? Sinners? Honor all. Do you honor them by showing them love and compassion, by sharing the truth with them, by bringing them to hear the truth of God's word at church or in a Bible study in your home?

Do you have a view of sinners, though, instead that precludes any interaction with them, that causes you to look down your nose at them, thinking you're better than they are? Brothers and sisters, except for the grace of God, we would be the very sinners that we're so loath to rub up against.

If God's amazing grace hadn't held us back, we would be the drunk, the junkie, the homosexual, the punk, gothic, devil worshiper, the gang member, the illegal immigrant, or whatever in your eyes is the scum of the earth that you just can't stand to see or even be around.

Whoever gets your blood boiling the most, these people don't need our scorn and our rejection, they need our love. They need to see their sin, they need to repent, I'm not condoning their sin, don't misunderstand anything that I'm saying, here, but we need to take into account what Peter

means by all, honor all, do you honor them by the way you show love to them and tell them the truth?

I wonder sometimes if our high holiness doesn't sometimes turn other people off. And I'm not suggesting that we compromise our standard of obedience or the way that we live.

[30:45] We have a reputation for being holy, that's good, but we should rather instead of just letting that turn people off, rather to seek always to make it plain that we're no different than they are, except for God's grace that He is so lavishly shown to us, grace that's available to them too.

What's our reputation as a church? Do we honor all? Have a reputation for a high standard of membership and holiness here? It's good, and we should, but do we honor all? You remember what our brother prayed this morning.

Church isn't a place for really good people, it's a place for sinners. Sinners in need of grace. Would anyone feel welcome coming in our doors?

Even some of the people that we've just mentioned that we think lowly of? I hope so. I trust we would reach out to them and show honor to such people should they ever come.

It might be awkward, but I hope that we wouldn't avoid them and not talk to them. Put feet to it.

What would you do if the girl with a reputation for being loose came in? If the local drunk came in?

[32:01] Would you avoid them? Would you walk up to them and welcome them and show them love? I want all sorts of people to feel welcome here. And that happens not so much because of our style of worship or how we dress, but because of how we've lived before them out there, honoring them, and how we treat them when they come in here.

And if people don't feel honored by you out there, then they're not going to come and hear the truth in here. And if they do come and we don't show them love and kindness, they won't come back.

Please don't misunderstand. I want to encourage you today not to beat you over the head. And I think you're doing a really good job of welcoming visitors and bringing them in.

But let's see some more visitors come in. Let's draw in some of these who are in great need. Some from our workplaces and school and neighborhood. We've got an opportunity two weeks from today.

Think of who you can bring in. And I'd love for us when they come to honor them, regardless of how they're dressed, what they smell like or what their reputation is. To reach out and show them love.

[33:10] If we don't love and honor them, who will? If they don't hear about Jesus from us, who will they hear from? It's one thing to say, oh, we would honor the people if they came.

It's another thing to actually get them to come and to actually do it. So God help us. I'm not talking down to you. I'm talking to me this morning. Peter says to honor all. And he's living in the pagan Roman empire.

And there are people that sacrifice animals and do all sorts of horrible things and pagan cults. And Peter says to honor all of these people around you. You show love to them. And we need to do the same.

Honor all. Love the brotherhood. I'm not going to spend as much time here, not because it's not important, because it is. It's vitally important, but I believe that you all, by God's grace, have and are doing a wonderful job of loving the brethren.

I love to hear of people bringing meals to those who are sick, who have had surgery, to have had babies. I love getting those meals when we had a baby. Thank you. You show love to the brethren.

[34:12] Or just a meal out of the blue. You show love to the brethren. I love to hear of those things going on. I delight to hear of work days being organized to help people who are in need.

I love to hear about people helping someone move from one place to another. I didn't even know what happened. I get wind of it. I love to see that people are showing love to the brethren that way.

I delight to walk through this church after a service and overhear your conversations and hear you really fellowshiping and bearing one another's burdens and showing that kindness to people.

That does my heart good. I love being in prayer meeting and hearing you hold one another up before the throne of grace. I love to see your servants hearts teaching Sunday school and

Wednesday night classes so that our children and young people can learn the truth.

I love to see you volunteering in the nursery so that parents with children that are little can come and sit and worship undistracted.

[35:17] Thank you. You love the brethren. You do it well. I would only say excel still more. We're to honor all, but there's a special bond with the brotherhood, isn't there? A love for the brethren.

And that's good and it's right. Honor all. Love the brethren. Fear God. I'm not going to spend much time here either, but this will stand out in a world that doesn't fear God, won't it? Behavior that's different.

All of this behavior. When you honor people that don't look like they deserve honor, people are going to look at you and say, that's something different about him. And one day, they will glorify God for it if it's not in this life.

And when they stand before him as judge. And so we're to fear God, that'll stand out. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And the way of wisdom is the way of life. And they see you walking wisely instead of like a fool.

People will see it. You'll say, it's because of God. He's changed me. I only honor and serve and love him. If you don't fear God and you're in danger of living the wrong kind of life, we must worship the God who made us.

[36 : 20] That's going to stand out. It's going to be different. You go to church every Sunday to worship God? Well, that's a little strange, isn't it? I'd love to have you come with me and show you the strange things about it.

We sing. We stand up as a congregation. We sing together. And God gets up and talks for 45 minutes when people's attention spans are nil these days. That's amazing. It's different. That's going to stand out to people if you fear God.

And so we should fear him, honor him, respect him, worship him each Lord's day and every day in the world. And then honor the king. Honor all and honor the king.

Interestingly, I think this word is the one that's used for honor your father and mother. Except for these two uses of it here in verse 17, honor all and honor the king.

It's used in the command form, the imperative, nine times in the New Testament. Eight of them are honor your father and your mother. And so just a quick question because we've already touched on it.

[37 : 25] Would you want your children to honor you the way you honor the king? It's the same command from God. Honor your father and mother. Honor the king.

It's just a different object of honor. Same command from the same God. And since we've talked about this under the way we respond to authority, we're not going to stop long here except to see that it's not just about outward obedience.

Remember the parenting class. True obedience is only obedience if it's doing it all, doing it now, and doing it with the right heart.

You might say, okay, I'll submit to the authorities, but I don't have to be happy about it. Would you accept that sort of obedience or submission from your children? Of course not.

And neither is it what God expects of us. We must actually honor the king. We can disagree with him. But make sure you do it respectfully. It applies to any relationship with authority.

[38 : 25] Be careful how you talk about our president. One of the best ways that you can honor the king and all those in authority is to pray for them, which we're commanded to do.

1 Timothy 2, I urge then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone. For kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

And so the way we submit to authority and the way that we treat others around us will reflect on our God. We're living in a pagan land. What does your behavior then, in the third place, say about you? Could anyone tell you're a Christian by the way you submit to authority, by the way that you honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the King?

It's amazing that your response to authority could be evangelistic. It's yours. Christians should be the very best citizens of a country.

[39 : 29] They should be the best, most loved, most admired folks in town. Governors should be saying, I wish I had more Christians in my state. That's not our goal to have that kind of praise, but that should be the outcome.

We should be the kind of people that are a delight to lead and to guide and to rule over. Everyone should wonder what's so different about those people from Grace Fellowship Church, and they should wonder it in a good way.

Are we living that kind of life before the pagans? Kids, would people love to be your parents because of the way you respond to authority? I wish that was my kid. Do teachers and coaches

wish that you were in their class or on their team because of how you respect your teachers and coaches?

Are people drawn to you because you're a God-fearing person that loves the brothers and honors all men and shows them love? These behaviors Peter is extolling don't happen in a vacuum. The point is that they're taking place in a wicked and a watching world. Their eyes are on you. What are they seeing? Do we honor all?

[40:44] Love the brothers, fear God, and honor the King? We must. And when we do, it will bring glory to God before that watching world. And hopefully, bring pagans in to worship that same God with us.

There's been little of the Gospel in this message. So I want to talk about Jesus for a moment at the end. And it flows out of what's gone before. We're only able to do these things that Peter calls us to, that God calls us to because of Christ.

He is our example. Notice verses 21 and following. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps.

He committed no sin, excuse me, and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate. When He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted to Him who judges justly.

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By His wounds, you have been healed. He is our example.

[41:51] You see how Jesus responded to authority. Did He rebel against those wicked people that were putting on the sham of a trial? Finding Him guilty of something He hadn't done?

Nailing Him to a cross for a crime He didn't commit? Did He rebel against them? You cry out about the injustice of it? No. He's our example in these things, but He's so much more than an example. He's our strength to do the impossible. We can't live God-glorifying lives in a wicked world without our head and our cornerstone. Yes, we're precious stones. We're built up into a house together. We can't do it without each other, without that encouragement, but we can't do it at all without the cornerstone. If we're built on something other than Jesus, all of this means nothing today. You can't do it.

Go home. Quit. Give up. But if you have Jesus as your rock and cornerstone, then you can live this kind of life that will bring honor to others around you. Or excuse me, honor to God before others around you.

[42:55] So He's our example. He's our strength. And most importantly, He's our forgiveness for all the times that we've fallen short in these things and in every other way.

Without His cross, there is no way to glorify God in this world. You see that He bore our sins.

Submitting to those corrupt authorities, He bore our sins. By His wounds, we are healed.

He took our place, the punishment that we deserved, so that we might die to those sins and live to righteousness. Not so that we can continue on in our sin and live however we want and assume that we'll find forgiveness.

No, so that we might die to those sins and live for righteousness. Live for following Christ. And He gives us the power then to live that life of righteousness.

So may God give us grace. May He give us strength to show proper respect for those who are in authority over us to submit to them and to show proper treatment to everyone around us.

[44:04] Some of you here still need Jesus. I'm sorry if I have not honored you like I should. I'm sorry if I haven't shown you the love and the respect that you deserve.

and haven't shown you what it is to be a faithful Christian. And I'm sorry if you've looked at my life and gone, if that's what being a Christian is then I want no part of it.

Forgive me. Forgive us for our shortcomings and the way we live the Christian life around you. It is still the very best way to live. Despite all of our shortcomings, we're sinners.

We need grace. We need a Savior. No better than you are. I need Jesus just as much as you do right now. And so, forgive us for our shortcomings but don't put that fault to God.

Say, I don't want to serve that kind of God. The fault's not with Him. He's a glorious God. He's a glorious Master. It's a wonderful thing to be His servant. To follow Him. To love Him. To obey Him.

[45:11] He's got a glorious Son, our Savior Jesus in whom there's hope. And so I think the best way that I can honor you and show kindness to you today is to say, come to Jesus. And to tell you that if you come, He'll never cast you out.

He'll receive you. And then you can walk this way with us. Weak as we are. You can stumble along with us by the grace of God. Trusting in Him. And He will save you.

Let's pray together. Our Father, we thank You today for Jesus. We thank You that He is our example, that He is our strength, and that He is our forgiveness. We pray that we would find our hope and trust in Him.

And we pray that You would make us a people whose behavior stands out in a pagan world. Help us to live such good lives in this land that people can't help but see and glorify God.

And we want them to glorify You not just on the day that You visit us, on the day of judgment, but to come and to see the Savior and to glorify You now. So come and save sinners.

[46:08] Use us. Weak and feeble as we are, use us to draw other sinners to Yourself. Do it for Your glory, for our good. Make us the kind of people You would have us to be.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.