

XXII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in Exile
“The Sojourner’s Journey – Submission, Part 3”
I Peter 3:1–7
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August 26, 2018 • Morning Sermon

Before I get into the study I want to remind you of the two books I recommend as our theme this year is Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship. The first is by Rebecca Pippert titled Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World and the second is by Randy Newman titled Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did. This book is how to do evangelism by asking questions. Now let’s look at the text for this study.

I Peter 3:1–7 says [1] *Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,* [2] *when they see your respectful and pure conduct. [3] Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear— [4] but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. [5] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

[7] *Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

One of the great benefits and challenges of a pulpit ministry committed to consecutive exposition of the Scripture is you get to deal with texts like this. Not many preachers choose texts like this particularly in our current situation, our current culture and the current cultural revolution that is going on but I’m committed to consecutive expository preaching so here I am at this text. I think this text is of great benefit. In fact, let me remind you of a verse from the hymn *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*;

Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!

Thou art the potter, I am the clay.

Mold me and make me after thy will,

while I am waiting, yielded and still.

What is God’s will revealed in His Word? Will He be the Potter and us the clay or will we be the potter to make Him the clay? He has revealed His will in His Word so let’s come to this text and try to understand what it is saying and what it’s not saying but not to the point where it’s not saying anything. We want to understand what it is saying.

The word ‘likewise’ in this text brings a burden to me in this study. This text starts off with the word ‘likewise’ which means in a similar manner as what has gone before, but not in an identical manner of what has gone before. The subject has been submission even if the cost of suffering as citizens or in the employer/employee relationship or slavery as it was in the first century. How do Christians respond in a Roman Empire, two governors, two magistrates? How do we respond to those who are over us? It is not dealing with how to eradicate slavery but how

do Christians deal with it in the context of it. Now in I Peter 3 it gets to submission in the context of a marriage. So likewise is continuing submission but not identical to what a citizen gives to a governor or what an employee gives to an employer but in the context of a marital relationship.

By the way, when you get to I Peter 3:7 the word 'likewise' is used again in context to Christian husbands. In other words, there is in a sense of the Christian's husbands submission to his wife will also in similar fashion but not identical as well. So sense it's in similar fashion we can't understand these seven verses without understanding the context that has led us to it, but we do need to look closely at the seven verses because it's not an identical submission to that of the citizen or employee/employer or slave submission.

Remember that the Apostle Paul has set up a pattern of looking Christian life from a pastoral perspective. He has reached back into the account of the Exodus – Moses, Pharaoh, Egypt, liberation from slavery, the journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land. Like other writers he has taken that not only as foundational for what God was doing to establish a covenant nation through which He would bring the Redeemer, Christ, to redeem His people from all the nations, but he also knows it sets up a picture of the Christian life.

That the One Moses points to, Christ, has come into this world and the power of God through Christ has defeated the kingdom of darkness, even as the power of God through the mediatorial work of Moses defeated the kingdom of Egypt. As the kingdom of Egypt struck down Pharaoh so the Kingdom of Christ struck down Satan. As God has defeated His people to liberate His people from bondage of Egypt, God has defeated our enemies – sin, death, hell, the grave. We are liberated not from work slavery but from the bondage of our sin.

We have been set free to cross over through the redeeming work of Christ, even as they were led through the Red Sea, so we have been miraculously led to start on our pilgrimage and that's why Peter loves to use the word pilgrim. You are on the sojourner's journey from your deliverance through the wilderness as you grow in the journey of grace changed and changing until you get to the ultimate Promised Land, a new heavens and a new earth. That is the picture and the language Peter is using here for us.

Peter, like Paul is doing something consistently. They are so consistent that some think Peter copied Paul or that Paul copied Peter but I would say I think they didn't copy each other for the reason they are consistent is because there is an Author behind the authors who is the Holy Spirit. That is why they are consistent. They are not contradicting but complementing and consistently affirming each other. Here you see them using the same apostolic pattern of pastoral discipleship. They give you Gospel blessings as the foundation of life before they give you Gospel commands and to how to live your life. The super structure is not built until the foundation is built. Why do they do that?

They do it for a particular reason. They give you the Gospel blessings first because we have a tendency to think when we obey the Gospel commands that is what saves us or allows God to save us. No, we are saved by what God has done in His Son Jesus and that is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Grace is never alone because it always brings a changed life. Faith is never alone for it is always demonstrated through some degree of obedience. The root is never alone, it also brings fruit but he doesn't get to the changed life without getting the foundation secured in our life so that we know what we are not by what we do but by what God has done for us in Jesus. We are what we are by the unmerited, relentless, irresistible, transforming love of God in Christ. Then when he lays the foundation he says this is why He saved you.

The Apostle Paul gives us the blessings of the elect of Christ as the foundation and then he gives you the responsibilities of the elect for Christ in life as you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is our reasonable service of worship. Peter does the same thing in his book.

In I Peter 1, Peter gives us four Gospel blessings and in I Peter 2 he gives us ten more Gospel blessings. He goes after blessing after blessing of who you are in Christ. Then after the Lord as put those foundations in place through Peter, he comes back with more Gospel commands. As we come to I Peter 3 Peter has given us five Gospel commands as to the way you live in light of who you are through the Gospel blessings.

Gospel command one is that we are to commit to a personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness in all of life, because we love our Savior. Be ye holy as I am holy says the Lord God in all of your conduct. As offering, praise and worship to God you say 'I surrender all' and now I'm on the journey of grace to find out what that all will mean.

Gospel command two is that we have a sincere and heartfelt love for one another.

Gospel command three is we are to have a cultivation of an appetite for God's Word and the preaching of His Word. Get rid of appetite suppressants.

Gospel command four is to live a lifestyle of obedience, stimulating praise to God as sojourners. You will live for the Lord in such a way that when God saves people they will come back and give praise to God for the life that they saw in you. They may have ridiculed you when you were living it but they will end up giving praise to God when the Lord visits them with salvation or when the Lord visits them in judgment they will have to give praise to God for the way that you lived your life.

The fifth Gospel command which is where we are now and that is once you have surrendered to Christ, are in submission to Christ, you then demonstrate that subjection by demonstrating a lifestyle of subjection to every human institution, silencing the ignorance of foolish men. Then Peter walks us through what we are to be in subjection to like government which God has ordained us to do. What does it mean to be a Christian citizen? You're an heir, preserved, chosen and we are to show this in surrender to Christ.

In government you are a citizen that obeys, honors, and respects those in authority. What if they are not believers? It doesn't matter for the only limitation is if they cause you to transgress God's law. For instance, if they show up here at this church and tell me not to preach the Word of God or they will put me in jail, then they will have to put me in jail because I must obey God rather than man. You don't enter into submissions defining subjections, you enter submission from the heart to embrace it. If the submission to delegated authority from God would cause me to disobey they ultimate authority of God then I have to say to that authority that I must obey God rather than man. But I don't begin with the exceptions, I begin with the principle of subjection, displaying my subjection to the Lord Himself.

I'm to display my subjection in the employee/employer world and the most oppressive one is slavery. We talked about how Christianity can and has eradicated slavery but in the midst of it we looked at how the Christian slave deals with his master. Other passages tell the master how to deal with the slaves, such as the book of Philemon which calls upon him to emancipate his slave. So seeing how to do things in that oppressive situation how do we show our submission to the Lord in the employee/employer relationship which is one we can walk out of? But as long as I'm in it I am to show submission to those in authority over me.

All of us are hit with sphere number one which deals with citizen government. Almost all of us are hit in the employer/employee call to submission but now we go to the institution of

marriage. So how do we display this submission in marriage? Peter first speaks to the wives in I Peter 3:1–6 and then he speaks to the husbands in verse 7. Because of time I will only deal with the first six verses which deal with the wife’s role in this study and in the next study I will deal with the men’s role. Both men and women need to heed this very carefully as well. I will not be telling you so much of what it is not saying so that we evacuate what it is saying yet at times this needs to be said but many times we spend so much time on what it is not saying that it ends up being nothing.

In this study we will look at what it is saying, what it is calling us to do, what does it mean and do we trust the Potter in what He is saying here, to be molded by it? Here Peter is bringing submission into the marriage relationship, not in identical fashion but in similar fashion as he uses the word ‘likewise’. I’d like to put this text back in front of you.

I Peter 3:1–7 says [1] *Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,* [2] *when they see your respectful and pure conduct.* [3] *Do not let your adorning be external (only)—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—* [4] *but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.* [5] *For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,* [6] *as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.*

Who is he talking to in these verses? He is speaking directly to Christian wives, heirs of Christ, those sprinkled with the blood, who are in a marital relationship. Secondly, what is he calling for? He is calling for a willing, from the heart, volitional trust in Him, displayed in submission to their husbands. These six verses are not written to men saying make your wives submit. We will find out what Christian husbands are to do but when I’ve spoken at conferences and I ask ‘what does the Bible say women are to do’ I usually hear a deep sign of ‘submit’ and when I ask ‘what does the Bible say men are to do’ I usually hear a high toned ‘sacrifice.’ We always hear to the other person as if it’s a command to us. Men, this is not your command to make your wives submit. We will find out how you are to submit to your wife and the ‘likewise’ to you in the next study.

This text is calling upon a Christian wife to embrace the creation ordinance of how God made you the completer of your husband to come right alongside of him. You are not to be his conqueror, his competitor or try to take his role and responsibility. You bear the testimony of the Holy Spirit by being the helper, completer, according to Genesis. In Genesis we see that it is not good for Adam to be alone and Eve is not taken from Adam’s head, where she is not over him, and she is not taken from his feet, where she is not under him but she is taken from his side to fit alongside of him.

Who is the Second Adam? Jesus, and does He have a bride? Yes and it’s you! Where did you come from? You came from the blood. Where did the blood come from? It came from His side. We are joint heirs with Christ, united with Him and Him to us. You have this glorious calling that is displayed willingly from the heart with all of your trust in the Lord to come alongside of your husband.

Thirdly, to whom are you Christian wives to submit? You are to submit to your own husbands, not to men. When another man shows up you are not to submit to him like you are to your husband for this is a marital call from a marital vows of submission from the heart in a relationship and Peter says this three times. Paul says it even more. Christ calls the Christian

wife to willing submission from the heart displaying honor and respect to your husband, whom the Lord has joined you to. It is not a general statement to you to all men but in a special relationship of marriage to your own husband.

One might think this is matter of declaring inequality or a loss of dignity and I will address this in a moment but I want to go back to the magistrate here. If I go out driving today and encounter a policeman who puts his hand up in front of me, what am I going to do as a Christian? I hope you do this even if you're not a Christian but even then as a Christian I'm going to stop. I'm not going to ask him how much money he has or what his achievements are in sports or his grade point average. He is in a position of responsibility and I'm in a position as a citizen. He is a magistrate and my job here is to stop. This isn't a statement of inferiority or superiority but a statement of relationship, responsibilities and roles.

God who made marriage, is telling us in the redeeming work of Christ this is how Christians bring marriage to bear within a fallen world. This is the call God gives to us. This is my wife's role but if you look at our report cards in school I didn't even come close to the National Honor Society yet I believe she was a charter member, but that doesn't mean that she still doesn't have this responsibility. When she said 'yes' to me in marriage this is what she signed onto in a covenant Christian marriage.

So let's answer the why Christian wives are to do this. Here are the reasons why you do this. One, is you do it to declare to the world that your hope is in God and not in your husband. You do it to show that you honor God by honoring the one that God has providentially given you in the office of husband. Thirdly, you do it in respect to the God who has saved you by the respect that you give to the one that God has providentially given you as a husband.

What if your husband is not a Christian? Peter anticipated that and gives you another reason to submit. I Peter 3:1-2 is not telling you wives you cannot talk in marriage or that you have to walk around as mutes within a marriage. It is trying to highlight to you the power of this act in the power of God within a marriage. I Corinthians 14 shows women giving testimonies, a word, a psalm and all kinds of things in a worship service. This that He is calling you to is so powerful that if your husband is not yet converted or faltering in his sanctification but is converted, then as you do this you are setting the table to win him to the Word even without a word. It has life changing power in the life of your husband.

I know this. It is overwhelming and I don't have time to share this with you from first hand personal experience. I am utterly ashamed of a moment in the first year of my marriage, what I said to my wife, the spirit behind those words, and everything else but this woman God has given me as a wife responded with stability in the Lord, faithful and fearless and the result was a conviction so deep that within two months I'm converted. That is what God does use and can use.

Is this opening doors for abuse? No and that's why there is ecclesiastical and governmental authority to make sure that every women is safe in the haven of the church of Jesus Christ. This is not about abuse. When your own husband falters don't use that as an excuse for anarchy. As Peter answers this the motivation isn't the husband and where they are but the motivation is who your God is. Your God is so great, your hope is so sure, your trust is so full that with fearlessness and faith, not in the husband but the Lord, you submit to him.

Then Peter roots this in some illustrations. He speaks of the women of old. Think of Esther and her fearlessness because of her faith in the Lord. Think of Rebecca, Ruth and then he specifically gives us Sarah. You're probably thinking she was submissive to a patriarch. This is actually quoting from two instances in Abram and Sarah's life. As famine hits Canaan Abram

runs with his family to Egypt and realizes that Pharaoh may want Sarah as his wife in which he would probably kill Abram to do that so Abram introduces her as his sister. Sarah just let him crawl right out on the limb. The word 'lord' Sarah called Abraham in I Peter 3:6 is not a sign of deity but meaning something like 'yes sir.' It is just a term of respect. The Lord lets Pharaoh know and drops the nukes on Abraham, 'What are you doing to me?! What kind of a man are you?!' He goes down into the depths of Abraham's sinfulness.

I wish I could tell you Abraham repented of this sin but he did it again with Abimelech. And Sarah does the same thing by relying on God as her Defender. Abraham's rationalization is that both he and Sarah had the same father but different mothers so she was his "half-sister." So in essence he told a half-truth but a half truth is a whole lie. It's not that Sarah had this easy route for she had a patriarch that was willing to sacrifice her in order to preserve his life but God dealt with Abraham even as she got out of the way so that Abraham couldn't focus on her. Abraham had to deal with Pharaoh and Abimelech and then that brought the conviction of the Lord upon his life. As you submit it declares your trust in Christ, the preeminence of the Lord and that your hope is in the Lord.

The last motivation to submit is that it is a demonstration of what is true beauty. He is not saying you can't wear lipstick or wear earrings, etc. but what he is saying in the text is don't make your focus the beauty of cosmetics. It's the beauty of a heart and a soul which overwhelms cosmetics. It is something that comes from the hiddenness of the heart displayed in the life. It is something that overshadows the inevitable demise of cosmetic beauty. It is glorious and that's where your concentration is. Sarah was 90 years old when kidnapped by Abimelech and at that age you wouldn't think she would be appealing to anyone but I don't her beauty was simply one that came from cosmetics and skin, it was from the inside out which was displayed in life.

As far as I know, every animal species that God has made, male and female, the male is the prettiest, except one species. This species wasn't just made by God but was made in the image of God and the woman has the calling of beauty. He isn't telling you to hate beauty but to develop your beauty from the inside out. When it comes from the inside out it's a fearless beauty. It's an adorning beauty. It's a life changing beauty in the life of your husband, either by way of his conversion or his sanctification.

Men, I know you were drawn to the beauty of your wife like I was, but I was even more drawn to the security and stability of her heart. She was different. Men, I don't want to burst your bubble but I'm not sure your wife was drawn to you because of your beauty. Your appearance is probably something that had to be and has to be overcome daily for her. Ladies, look at that beauty that He is calling for that's displayed in such confidence and hope in the Lord that even to husbands need to be won to the Word, you can show it with confidence in Jesus.

Here is the takeaway. Here's your choice. It's either the sovereign self with your lifestyle and life view or the sovereign God. If God is sovereign in your life because He is your Lord and Savior then the evidence will be submission. The inescapable fact in an authentic Christian is a new relationship with Christ as Lord and Savior, with a changed life and a changing life in the journey of grace all the way to the Promised Land of a new heavens and a new earth, you have renounced the old way of the sovereign self – self-reliance, self-promotion, self-actualization – and you have said 'yes' to the sovereign God. In this new life you want to glorify and enjoy God as the Sovereign God through the preeminence of Christ the Savior, Lord, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and this submission to Him is displayed by heart-enabled, God-hoping trust, love, worship and desire in human relationships, even in the intimacy of a marriage.

The contemporary current culture utterly despises everything I have just said. Not only does this culture despise submission in general but it despises any notion of a marital definition of the submission of a husband to his wife and of a wife to her husband as defined in I Peter 3:1–7. Some will agree that other passages support this but they will come back and say ‘those were just a couple of apostolic guys that compromised and were captured by the chauvinism of the first century. Why did they get examples from 2,000 years earlier? Have they really been captured by the cultural chauvinism? I would say to this it was the exact opposite.

They liberate wives of this text from the cultural chauvinism of that day. In that day the law of the culture required women to exist for man’s pleasure. They just said woman can be life changing agents in the life of their husband, even if they are disobedient. He is telling those women that you are not only liberated as existing for man’s pleasure but you are now liberated from the cultural requirement. A cultural requirement was that when you married the man you had to convert to his religion, yet here you have the power to convert him to Christ. In that culture a woman existed as an object of property for the gratification of men who looked upon her in general and others who would desire her in sexual intimacy.

Peter knows the culture is telling women they are what they are by what they look like cosmetically, but he wants women to forget that and there is nothing wrong in cultivating beauty but Christian women go from the heart. They set them free from women merely existing to being put on the pages of a magazine scantily clothed or cosmetically manipulated for the pleasure of men. No, God has put in you in a place where you can change the lives of men. You can change the life of your husband and display the pleasure, trust and hope that you have in your God.

Someone might be thinking that this isn’t dignified. If submission declares a loss of dignity why does Luke 2:51 say that before Jesus entered His earthly ministry at age 30 that He was submissive to Mary and Joseph? Jesus is God who has come in the flesh and the Son of God made Mary and Joseph, yet He submitted to His adoptive father and His appointed mother. He is about to go to the cross to save them from their sins but He submitted to them in that home. In I Corinthians 11 it says the Father sends the Incarnate Son and the Incarnate Son submits to do the will of the Father. Or you can go to the Risen Son who sends the Spirit of God to accomplish what the Father has ordained and He has accomplished and the Spirit submits yet we know that coequality and co-dignity of the Three Persons of the Trinity. No this is not a loss of dignity.

On the contrary, whether I’m a citizen obeying the government or as an employee obeying my employer or a Christian wife in submission to her husband, this is not a loss of dignity but a declaration that I exist. I say ‘no’ to the feminist egalitarian that we’re just interchangeable parts with no difference between a man and a woman. What about Galatians 3:28 that says *[28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* The rest of the Bible doesn’t pretend like you don’t go reach people in their ethnicity or speak to those in context to their vocation of whether you are slave or free, Jew or Gentile. No, the Bible understand that.

The Bible talks to people like male and female. Act like a man. Act like a woman. The text in Galatians is telling us that a man has the same blood of Jesus that a woman has. A woman gets the Spirit of God and a man gets the Spirit of God. Same for Jews and Gentiles, and this verse is telling us that in redemption it is the same blood, the same Spirit, and the same grace that saves every single one of us but we don’t become gender exchangeable at our conversion. God’s creation is good, there is male and female and both are required to image Him. The ethnicities are to be reached not ignored and understood and responded to. It’s a tough text.

I don't care if you're a citizen submissive to a governor, an employee submissive to an employer or ladies submissive to their own husbands, I want you to remember who is submissive – Christian citizens, Christian employees, Christian wives – for these are the same ones who have an inheritance that is imperishable and they are being preserved and reserved for that inheritance. You have been sprinkled clean by the blood of Christ. You have been born again by the imperishable Seed of the Word of God. You were chosen by God. You are a people of His own possession. You are sons and daughters of the living God. That's who you are and that's why you are able to show that submission. That submission is from the God who made you faithful and fearless. You by His grace have said 'You are the Potter, I am the clay, mold me and make me yielded and still after Your will.'

We get the opportunity to display that fearless faith in relationships, not in the anarchy of our culture but in submission and trust to the Lord. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Let the Lord just speak to your heart in these silent moments. Father, thank You so much for the privilege to be in Your Word. God, I want to thank You for the great privilege to preach Your Word. I thank You that Your Word brings us to issues that in the weakness of the flesh we would recoil, dodge or hurt but I know these are so precious and glorious and in a world in which there is clearly a pagan revolution declaring the sovereign self – doing and being what I want to do and be – where God is the clay for me to make into what I want. In this world we get the opportunity to display something glorious and different and that's what brings people to Christ, not that we're like the world with religious words, but that Your grace changes us, changed us and is changing us. Father, I pray that men will hear this and pray deeply for their wives. I pray that as a church we will always be ready, not only to equip but to shepherd well in every situation. Father, I pray that the world might see men who know how to lay down their lives for their wives and wives who know how to honor, respect and complete their husbands. Lord may they be like that Proverbs 31 woman who owned businesses, manufactures, sells and everything and yet her husband was not overshadowed but simply propelled into the gates of the city. God, thank You so much for Godly, fearless, faithful women who embrace this call to be helper, completers, honoring and respecting their husbands and an asset in their husband's conversion or sanctification. God may their tribe increase, I pray in Jesus' Name, while I praise You for them, Amen.

Power Point

Introduction/review

GOSPEL BLESSINGS

GOSPEL COMMANDS

GOSPEL COMMANDS

1. Personal pursuit of a pervasive holiness in all of life.
2. Sincere and heart-felt love for one another.
3. Cultivation of an appetite for God's Word.
4. A lifestyle of obedience, stimulating praise to God as Sojourners.
5. Subjection to every human institution silencing the ignorance of foolishness men.
 - Christian Citizens

- Christian Slaves
- Christian Wives
- Christian Husbands

Life Takeaway

Sovereign Self? – Sovereign God?
Submission!