

# The Exiled Life: 1 Peter 2:18-25

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, good morning. Thanks for praying for my wife and I. We were absent last Sunday and! I had the privilege of accompanying my wife on a work trip down to Northern California. So we were! in Redding and Chico and then we drove back. And so my job was just to be the driver. And so I felt like I was just driving Miss Daisy on that trip. And so it was a pleasure and it was a great way for my wife and I to connect and have many conversations. So thank you for praying for us.

I'm also grateful for Pastor Jay. I just, I'm grateful for his partnership and friendship in the gospel. And I think we are a blessed church and well served to have a fellow elder to preach. And I'm grateful for you Jay. And thank you for preaching. Today we're going to look at this text that Rob read and we're going to be answering today the question, how should the Christian respond when being treated unfairly by those in authority, especially in the workplace. The context that this is saturated in, we need to go back up to verse 12 because that verse sets the setting for the sections that follow. Let's remind ourselves what 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 12 reads, it says, keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they will see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. And so we remember that what is this honorable conduct that we're supposed to have as we live out among those who don't know Christ around us? What does that look like? Then, then Peter begins with this outside sphere, this broad sphere and says, okay, well then believing

Christians under the authority of your civil magistrates, whoever they are, emperor, mayor, governor, whoever they are, as citizens under them to yield under their authority. And so Pastor Jay spoke about that. That's from verses 13 through 17. Then verses 18 today through our text through 25, we're looking at what does it look like to willingly place yourself under the authority of one in the workplace? And then next week we'll get to what is this living honorably looked like in the home? What does that look like? And that'll be next Sunday. Well, our text today tells us some servants, it begins in verse 18, servants be subject to your masters. That word could be translated slaves, slaves be subject to your masters. We have to understand that there are many ways in the first century that people that people came into slavery. They could have been part of the spoils of war. And so

Rome could have gone in, defeated a nation and taken people as some of the spoils of war. They could have been kidnapped and they could have been born into a slave household. If a child was born under slavery, that that child was not considered the child of or the property or the ownership of the parents, but rather the master in that case.

[ 3 : 5 1 ] And because some of them were taken as spoils of war, slaves could have been and did serve in some cases as doctors and teachers, managers, musicians, artisans. And it was not common, but it was it was common enough that slaves could have even been better educated than their master. Those who are familiar with slavery with history in the United States, we must be careful not to impose our historical experience, the unfortunate trans and a horrible transatlantic slave trade in the antebellum South into the New Testament times. We need to be careful not to liken those two because of the Greco-Roman slavery was not based on race.

In any case, those slaves often suffered brutal mistreatment at the hands of owners. There were no legal rights for a slave. A slave could be beaten. They could be overworked. Some were branded and physically abused. And many of the believers in the first century were slaves. And so remember the audience to whom Peter is writing to. He's writing to believers who were in Asia Minor, Turkey, modern-day Turkey.

And many of them had come to faith in Christ. And so Peter is writing to those slaves who are in the church to say, okay, here is how you display Christ in your circumstance.

And so because slavery, slaves were considered a part of the household, and slavery was this part of the economic structure of the household under the authority of the masters.

Most scholars and theologians and pastors take this and apply it today to the sector of labor in our case, which is employment and employers and employees. And so I will too today be taking this text and applying it in that way for us today. Because it's not likely any of you sitting here are slaves. [6:08] And you have a master and you have no rights. That's not likely our situation. But many of us are employed in some way. And we have an employer, a boss, a supervisor that we answer to. And so I will be applying the text in that way today. So the question then is, how is it that we are to submit ourselves? Look at verse 18 one more time. Here's what we're commanded to do. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. To the unjust.

This is remarkable because this grates against our sensibilities and it is contrary to our flesh. Peter encourages believers to willingly place themselves under the authority of both good bosses, the good and gentle, but also even those to treat you unjustly, even to poor bosses, poor masters, harsh masters. The slaves in the first century had no choice and there was no recourse. In the first century, there is no such thing as the HR department. There was no recourse if there was a hostile work environment.

There was no recourse. There was no union boss. There was no labor in industries. There was no OSHA to appeal to, to make sure your workplace was safe. There was no recourse for you as a slave. So what was the slave to do? And there was no quitting. You quit and you walk off the job, you are dead. That's a death sentence.

So you can't quit. So what were the believers to do in that circumstance? They were to submit themselves to their master and every respect, both to the good and to those who treat you harshly. That was the encouragement. And oh, what a harsh word that would have been to receive, to say, oh, that's hard.

So, we get, so my point today is to say, we are to humbly endure and submit under unjust treatment because, in our workplace, let's assume that's your case, for the primary reason and the primary motive to please God. Look with me in verse 19, how Peter roots his argument and says, please do this. This is your job, is to submit to these masters for what reason? What's our primary motivation? What does Peter appeal to, to say, do it for this reason? Look with me in verse 19. He begins with the word for, for. He's going to provide the motivation or the reason for this. Submit in all these respects, why? For this is a gracious thing. What's a gracious thing?

[9:14] To submit to your masters whether they're good or unjust. This is a gracious thing when mindful of God, there's the motivation, being mindful of God, being pleasing to him. One endures sorrow while suffering unjustly. What's the primary motivation? Being mindful of God. He says it here. Being mindful is out of reverence toward the Lord, I'm going to submit myself and suffer sorrows at the hands of someone unjustly. Look with me in verse 20, 20. He also roots this in, in the motivation to be pleasing to God.

And he says, for what credit is it if one endures, if you sin and are beaten for it and you endure? But if you do good and suffer for it, you endure. This is a gracious thing that in the sight of God.

This is a gracious thing in the sight of God. This finds favor in the sight of God. So what is the, the thing that he appeals to, Peter appeals to, to say, yes, yield under authority, even unjust authority, and to suffer for it and to submit yourself in all respects? Do that out of a motivation to be pleasing to the Lord. That is your primary motivation. And Peter presses this argument by asking a rhetorical question. Look with me in verse 20. For what credit is it when you sin and you are beaten?

What credit? And you endure. What, what, what credit is that? And the, the answer to the rhetorical question is there is no credit for that. There is no benefit to you for that. If you sin and you do wrong, you deceive, you do not perform, you are lazy, you deserve punishment, you deserve being reprimanded, you deserve being written up, you well earned it. There's no credit for that. But he, he asserts it positively as well. But if when you do good and suffer, you endure.

[11:29] When you do what is right and good and you unjustly suffer and you are still treated harshly, you don't deserve that. You, you did everything right and yet you still were treated harshly and you humbly endured it. This is a gracious thing in the sight of God. That your primary motivation ought to be when you find yourself in a situation like that to be, Lord, I'm going to please you in this way. And we're going to get to look at what does that look like? Because our flesh and our nature hates this, being treated unjustly, especially for doing good and right. By nature, we hate

giving the impression of weakness. We hate to look like, like someone who got, someone got an advantage over us.

We don't like that. We don't like it when we are falsely accused of something. We don't like it when unreasonable and abusive people seem to get the last word. Oh, that'll just be soothing on the nerves.

And there is a tremendous power when these things occur that wells up in us. That's our flesh that pushes us to the desire to retaliate.

I recall this is an unfortunate story. This is a story. Do not imitate your pastor story. I was 20, probably four years old. I was working a part-time job and volunteering at a church for ministry. Keep in mind, for ministry, for the Lord. Yeah. Working a part-time job and I was a cashier and we got a new point of sale system on the computer and it was just fresh. It had a different layout and I was making tons of mistakes and checking out this customer. And this man just kept giving verbal insult after verbal insult. And it probably took me, and you know when you're a cashier and you're in that situation, probably two and a half, one and a half minutes to two minutes to finish his transaction. And he only bought like three items. So it's not like this is a lot. This is my own failure. And I ended up giving the wrong change. I owed him more. So it looked like I shorted him. And so it just, one error after another, Scott was committing. My temperature is getting flustered and he's continuing with insults. That's the situation. His last insult was this. He said, well, I guess that's what I should expect. Shopping at an establishment where people work minimum wage and don't need a college education. So I finished the transaction, gave him his receipt, and I said, and thank you. You have a great day. And thanks for treating me less than human. Because I didn't want him to have the last word. So, but this is our situation. But my boss later, who overhears this, says to me, need a break, Scott?

I was like, I think I'll take my break. So, hours later though, I went to my boss and I said, her name was Heather. Heather, I'm so sorry. I said, I sinned against that customer and I sinned against you. [ 14 : 56 ] And whatever form of punishment you think is necessary for me, I gladly accept it. And if you would like me to resign, and if this is my last day, that'll be fine. I well deserve that. And I said, because, and she's not a believer. And I said, because I know that customer is going to tell now probably seven people at least of his interaction today. And he'll never shop here, nor will others.

I cost you a lot. I not only sinned against him, but I sinned against you. And, and so I'm asking for your forgiveness. And I said, I did not model Christ before you. She thankfully forgave me and allowed me to keep the job. But that was a, an experience where I'm, I'm saying it's very hard to do what Peter is asking us to do. That was a customer, not my boss. Is your highest motivation to please God, or is it to defend yourself and look out for number one, yourself? Second, our desire, our second motivation, if you will, our desire is to bear witness to the lost. Look with me in verse 12. Not only are we to be pleasing to the Lord, but keep in mind how this whole section begins. Keep your conduct among the

Gentiles, the lost, unbelieving world, honorable, so that when they speak against you as evil dealers, they will see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. Oh, that they may be saved.

This is the motivation. I was on a flight recently that, not recently, this is years ago, where my flight got detoured because the weather on our destination was compromised and they were having storms, so we couldn't land. We got detoured for a while. So we're sitting on the tarmac for a few hours, waiting for the storm to clear and take off again, and people are getting restless. People are getting irritated. People are not having fun. They're becoming impatient, and there was this one obnoxious man who was venting toward the female flight attendant, and she was responding so graciously, so courteously. She was de-escalating situations marvelously. She was kind. You would think that she's having the best day of her life, and like rays of sunshine were just on her head, but that isn't the case, and the verbal onslaught and abuse that she was taking up from the impatient passengers was remarkable, and she just was so beautiful in her responses. So I asked her, I said, ma'am, what is your name, and can I have the name of your supervisor? Because I want to just write to them and commend them before your employer, because you're handling these situations marvelously, and I think I want your employer to know that you're doing just a phenomenal job, and it's a pleasure to be on this flight with you. She responds to me this way.

She says, thank you, sir, but that's not necessary, because I don't really work for Delta. She says, uh, my employer and I work for the Lord Jesus Christ, and I thought, oh, everyone on the flight. I

wasn't the only one observing her. Everyone, it was more telling about everyone who was losing their cool than the one who was handling it, and doing a beautiful job representing the grace and the kindness of the Lord to everyone else who was being severely impatient, and I think this is what Peter is getting at. Our second motivation, he begins with saying, keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. It is our second motivation, primarily to be pleasing to the Lord, second, to be, to bear witness to the lost.

[ 19 : 01 ] And, and you say, well, Scott, what is it? We're to humbly endure and submit under unjust treatment of authority, because thirdly, Christ gave himself up and as an example to suffering unjustly. Look how Peter roots his argument here in verses 21 through 23. For this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example so that you may follow in his steps. This word example is kind of a word picture. You remember learning to write, and you, you had a worksheet the teacher gave you, or your mom, or someone gave you, and it may have had a rough outline of a letter, and you were to trace that letter to learn how to write the letter A, and letter B, and, and, but they were already kind of, there was a light imprint on the page, and all you had to do is trace over, and that's the, the, the word picture of this word example, that Christ has provided you this perfect example, and all you need to do is live exactly, and don't deviate out of the lines, and write the letter, and live your life the same way that Christ did, and then to follow it, he says, oh, and yes, for this you've been called, because

Christ also suffered for you, so there's our motivation. Christ gave us the example, leaving you an example that you may follow in his steps, and it's the same thing. Just like you're supposed to trace the letters, and stay within the lines, you're supposed to, wherever Jesus has stepped, however he has stepped, those, you step exactly where he did, don't deviate, your life is to, to be an example just as the way Christ did. So how did Christ do this? How did Christ do this?

So you may follow in his steps. Let me, before we get to how did Christ do this, how to follow in his steps. Many people will never read the Bible, but they will read your life, and I pray they see Christ in you, not a defiant spirit, not a self-willed person, a self-willed person, not one who complains, not someone who is living for themselves, and, but it's someone who is humble under unjust treatment. So what is, what is, what is Christ's example? What is, what are his footsteps that we're to stay within, and his example that we're to trace, and stay within the lines with our lives? Well, look with me in verse 22. There's four ways in verse 22 and 23 we get an example from Christ. Look, the first one is he committed no sin. He committed no sin. Verse 22. First, he acted in complete obedience to the Father when he was being unjustly treated. Jesus never once sinned. He was never self-willed. He never justified himself. He never sought to have the last word. Second, we see neither was deceit found in his mouth. So secondly, there was never deceit found in his mouth. He did not bend the facts to win an argument or to get his way. Never did that. Thirdly, we read in verse 23, when he was reviled, he did not revile in return. When he was criticized, he did not criticize in return. He never traded insults. Fourthly, when being treated unjustly, Jesus being our example that we're to walk in his steps, what did he do? After, it says, when he suffered, he did not threaten. So he uttered no threats. That's our fourth point. He uttered no threats. He did not say, you just wait and I'll get even with you. If you think about this, this is, we have this phrase, and I don't care for it at all, but it's rooted in our English vernacular of people wishing others would go to hell. Do you realize Jesus is the only person that could have exercised that and had the ability to do that? And yet, the very reason why he did not sin when he was being unjustly treated, the very reason why he was willing to take insults, be spat upon, be scourged, and ultimately hung on the cross is to forgive sin so that others would not be condemned forever, to save them from hell and to allow them to avoid that eternal punishment.

[ 23 : 56 ] Even the worst of enemies like you and me, the biblical record informs us that he suffered God's wrath so that others may not have to. He's beautiful. He's wonderful.

And those are four ways that Peter writes that says, follow in these steps that Jesus follow him in the same way. He is our example. So fourthly, what's our fourth motivation? Humbly endure and submit under unjust treatment because, fourthly, we entrust ourselves to the righteous judge. The bottom of verse 23, he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. How did Jesus continue to suffer unjustly? How did he continue to endure mistreatment, to experience verbal and physical torment and not lash out?

Where is the hope for us to endure such hardship for ourselves? The same hope that Christ exercised, that Jesus knew that one day he would be vindicated. Jesus knew that on the third day he would raise from the dead. Jesus knew that he would be shortly seated at the right hand of God. Jesus knew that his persecutors would be judged according to their sin. And he entrusted himself to the Lord, to the Father.

He continued to entrust himself to the one who judges justly. That phrase, entrusting himself, is the same word that we find in John 19, 10, when the people delivered up Jesus to Pilate. That delivered up is entrusting himself to the Father. So they delivered him up to death, but he delivered himself up for our sins, and he entrusted himself to the Father. Do we entrust ourselves to God the Father when we're being mistreated? Being mistreated will lead us to the cross as well, where we die to the right to live for ourselves, but for the glory of God and for the benefit of others. We see beyond the cross, and we are assured of heaven and the glory that awaits us there. God is the righteous judge. He will one day right every day. We will be wrong and bring vengeance on those who resist his authority. Our task is to just trust him by submitting to the human authority, even when they are treating us unjustly and fair and unfair.

[ 26 : 54 ] Lastly, on your outline card, I would like for you to scratch out my original outline of my word. It says, we are comforted by our shepherd. I would say our last motivation should be because of an essential reality, and that essential reality that I'm going to talk about is the substitutionary atonement of Christ. How do I get there? Look with me in verse 24. As a motivation, how do we humbly endure and submit under unjust treatment because of the essential reality, because of the substitutionary atonement of Christ? Look with me in verse 24. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. And then listen to this. For what purpose? That we might die to sin and live to righteousness. There it is. The essential reality, because of Christ's essential death, the power of sin has been broken in you, and you can live righteously. It says, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree. Notice, whose sins is he bearing?

Those who have trusted in Christ. He bore our sins in his body as he hung on the tree, the cross. For the purpose that we might die to sin. The power of sin has been broken in your life, and now you've been crucified with Christ. Sin has been broken, and you've been made alive unto God so that you can live to righteousness. So you don't have to sin against the one who is unjustly treating you. That's the point.

That has been taken care of on the cross for your sake. I am going to go down a little bit of a rabbit trail. So let's stay here. Let's remember where we're at here, because I'm going to go on a little rabbit trail, and we're going to come up quickly. Rabbit trail. There's a phrase in verse 24 that I've heard quoted often, and unfortunately, I have even said this in the context of which I'm about to speak of, and I want to correct that. It says, by his wounds you've been healed.

If you have been around Christian science movements, if you grew up in a Pentecostal or charismatic circle, you have heard this phrase, and it's often being applied to someone for physical healing who is who is suffering. And so people will pray, by his wounds we've been healed, and so they'll pray for someone's physical healing, and they'll quote that verse in that kind of context. Now let me first say, do I believe God heals? Yes. Do I believe the church should come to the elders, those who are sick, and ask them to pray over you, and that God may heal you, and for the prayers of a righteous person avail much? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, to all of that. However, I would not use this verse in that context when I'm praying. Let me share with you why. This, Peter is alluding to a passage that is found in Isaiah 53, and let me read it, and it's Isaiah speaking of the one who is going to come, the Messiah, and this is what

Isaiah says. Who has believed in what he has heard from us, and who has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For who grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground? He had form or majesty that we should look on him, no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, the one whom men hide their faces, and he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, afflicted. Who is this speaking of, foretelling of? Christ. Now look with me, the next two verses are on the screen, I believe. It says this in verse 5, and he was pierced for our transgressions, and he was crushed for our iniquities, and upon him the chastisement or the punishment that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. We all have, we all like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Now I want you to find, this is where Peter is

referencing, look, he says by his wounds we're healed. Actually keep that up, Elijah, if you don't mind. By his wounds we've been healed. Look at the surrounding context. Look with me in verse 5. Is this speaking of physical healing, or is it speaking of the sin being forgiven? Look with me in verse 5. He was pierced for our transgressions, transgressions. He was crushed for iniquities, iniquities, and upon him the chastisement, the punishment of sin has brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed, then dropped down to verse 6, and the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Transgressions, iniquity, iniquity. It's talking about sin being forgiven, that the sin has been now broken, the power of sin has been broken in our lives, that we don't have to sin. So here's the context.

[ 32 : 32 ] If someone were to ask me, Scott, here's the appropriate context for this verse. If someone were to ask me, hey Scott, hey I'm, I have this employer, they don't treat me well, I have an unjust employer, they don't treat me well, they don't speak of me well, I don't want to quit, I want to share Christ with this person, what would you say to me? I would say, well, by his wounds you've been healed.

Now they're going to blink twice and quickly change the subject because they have no idea what I just said, but that's the appropriate context for encouraging someone who's being mistreated under authority. Why do I say that? What is now Peter saying in this context? That's the context wherewith this verse is found, and he's saying, hey, by his wounds, his death on the cross, the power of sin has been broken in your life, you have been healed, the power of sin has been broken in your life, that you can now respond in a righteous way. So by his wounds you have been healed by this essential reality, the substitutionary atonement death of Christ on your behalf. That's a motivation for you to bear under. It makes it possible for you not to sin and follow in Christ's footsteps and follow his example of what it looks like to suffer unjustly with those in authority.

So that would be my encouragement. I would have to explain it, and so might you. Okay, let me conclude with this story.

Pastor once told me a story of a boy who was 12 years old who lived with an unbelieving father, and the boy asked to attend a prayer meeting and to go to church, to attend a prayer meeting.

The father agreed, and the boy began walking to the church. He attended the prayer meeting, and the boy had a remarkable heart for the Lord, and he got home, and he had an unjust father who saw the boy come home. The boy was walking back home. Someone in the prayer meeting saw him walking, gave him a lift home, and it was a teenage boy. And so his dad saw who delivered him home and came to the assumption, my son did not go to church to go to a prayer meeting. He went to go hang out with these guys, and he lied to me. So he told the boy, I'm going to beat you. He goes, where were you? He says, I was at the prayer meeting. And he said, you lied to me. I'm going to beat you because you lied to me.

[ 35 : 19 ] And then, so he subsequently did. The boy's heart was tender toward his father, and thankfully, he did not get embittered toward his father. And a week later, the pastor saw the father in the hardware store and said, hey, I just want to let you know, your son is such a blessing to us.

And he relayed a story of what his son told, of a testimony of what God was doing to this unbelieving father, what his son had said in the prayer meeting. The man was so convicted that his son did not retaliate under this harsh authority, submitted lovingly to his father, who was unjust. And about a month later, that father came to Christ. The unbelieving world may not have a Bible. They may not read their Bible, but they're reading us. They're reading you. And what are you saying? What are you communicating?

And so I pray this would give us encouragement. And Peter is seeking to give encouragement to those under authority, especially unjust authority. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for your kindness, your goodness to us. Thank you for being a good, good father.

Lord, I pray that if we have good employers, good workplaces, that we would thank our bosses and we say thank you.

[ 37 : 02 ] I pray, Lord, for those in the room, though, who are suffering in places of employment that are not healthy, that are hostile, that are complicated, that are unjust, that treatment of people and perhaps those in this room themselves is not good. I pray that you would allow us to bear under that, follow you in your steps. You gave us an example of how we might ought to live under that circumstance.

I pray that you would give us the courage, the boldness, the motivation to live out that, live out that circumstance in a manner that is pleasing in your sight.

May we bring your glory. That be our highest motivation. May others, the unbelieving world, come to faith in you because of our example. And may we be a bold witness, even in the suffering, unjustly in the places that you have us. We love you, Lord, and it's in your beautiful name. Amen.