

Our Walk: The Freedom of Submission

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Preacher: Rev. Andrew Ong

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Please consider donating to this work in the San Francisco Bay Area online at ChristChurchEastBay.org. I will be reading the scripture as written in your liturgy from 1 Peter 2, 9 through 29, I believe.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession 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 foreigners and exiles 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.

[1 : 25] He visits us. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether to the emperor 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 people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.

Live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Slaves in reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are 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.

[2 : 38] 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. 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.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thanks, Shantanez. You know, I tried last night. I spent about three or four hours and another hour this morning trying to shorten this, knowing all the things we'd have today.

And I only made a small dent. So just want to put that out there, heads up. And I also just want to thank Jonathan for giving me another passage on slaves. I had to preach on it last time.

But we're going to get through this. And I know that's a question that's out there. And I want you to know I'm going to address it. And there's another place on our website where I address it further. I just want to put that out there as the caveats going into this sermon.

[3 : 42] But let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we pray that in the preaching of your word, that you would form your church into the church that she was made to be.

That you'd make us more like Jesus by your Holy Spirit with the power of your word. In Jesus' name, amen. All right. So last week we read from 1 Peter chapter 2.

We're in the book of 1 Peter. And last week we read chapter 2 verses 9 and 10 that to be a Christian is to be part of a chosen people, Peter says, a royal priesthood and a holy nation, God's special possession.

And in case it's not clear to you, these are incredibly good things, an incredibly high honor and privilege and calling. To be a Christian united with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an absolute gift of an identity.

The highest fulfillment of God's intentions for what humans are meant to be. But notice just as soon as Peter points to the privilege of being the people of God, he is also quick to remind his readers here in verse 11 that that is not all that they are.

[4 : 43] He reminds his readers that they are not just the elect, but elect exiles. They have a dual identity. Verse 11, dear friends, or a more literal translation in the Greek, beloved, beloved he calls them, beloved I urge you, not only as God's beloved, not only as God's elect holy nation, but as what?

Foreigners and exiles. You see that? They are beloved and foreigners and exiles. That's how Peter is encouraging his readers to understand themselves with this dual identity that actually the people of God have always shared from at least the time of Abraham, right, who himself was chosen and blessed by God, but at the same time was a perpetual pilgrim waiting for his final home.

This is how Christians are supposed to see ourselves. And for Peter, this dual identity is critical for every Christian's self-understanding if we are to live rightly and faithfully before God and amongst our neighbors.

It's the key ingredient to living a compelling life as followers and representatives of Christ in this world, even and especially when this world is hostile toward Christians. We always have to hold both.

We always have to believe both, that we are God's beloved elect and foreign exiles. And let me tell you why. See, if we only understand ourselves to be God's beloved elect, but not also exiles, waiting for the king to finally bring his heavenly home down to us, then what's going to happen?

[6 : 07] Well, we'll have this over-realized sense of the kingdom of God, and we'll be tempted toward triumphalism and arrogance, a sense of supremacy and entitlement, self-assertion, and this idea that because we are God's special people, we have a license to dominate and oppress and look down upon others.

And honestly, I've been guilty of this in my own life. I grew up in a pretty fundamentalist church, and while I doubt they ever explicitly taught this, in my own sinful heart and in my own broken understanding of Christianity, I had the sense that people who were not Christians were either ignorant of the facts and the evidence or that they willfully rejected the truth because they just wanted to hang on to their immoral lives.

So I just assumed that people who weren't Christians were either not as smart and rational as me or not as righteous as me and my religious tribe. And this kind of religious supremacy and logic has sadly been used at many points in history by many Christians to coercively assert themselves and their ways and their wills upon others.

The medieval crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the anti-Semitism of European Christendom. Sadly, Christians have not been immune to taking in supremacist ideology, to using power-grabbing techniques and violent coercive behavior.

But this was never how God intended for His people, the church, to understand themselves as His chosen people and holy nation. If anything, this high and privileged identity as a royal priesthood was meant to humble us, not feed our tribalistic religious superiority complexes.

[7 : 49] And not only does neglecting our exilic identity as Christians make us elitist and puffed up and oppressive, but if we never reckon with the Christian's exilic identity, then we'll also never be able to make sense of the hardship and the suffering that we face as we seek to follow Christ and deny ourselves and take up our crosses.

You know, no matter where we live, the exilic dimension to our Christian identity is not just for the church in North Korea or Iran or China. It's for Americans and Brits and Argentinians as well.

No matter where we live, whether in Yemen or in the Bible Belt, Christians are exiles. And so discouragement, persecution, and public shame against Christians shouldn't ever surprise us.

Why would we expect that our lives would be smooth and easy or that following Jesus would be a cakewalk if our Lord and our King's life was also not a cakewalk?

Why should ours be? Exiles expect that following Jesus will be difficult until He returns to finally establish His eternal home on earth. And yet as elect exiles, as the elect, we are also able to bear these hardships and disappointments with real and lasting hope because we know that we are special and precious to God regardless of our circumstances.

[9 : 13] So even when we are oppressed and disadvantaged and thrown into prison or even killed for our beliefs, we the elect, we can never lose our sense of security. Because even if our own country says we don't belong there, God says we belong to Him and to His kingdom and to His people.

And that's how we can face tomorrow with lasting joy and honesty. It's only when we hold both, elect and exiles, beloved and foreigners.

Now here in 1 Peter 2, verses 11 and following, having established this dual identity of his Christian readers, what Peter begins to do is give them directions for how to practically live out and embody this dual identity.

Basically, he's trying to cast a vision, a more concrete and practical vision of what it looks like to live as God's beloved religious minorities. He's trying to answer the question, how do you live in a time and place where you are a religious minority, possibly socially and politically disadvantaged, and where you and your community just seem so different and so foreign to the neighbors around you?

And I wonder if that's a question that many of us here have as well, living in this very secular Bay Area, this place where our coworkers cannot believe that we give up our Sunday mornings to come to church and sing songs to this invisible deity, right?

[10 : 30] This place where our neighbors cannot believe we give a tenth or more of our income to the church, and where even some of our own family members cannot believe that being a pastor or on a church staff could be a full-time job that actually makes a positive contribution to society.

I feel this too. How are we supposed to live in this kind of an environment? Do we choose the way of the turtle? Do we cloister back into our shells to escape the antagonism of the hostile world and maintain our own self-righteous purity in our shell?

Or do we choose the way of the ostrich just ignoring the world around us with their heads in the sand, growing numb to all that's going on, just trying to bide our time until Jesus comes back? Or do we choose the way of the wolf prowling around, trying to gather, muster our massive wolf pack, looking for an opportunity to attack in force against all our threats and all our enemies to gain power on a specific turf?

Or do we capitulate to the ways of the elephant and the donkey? Just let the algorithms, just let the media polarize us and force us to choose between two simplistic options and just run within those ideological tribes.

Christchurch, I cannot think of a more important, more relevant cultural moment in my lifetime, 36 years, for the church in America to recover and insist upon our nuanced, paradoxical, and Jesus-shaped dual identity as elect exiles.

[12 : 01] See, the elect need not cower in the way of the turtle, nor grow numb in the way of the ostrich. And yet, as exiles, we also know that full assimilation and capitulation to the ways of the elephant and the donkey are also not an option, and neither is the violent, revolutionary way of the wolf.

No, the church is called to walk in the way of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. So what we find in our text today are three ways that we can walk in the way of the Lamb.

To those who are God's beloved and yet foreign, exiled religious minorities, Peter urges them, Peter urges us to do three things. Fight the good fight, let your light shine, and live as free slaves.

Fight the good fight, let your light shine, and live as free slaves. Let's start with the first one. Peter's exhortation to fight the good fight. Look again with me at verse 11. Having established their dual identity as beloved and foreign exiles, he urges them toward a certain way of living.

Now again, if people convinced that they are God's special, chosen, holy nation, that could lend itself to a certain kind of fighting, right? A certain kind of combativeness. And again, we've seen this in history, and many Americans, particularly on the right, are pursuing this today, right?

[13 : 14] In this cultural moment where leftist secular ideology increasingly makes Christians feel like exiles, many on the right are seeking to fight back and reclaim their special privileges in what they believe to be a fundamentally Christian nation.

But what I want you to hear very clearly at this church, from this pulpit, is that yes, the secular left is worryingly anti-Christian and often anti-truth and anti-reality, but the solution isn't the restoration of Christendom by any means necessary.

What verse 9 says, when verse 9 says that the church is a chosen people and a holy nation, it is not insisting upon the establishment of a Christian nation state as some geographical, ethnically bound political entity.

No. Neither Christianized Europe nor North America nor even the nation of Israel as a political, cultural, and ethnic entity have ever been the pure and holy nation of God that's being talked about right here.

Actually, the holy nation of God has always been a people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, united not by their own blood and soil, but by the blood of Christ. And yes, sure, we do hope for the nations of the world and their legislative policies and practices to be influenced by the Christian faith.

[14 : 36] We do pray that the way of Jesus might inspire more equality, more justice, more mercy, more compassion, more truth, more morality in this world. But to pursue Christendom and maximal political power and influence as our highest and most important pursuit is to naively disregard the pattern of Jesus' life.

He's the lamb who was slain. He's the stone who was rejected. The Word of God does not call us as elect exiles to take up arms in the name of Jesus and to fight the enemies out there, but rather to fight the good fight is to wage a different kind of war.

Look what Peter urges these beloved foreigners and exiles to do. Verse 11, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul.

Did you hear that? The war is a war within, within your heart, not a war for the sake of your mere rights and privileges and preferences. It's a war for your soul.

That's the war that we Christians are meant to give our greatest attention to. Whether we live in Christianized context or pagan context, we're always exiles at war, but the war we're to most focus on is the war inside of us, the war between our sinful desires and the Holy Spirit indwelling within us.

[15 : 56] It's not pagans versus Christians on the streets of Oakland and Berkeley. It's greed and porn, apathy, hatred, selfishness, arrogance, lust, jealousy, and addiction against love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

And my question is, is this the war that we are most preoccupied with? Just like Jesus said, we are to focus on the planks in our own eyes before worrying about the specks of those around us or across the political aisle.

Being God's chosen elect doesn't give us the right to be extra judgmental, nor does it give us a reason or a right to insist upon our status as God's special privileged people, and then to stomp on others and assert our coercive dominance over those who don't share our Christian beliefs.

We don't fight for more and more ground and privilege with the same tools and tactics that every other empire uses. We don't use swords and guns and nukes and public shaming and canceling.

We don't toil and try to build the city of God ourselves here in America or even in Jerusalem through politics and posturing. Our calling is not to build up a temple in Jerusalem with its steeple reaching into the heavens.

[17 : 07] No, we as elect exiles look forward with hope to the new Jerusalem that comes down when Jesus returns to consummate His kingdom to which all the nations will flow.

So in the meantime, we fight the good fight of faith against the wicked tendencies and inclinations in our own hearts, and this is the way of the Lamb. Now, lest we become overly introspective and focus only on what's going on inside our hearts, Peter commends to these elect exiles a public and outward-facing life as well in the pluralistic society that they inhabited.

Verse 12, 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.

And this is just another way really of saying what Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount, right? Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Yes, we may feel awkward and different and strange to the watching world around us, and they may call us legalistic Pharisees because of our high standards of morality, and they may call us bigots or prudes because of our sexual ethic, or they might call us narrow-minded dogmatists because of our insistence that Jesus is the only way to the Father, that He is Lord.

But this is God's world, and the eyes and the minds and the hearts of every human being, no matter how hostile, they are wired in such a way that they cannot ultimately deny the good deeds that we do towards them.

[18 : 43] They cannot unsee it because they are made in God's image. This is why God told the exiled people of Israel in Babylon to seek the welfare of that city and to pray for it, because it is often by these prayers and good deeds as we let our light shine before others that even the most hostile people are eventually convinced to turn and glorify the God we worship here every single week.

I recently read the story of this pastor in New Hampshire. His name is Randy, and he said that before he became a Christian, he once hated church people until he found himself at his second wake in less than a month, his second wake in less than a month.

At this first wake, grieving the suicide of his son's girlfriend, a family friend of that girl approached him and his wife with kindness. Her name was Debbie, and numerous times, he said, she came over to ask if his sons needed any support.

And he writes, In a sea of darkness, Debbie was the only light we saw that day. I was surprised, comforted, and drawn in by her warmth and compassion. Yet I soon forgot about her.

But now at the second wake, again, in less than a month, grieving the death of his other son's girlfriend from a car crash, he writes, As we waited in line to pay respects, I saw Debbie again.

[19 : 57] She asked about both of our sons, more kindness, more light, more carefully measured sweetness, just when we needed it. And as she walked away, I turned to hide the tears in my eyes, silently wondering, Who is like that?

He continues, The line was getting shorter, as I considered what to say to this mom who just lost her daughter in a car crash. Having never met her, I knew only two things about her. She had been very close to her daughter, and she was a Christian.

I didn't like church people. In my opinion, Christians were simple-minded and hypocritically judgmental. But I set those feelings aside to mentally rehearse the condolences I would share.

But as I readied myself to speak, she reached out and took my hand in a friendly manner. Then she surprised me by speaking of my family's grief rather than her own.

I am so sorry, Zach lost Ashley, she said. And she even asked to spend time with this family and their sons. And Randy writes, As I walked away, I asked the universe, What is going on here?

[21 : 02] She just lost her daughter, her best friend, and she wants to care for my son? Who does that? On the way home, they get in the car, and his wife turns to him, and she says, I'm going to start going to church.

And the rest is history. He's a pastor in New Hampshire. Live such good lives among the pagans of the world, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Fight the good fight. Let your light shine, Peter says. And now our third point, live as free slaves. So in verses 13 to 20, Peter gets even more specific about how to let our light shine by addressing the question of how we are to relate to two kinds of authority figures, those who govern the places we inhabit and those we labor under.

Peter gives a little theology of politics and a little theology of work. But most importantly, I want us to see how our dual identity comes into play in our politics and our work and how Jesus, as the Lamb of God, informs this identity.

I think the core of these verses is in verse 16. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil. Live as God's slaves.

[22 : 22] Did you catch that? Peter reminds them that they are free and at the same time, God's slaves. Their ultimate authority isn't a politician, an employee, or a slave master, but it's God.

It's God. And thus their freedom, their freedom is not a freedom from all authority to do whatever evil they might desire, but a freedom under and bestowed by God, given to them to serve God and His purposes.

They are elect exiles who are free slaves, another dual identity. And Peter helps them work this out, again, in their politics and in their workplaces.

So let's start with politics. Verse 13, Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether to the emperor 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 people. Now, Peter is not saying absolute submission ought to be rendered to our governing authorities no matter what.

[23 : 28] Actually, in verse 13, he says, Submit, what? For the Lord's sake, making the Lord the highest authority. As New Testament scholar Scott McKnight writes, Far from an endorsement of Roman authority, Peter's perspective was one that put Nero and his authority in its proper place.

But in the same breath, Peter is also saying that there is a respect and a deference and a submission we do owe to our governing authorities, which God Himself has established to uphold justice and to restrain injustice and maintain order.

Tom Wright comments that though tyrants can behave terribly, even toward God's people, it is part of God's will that His created earth should be ruled and governed by human authorities.

Order is better than chaos, even though order can turn into tyranny. And though our hatred of tyranny might lead us into the normal kind of revolutionary politics, Peter advocates a different way.

Be subject to the ruling authorities, but make sure at the same time that by your good behavior, you shame those who out of folly and ignorance want to criticize you, he says.

[24 : 34] That is how God is establishing His presence and His rule on earth as in heaven. Oppressive tyranny and violent revolution are not the only options. Serving the true God by living a peaceful, wise, visibly good life in the end is far more revolutionary than simply overthrowing one corrupt regime and replacing it by probably another one.

And this is the nuanced way of the Lamb, right? Remember Jesus before Pontius Pilate, He said to Pilate, You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. He recognized His Father's authority over Pilate, and yet He did not forcefully resist Pilate either.

But maybe you're wondering, What about when our leaders and our governments are corrupt and unjust? Are we just supposed to submit and be complicit? And the answer is no. The people of God have indeed rightfully practiced civil disobedience when warranted.

When Israel lived as foreigners in Egypt, and Pharaoh ordered the slaughter of the Hebrew babies, the midwives in faith rightfully disobeyed. And when Israel was exiled in Babylon, and King Darius decreed that no one should pray to anyone else but him, did Daniel stop praying to Yahweh?

No, he kept praying. But see, the difference with Christians is that we are willing to suffer the consequences rather than stir up an uprising in self-protection. Daniel disobeyed by praying to Yahweh, but he trusted God, and he willfully went to the lion's den.

[26 : 01] Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's statue, and they willfully went to the fiery furnace, trusting the Lord. Yes, civil, nonviolent disobedience is a good way to honor God, particularly on clear-cut black-and-white issues that the Scripture clearly teaches on, but probably not on less clear matters of what is best for society.

Like, I'm not sure if we should exercise civil disobedience over maybe California's irrigation policies, or maybe the legal voting age, or the minimum wage standard.

The most important thing we need to ask ourselves as Christian political agents in society is will our actions and our votes, to the best of our understanding, honor Christ and demonstrate love for our neighbors.

As the Wheaton scholar Karen Jobes from Westminster, my great alma mater, writes, the apostle gives his readers two major principles of engagement.

Their allegiance to God in Christ does not exempt them from submitting to pagan authority, and they must maintain their identity as God's holy people, and consequently be prepared, if necessary, to suffer unjustly, and without retaliation for holding to their convictions and values as followers of Christ.

[27 : 22] The overarching principle for those who would walk in the way of the Lamb, as it says in verse 17, is show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers, fear God, and honor the emperor.

Christians are called to do all of the above, and this formula has always led Christians to be a unique and compelling light and blessing to the world. And actually, because they've held these things together, refusing to honor the gods of their Roman rulers, and yet still respecting these rulers by paying taxes and being good citizens, because Christians show that you can be good citizens without worshiping your emperor or his gods, and because Christians also saw religious identity not as something that's tied to their culture or ethnicity, but just about one's relationship with God.

The historian Larry Hurtado, he writes that Christians, they were the ones who were able to offer the first reasoned defense of religious liberty in the ancient world. And I know I'm past time, but I've got to comment on the slaves, okay?

I've got to comment on this, especially, you know, just having celebrated Juneteenth. And again, I'm sorry that I can't address this at length, but again, if you want to hear that sermon, I can find that for you.

And we want you to know this is a church where you can bring those kinds of questions, and where you can get to know your pastors and dialogue with them and go deep with them. But if I could just say very quickly, the slavery mentioned here, it was very different than the transatlantic chattel slavery that we typically think about when we hear the word slaves.

[28 : 43] We're talking about basically a third of the population in the ancient world, a whole class of people, and this wasn't an institution of slavery that was based on race or where slaves could not seek education.

Many slaves had very important functions and responsibilities. They could own property. They could even own other slaves. And there were no laws against their public assembly. So really, it was very different. Not to say that it was right, but it was very different than what we think of today.

Even here in the Greek, the word is different than the normal word *doulos*. It's more of a household servant, *oiketai*. And for sure, you know, there was oppression and there was injustice, but there was also opportunity for these servants to become free and full Roman citizens.

One scholar at UCLA, he even says that the majority of urban and domestic slaves could legitimately anticipate being emancipated by the age of 30. Okay, so this is something quite different, and there are lots of places in Scripture that talk about slavery that we could go to, but that's not what Peter's getting at here, okay?

Peter's primary agenda here, his focus, at least in these few verses, isn't on ending the institution of slavery, but rather, he's giving instructions to workers and laborers on how they should live even when they find themselves in harsh, oppressive, and unjust work environments.

[30 : 03] Verse 18, In reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.

Peter isn't writing pro-slavery material, but actually he's writing to slaves with dignity and saying that you can live a commendable life even as a slave because your ultimate master and allegiance is unto God, and to be a slave is even to be like your Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just like slaves, just like Jesus, slaves can shine brightly by honoring God, particularly when they suffer injustice for His namesake. As it says in verse 20, If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

And so the application for us as Christian workers and employees who probably do have more freedom to just leave our jobs, flee from our bosses and employers, the applications that Christians don't slander, don't disrespect our supervisors, we don't quiet quit, we don't just leave our jobs just because we feel like it.

Sure, we have the freedom to leave our employers if it's a toxic work environment and it's unjust, and if God is calling us elsewhere, but we leave not just because we want to. We leave based on the principle of seeking what is most commendable before God and the good of those around us.

[31 : 26] Because Christians don't simply work for their own consumeristic ends, but they primarily work as a reflection of Christ to the world. That's what's most important to Peter, not that slaves get free, but that they represent and reflect Christ.

And as our very own Christ Church member Denise Yon teaches in her faith and work curriculum, what it means to reflect Christ is to show the world, the person of Christ as a provider, as a bringer of good news, as a creative artist, as community servants, as image bearers, and as renewers in our communities.

And sometimes this might mean staying in our jobs, even under unfavorable working circumstances, if we feel like our work as providers and missionaries and artists and servants and image bearers and renewers is not complete.

This is the theology of work that Peter's trying to instill in us. So see, in the same way that Peter encourages his readers to submit to their pagan and often hostile political authorities, he does the same to slaves and workers under even harsh bosses.

He encourages them to let their light shine by using their freedom to serve even harsh authority figures. And perhaps you have trouble receiving this word because, man, why would anyone want to live like this?

[32 : 42] Especially if they are part of God's special, chosen, holy nation. To submit to hostile, harsh authorities just sounds so foolish, right? Irrational, self-destructive, and unnecessary.

But Peter would remind us that this is the way of the Lamb. Our very calling as elect exiles, verse 21, To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps, not in the way of the world, but in the way of the Lamb.

Verse 22, He committed no sin and no deceit was found in His mouth. When they hurled insults at Him, He did not retaliate. When He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly, even under the greatest affliction, followers of Jesus.

We abstain from sin. We tell the truth even when it costs us. We never retaliate. We make no coercive threats. And we do all of this by trusting in the justice and timing of our judge on high.

We do all of this relying on the same Spirit that empowered Jesus to do it, leading, yes, to His cross, but also to His resurrection. We do it for the good of others because Jesus did it for our good.

[33 : 51] Now, perhaps this sounds to you like a good way to get beaten up, taken advantage of, stepped on, and even killed. But my question is, what if this is also the way to resurrection life with Christ and to sharing His unique love with the world?

Christchurch, do we just want to live and then die like everyone else, or do we want to live and die and live again more fully like Christ? Christchurch, do we want our lives to make sense?

Do we just want our lives to make sense? Or do we want to live the kinds of lives that make people like Pastor Randy ponder to themselves with tears in their eyes, who is like that? Who does that? And how and why?

The only answer is Jesus and His people following in His steps. So do we want our lives to make sense? Or do we want our lives to make much of Jesus as we live by faith in the way of the Lamb?

Let's pray. Lord, we ask for Your Spirit's power and grace to live in the way of the Lamb, to Your glory and for the good of this world.

[34 : 58] In Jesus' name, amen.