

## **Focus 1 Peter 2:18**

**Please stand for the reading of the word.**

Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

### **Prayer**

Father we thank you for giving us such an amazing gift in the preaching ministry of pastor matt. I thank you for the clarity of your word and for the privilege to be able to bring your word before your people today. I ask that you would bring about the necessary conviction to allow us to be a people focused on displaying grace. We ask this in your heavenly name. Amen.

### **Introduction**

I think its hard for us as christians who live in a world that is controlled by the prince of the power of the air, who are surrounded by an evil and an a-moral culture to live a transcendent life. Its easy to get our minds pinned down on our present conditions and situations. Especially if those current situations are tough. We are prone to only think of the here and now and we are prone take our focus off of Christ. To forget that he is coming back again to rule and to reign and to make all things new. That this heaven and this earth are passing away and a new heaven and earth are going to take its place.

Forgetting about the eternal makes us very earthly minded. It can lead to getting too wrapped up in our possessions and our positions in society. To getting over involved in politics and worldly power. We start to demand rights and seek revenge because we need to collect and get and eat and drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. We start to demand things in this life that we think we deserve. We forget about the grace that has been given to us and that the only reason we are still on this planet is because god has not removed us yet. And once we start throwing around the words "i deserve" and "i demand" we have just stepped into deep water.

we know what we deserve, scriptures says it over and over again, we deserve hell, but by Gods grace we are here. And it is this message of grace that needs to be our focus until He returns.

To say all this more simply, When we forget Gods eternal plan we forget our earthly focus. This is commonly called mission drift. Mission drift in the church has many faces but it is most manifested when we start replacing the best thing with good things. Though it is good to build schools and get clean drinking water to those who don't have it, though it is good to go through the proper channels to bring about reforms that will help civilians and employers and marriages, we can never replace these good things with the best thing and that is bringing the message of Grace to a lost and dying world.

Peter writes this book to remind believers who were being persecuted for their christian faith to remember the eternal plan and that by bringing this to remembrance it would help them maintain a **proper earthly focus. Displaying Grace.**

I have heard it said that you can be too heavenly minded to be any earthly good and peter seems to say that the only way to be any earthly good is to be heavenly minded.

Lets look at chapter one verse 3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 **to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 uThough you have not seen him, you love him. vThough you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

So he starts off by stating exactly what I said previously, that though in this world they will have trials, they can take heart knowing that they have an inheritance that is guarded for them in heaven and is imperishable, undefiled and unfading.

Look a little further down in verse 13:

Therefore preparing your minds for action and being sober minded **set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of jesus Christ.** As obedient children do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance but as he who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

Here we see again peter draw our eyes to the eternal plan, but give us the earthly focus. To be holy in our conduct. He will then go on to say what this holy conduct looks like as Civilians, as Employees and as Husbands and wives. And this really brings us to our scripture for today.

## Homiletic

### SUBMIT TO UNJUST EMPLOYERS

So lets get into it. And before we do I want to give you guys the main idea so please write this down. here is the main idea, its quite simple. **“Display Grace in the workplace”** “Display grace in the workplace” It also rhymes and that will hopefully help you to hold it to memory.

We are going to see three movements here in the text and I’ll give you a one sentence overview of the argument that peter is going to make. He is going to say **“submit to unjust employers, to display grace, for you are called to follow the example of the suffering servant, but will one day follow the conquering king.**

So lets get right into it, verse 18, chapter 2 of first Peter we read: Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.

Now there is a little nuance here at the beginning that we need to address and that has to deal with these words “servants” and “masters”. In some translations of the bible this term is translated “slaves” but the best translation that we see is “servants” or “household servants”.

During the time of peters writing the world was in a far different social and political standing that it is now. This book was written in early 60sAD. to Christians who are scattered across what is now modern day turkey. Politically this area was under control of an emperor not a president. It was under a lordship not a democracy. Slaves and Masters were the warp and woof of the social order and everyone saw them as commonplace.

People at that time became slaves by being captured in wars, kidnapped, or born into a slave household. Others who were facing economic hardships might choose to sell themselves into slavery in order to survive. Many slaves lived miserable lives, particularly those who served in the mines. Other slaves, however, served as doctors, teachers, managers, musicians, artisans, and could even have enough money to own their own slaves. It would not be unusual for a slave to be better educated than his master. Slaves at this time were under the control of their masters, and hence they largely had no independent existence outside of that social structure. They also had no voice. Another way to look at them is more along the lines of an indentured servant. Most work at that time was done in or around the home and even if they worked for a

marketplace business, the marketplace would be set-up and torn down daily. It was similar to a modern day swap meet.

Now although here in America it is hard for us to relate to this type of social structure it still allows us to see the relationship of slave and master within the structure. One was in a position of authority and the other was in a subordinate position. Today we see this in an employer-employee relationship or a worker and a boss or a student and a teacher.

Now before I go any further the caveat that must be made is that here in America you are not bound by your life to your employer as a slave was to their master. If you don't like your job you can quit, if you don't like your boss you can move departments or leave your job altogether. But, what Peter is saying, is that until you do that, this is how you are to behave.

So again, Servants be subject to your masters with all respect. This word subject can be translated as be submissive and is in the present tense. To say it in modern day vernacular Peter is saying "continue to submit to your masters with all respect" Then Peter adds the qualifier, "not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust"

Now this word respect may catch you off guard because you are going to ask yourself, I need to respect my terrible evil bad boss? No. What Peter is saying is that you need to submit to your boss out of fear and respect for the Lord. Look at verse 13 of Chapter 2. "be subject for the LORDS sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good." It is for the LORDS sake that we are to submit to our bosses. Even our unjust bosses. Why?

because this is God's will for us. That's a pretty good reason. People are always asking me "what is God's will for my life?" well, it says it right here. Submit to your boss so that you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Ephesians 2 says that we are saved by grace and called unto good works. These are the good works that that verse is talking about.

you see I've come to realize that scripture is way less concerned about WHAT job you are doing and more concerned about HOW you conduct yourself at that Job. Your identity shouldn't be based upon what you do but it should be based upon what Christ did. The apostle Paul was a tentmaker, Peter was a fisherman. The Lord isn't worried about whether you are a custodian, a salesman, a CFO or an officer in the navy, he is concerned about your Christian testimony at your workplace because it is a reflection on the character of who He is.

Look up at verse 12 of chapter two. This is amazing. "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." This is speaking of salvation. So not only is submitting to your employer God's will for you but it is also a means by which he will bring about the

salvation of your unsaved co-workers. I hear people say all the time “I wish I could evangelize more but I'm stuck doing this stupid job” **No**. There is no sacred secular split when it comes to your work. There are no workplaces there are only mission fields and you have the privilege of being able to go to your mission field 8 hours a day and not only that you are getting paid for it! You are all paid missionaries at your workplace. What a freeing thought that is.

He has this same thought about submissive conduct towards wives who are married to non-believing husbands. Look at Chapter 3 verse 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, when they see your respectful and pure **conduct**. Do not let your adorning be external, the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry or the clothing you wear, but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in **Gods sight** is very precious.

Now I know a lot of you don't like the phrase “give the gospel and sometimes use words” but Peter shows us that your Christlike conduct will bring about inquisition as to why you are behaving in such a way. Look at verse 13 of Chapter 3: we read “Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake you will be blessed. Have no fear of them nor be troubled but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.**” The implication is that non-believers were seeing the unjust suffering of these Christians and were so intrigued at how they just sat there and took it, that it provoked them to ask “why?” Peter says to prepare for that and so should you.

Just to undergird this point lets look at Ephesians 6 verse 5, Ephesians 6 verse 5. Its to the left just a few books. You will hear Paul echo this exact truth, he says:

Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, **as you would Christ**, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as **bondservants of Christ**, doing the **will of God** from the heart, rendering service with a good will **as to the Lord and not to man**, knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

Lets look at Colossians 3:22, Paul again is carrying this same message that Peter is to us, just to a different church. Colossians 3:22 we read.

Bondservants obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service as people-pleasers but with sincerity of heart, **fearing the Lord**.

To use a common refrain to sum all of this up. You are to work as unto the Lord. He is your master, he is your boss, he is the one that you are working to please. And what pleases him, is that you submit to your earthly boss.

And then here comes the kicker. Here comes the part that you don't really want to be there when you read it. It violates the flesh just to read it. Peter tells us in the second half of verse 18, "not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust".

"Good and gentle" means "virtuous and mild." The Greek term for "gentle" means reasonable, fair, yielding, ready to forgo rights. It even means content to take less than due. This is a magnanimous, generous, kind, gracious person.

Its easy in some sense to be able to submit to a good boss, a christian boss and some of you in this room have great, kind, just, gentle bosses. They treat you fairly, they pay you a worthy wage, they offer you benefits, they don't overwork you, they understand the priority of the home and if you are called to submit to an unjust boss **how much more** should you be graciously willing to submit to a good boss.

But he also says in verse 18, to those who are unjust, (ska lee oss). You've heard of scoliosis of the spine, curvature. That's the word. It means bent, crooked, curved, metaphorically perverse, unfair. Unreasonable is a good translation, harsh, hard to deal with, unbending, unkind, ungracious. But in either case, what are you to do? Submit.

Now it must be said that submission to your boss goes right up until the point of sin. You are not to continue to submit to him if he is going to force you into a situation that will ruin the testimony of Christ or will cause you to sin against God. So for example say that you work for hillary clinton. I love using this name because she causes such a visceral reaction in everyone. She has been overworking you, making fun of you because you're a christian, treating you poorly and at 4:59 on a friday she says "hey, can you type up and send out this email to the entire department letting them know that I'll be out of the office on monday?" Knowing that Christ is your Lord and Master you can say "sure thing misses clinton" Now on the flip side if she says "can you type up an email saying how amazing abortion is and send it out to the entire department?" again, knowing that Christ is your Lord and Master you can say, No misses clinton. and you take the punishment coming to you.

That's a small aside that needed to be addressed because I don't want any of you thinking that you can scorn Gods precepts because your boss told you you could.

And so peter starts his argument out by saying that we as believers are to submit to unjust bosses out of fear and respect for the Lord. Again, He points us to the fact that we are to have

a heavenly perspective, that God is our true Boss, Lord and King and that will allow us to have a proper earthly **focus**...at your job.

In the next section Peter pushes this argument a little further.

## **TO DISPLAY GRACE**

We read in verse 19 “For this is a gracious thing when mindful of God one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God”

In this section Peter is going to elaborate more on the reason **WHY** we as Christians are to submit to unjust bosses and I’ll give it to you at the front end and the reason is “**to display grace**” . And this is the key to this entire section.

Now you can see there is a negative statement at the beginning of verse 20 that is sandwiched between these two statements that say “this is a gracious thing” and I want to address that negative before we move any further. He says in verse 20: “for what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it you endure.”

And if you’re tracking with me this shouldn't need much explaining, if you are suffering cuz you are a bad employee and enduring, even though you are enduring, God is not pleased. This is not a gracious thing. This is a just thing. You’re getting what you deserve. That’s the implied answer. There is no virtue in enduring what you deserve to get. If a prisoner gets sent to jail for 10 years for committing a crime and is let out ten years later there is no welcome wagon waiting for him at the gate. He did the crime and he did the time. Job done.

So in your workplace If you show up late, you take long breaks, your work is haphazardly done, you talk all the time, you don't follow the dress code, you sit on Facebook all day, you complain, you taunt you speak poorly of others, and if that is the case, well then you deserve whatever is coming to you.

I hear sometimes (not from anyone in this church, but sometimes) “Im being persecuted! We Christians love throwing this word around. Persecuted! I got fired today” And I’ll ask why? and they’ll reply: because I was late a bunch of times...which is usually followed by a litany of excuses, “I was late because...traffic is bad, car is bad etc... etc... If traffic is bad, leave earlier, if your car is bad get an uber. Do what you have to do in order to get to work on time. You are not being persecuted for your Christlike conduct, you were simply being a bad employee and got what was coming to you. God is not not pleased by this. Now that sounds really harsh..but

that's what the bible is saying. You broke the rules and now justice is being exacted upon you. Not only that you are dragging the name of Christ through the mud. Remember what Peter has already said, when your coworkers see you they see Christ. When you're lazy and slack off at work you're saying that Christ is lazy and that he is a slacker. You are ruining your witness.

**BUT!** Back to our verse, "if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God." So if you do bad and get punished, there's no credit in that. That punishment is just. You are getting exactly what you deserve. God is not pleased. But if you suffer for doing something Good, this is a gracious thing and God **is** pleased.

What does that mean, put simply, **It means that respectful submission to undeserved suffering finds favor with God because such behavior demonstrates his grace.**

God is pleased with you when you display grace because you have been shown grace and grace is what is available **now** to those who are here **now** on earth. 2 Corinthians 5:20 calls us ambassadors of Grace and what Peter is telling us is that we are ambassadors of grace in the workplace.

Look at these verses in first Peter that show that God is pleased in us as we display grace in the midst of unjust suffering.

Chapter 3 verse 14: But even if you suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed.

Chapter 4 verse 14: If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed.

Chapter 4 verse 16: Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

This is speaking specifically of the name Christian. I am sure some of you at your jobs get ridiculed and reviled and picked on simply because you bear the name Christian.

This is nothing new. Go with me to Matthew 5:11. Let's see what Christ had to say about this very same idea.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your **reward is great in heaven**, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

So do you have a heavenly view or an earthly view? Jesus laid it out as marvelously and simply as He could. "**Your reward is great heaven.**"

Now what is the opposite of this? Well it's what I've been saying the whole time it's living for now, it's seeking justice now, it's seeking retribution now, it's demanding rights and equality. It's



not showing grace but seeking justice. And this is very easily preached but extremely hard to apply. Its other worldly. It is impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit working within you.

That is why peter calls us strangers and exiles and sojourners because this world is not our home. and when we lose that mindset, when we are not conscious of God we are going to be prone to blow up at our boss and at our coworkers. And its these people that need to see grace the most.

Why do you think it is that they are treating you so poorly? It's because they are sinners. We often forget that. The scriptures are scandalously silent about social injustices because God realizes that the problem isn't the institutions its the hearts of those men and women who are running those institutions.

Christ told us that it is out of the heart that the mouth speaks. So when your boss is cussing at you and calling names and treating you poorly you need to be conscious that it is because he is an unregenerate sinner and that no Policy no Pact no Government Program, and no Human Resources Department can fix that. **Only Christ can.** That is why our **focus** needs to be on displaying His grace in the workplace.

Want a perspective on your unjust boss that will take you to your knees in prayer for him? Look over at Chapter 4 verse 17. "Peter writes "for it is time for judgement to begin in the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

Peter here is making an argument from the lesser to the greater. He is saying that if you think your trials on this earth are bad, think of the judgement that is about to come on those who are not saved...like your unjust boss.

What is that Judgement? Its an eternal lake of fire, its torment day in and day out, its weeping and gnashing of teeth, its the wrath of God poured out upon them forever. And the only reason **you** are not going there is because of Gods free gift of Grace in your life.

Sear that image into your mind so that it will give you a proper perspective of your suffering as well as a proper perspective of the one who is inflicting it upon you.

Surgeon said it best "If sinners be damned at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies and if they perish let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for" ...And this includes your Harsh, Unjust, Mean, Terrible boss.  
**When is the last time you have prayed for your boss?**

One more comment on this section before we move on. The phrase in verse 19 of chapter 2, when mindful of God. With a focus directed upon God. It can be translated to say “with a constant awareness of Gods presence. Again when we have that right heavenly perspective our conduct on earth will **stay focused** on the task of displaying grace.

It reminds me again of the verse we went to in Ephesians 6 where we are called not to work to give eye-service to men but to be in service to our God who sees all. God sees when you are taking it on the chin unjustly and enduring it. God sees when you get to work on time, when you work hard, when you leave your lunch conversation early because you lunch time has ended. Even if your boss never appreciates you for it, never commends you on it, never gives you any accolades, God sees it, he cares and he is pleased when you do it because it glorifies Him.

So just to recap peter has told us that we are to **submit to unjust employers** in order to **display grace** and now he is going to continue his argument by saying that this **is because we are called to follow the example of the suffering servant**.

## **SUFFERING SERVANT**

We read, verse 21:

For to this you have been called. (what is the this? Its Grace. again, we are ambassadors of grace scripture says) For to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who **judges justly**.

So our calling here on earth is to display Grace, to give grace, to preach a gospel of Grace. And what peter is going to do now is use the most exemplary display of grace in the history of humankind in the suffering and humiliation of our Lord as a model of grace.

So Christ suffered for you, not only redemptively but in an exemplary way. Not only did He suffer to redeem, but He suffered to set the model for how you're to live. And he left it that we might follow in his steps, his footprints.

Now to start out with this word example is the only used once in the entire new testament. The word is used of children who would trace over the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to write the letters correctly. The best way I have heard this taught and will now teach to you is to think of this word **example** like an autobiographical movie script, where you as the actor are

trying to play the role of the writer. The more closely you follow the script the more closely you will represent the writer. It is the same with Christ. The closer you follow his script the more accurately you will display his character.

Now lets apply this to your workplace. Whats Gods script for you in your workplace.

Look at Verse 22, He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten but continued **entrusting himself to him who judges justly.**

So your script in your workplace is to not sin. To not deceive your boss or your coworkers. When your lunch is cut short, when your breaks are taken away when your boss gives you mandatory overtime you shouldn't threaten them. There is no room in the christian life for boycotts, or walkouts, or picketing or letter writing campaigns if they are outside of the proper corrective channels. You simply continue to entrust yourself to Him who judges justly. Why? Because this is the script.

God in the flesh condescended to earth to give you this example. He had more rights and power than anyone. He could calm a storm with his words and raise men from the dead yet he wanted to show you that the way to the Crown is through the cross. Again, the way to the Crown is Through the Cross. That is his plan for you.

Go with me to Luke 22:39 and pay close attention to what is going to transpire, again, Luke 22:39. This is just before the Jesus' betrayal. We read.

And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. And when he came to the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "**Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.**" And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation."

While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, "**Lord, shall we strike with the sword?**" **And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.** But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him.

We know from the Gospels of Matthew and John that the disciple who cut off the ear of the servant was Peter. Peter. The same person who is writing to you about not avenging yourself, not reviling those who revile you and not to threaten when you suffer. Peter himself had to learn the hard way what he is telling you to do. This isn't easy. It wasn't easy for Peter either;

Look just a little more to the right in Chapter 23 verse 32

Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. And Jesus said, "**Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.**" And they cast lots to divide his garments. And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers **scoffed** at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!" The soldiers also **mocked** him, coming up and offering him sour wine and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

Look down at Verse 44:

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I **commit** my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

While Jesus was being unjustly crucified under the power of an unjust government while being scoffed at, mocked and humiliated, while hanging on a tree gasping for breath what are his last words that he gives us "Father into your hand I **commit** my spirit" Until his last moments of life on this earth he **Entrusted** himself to him who will do what? **judge justly.**

What a supreme example our Lord has put before us. His focus was unwavering as he endured such unjust treatment for **our sake**. Not only redemptively but also to leave us a script. He knew that it wasn't time for justice but time to give grace.

Now the good news is you're not Jesus. And you will never be able to atone for sin. He was the only true God incarnate that was able to save. Yet you are called to model his life. Which sounds like an impossible task. And so what Peter does in these final two verses is gives you a reminder of the means provided for you in order to follow such an impossible script. To help you stay focused on displaying grace.

Verse 24 we read: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls"

I'm going to sum this up fairly quickly.

Christ died for you in order that you might depart from sin and live to righteousness. To change your life pattern, to cover you, to regenerate you, to make you a new person from sinner to saint. His death makes it possible for you to be free from both the penalty and power of sin and to live for Him. His death and resurrection has allowed you to be indwelled with the holy spirit so that you are able to walk by the spirit and not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

Look at 1 Peter 2:9 - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession that you may **proclaim the excellencies** of him who called you of of darkness and into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

I love that last line, we have received mercy, we have been returned to the care and comfort and protection of the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. Friends at the moment of salvation we are placed into Christ. We are able to do the good works which he prepared beforehand because of the finished work of Christ on the Cross. We can continue to entrust ourselves to God in any and all circumstances because he is the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us so that we may lay down our lives for others in order to display grace.

Why are we able to endure unjust treatment in the workplace? to keep grace our focus? Because we are in the loving care of our perfect shepherd and under the protection of our perfect overseer.

## **CONQUERING KING**

So again, in summary. Peter has told you that you should **submit to unjust employers**, in order to **display grace, for you are called to follow the example of the suffering servant**, and now I want to take it one step further and say "**but you will one day follow the conquering King.**"

You see, There is more to the story. The script doesn't stop there. We have the privilege of sitting on this side of redemptive history with the word of God inscripturated that tells us that there is more.

Why can we lay aside our rights and just deserves now? Why can we display Grace now and not have to overly fixate on trying to fix social institutions, fix our workplaces, **because Perfect Justice is coming, and we are coming with Him.**

Lets see how the script continues.

Look at 1 Peter 1:10:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied long ago searched and inquired carefully inquiring what person or time the spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the **sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.**

Look at 1 Peter 1:20

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God who **raised him from the dead and gave him glory** so that your faith and hope are in God.

So there is suffering followed by Glory, lets expand on this a little more.

Lets go to 1 Corinthians 15 Verse 22

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the **firstfruits**, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father **after destroying every rule and every authority and power.** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

So as the script continues we see that Christ suffered, died, was raised was glorified and then will reign. You hear in this passage that Christ is called our First Fruits. He is the preliminary installment of what is both an example and a guarantee of what will come for we who believe in him. ie: we too will suffer, die, and be raised and glorified and will rule and reign.

If none of you are tracking that is ok, come next week and show up for the next year to hear all about this in the book of revelation. And it is to that book that we will now go.

What does perfect Justice coming look like. It looks like this.

Revelation 19: 11

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he **judges** and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many **diadems**, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will **rule** them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Go over to Chapter 20 verse 11

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

That is what perfect Justice looks like. And as sure as the bible is true that justice will have its day. That is why it need not be our main concern. He is going to do it. As I said, Perfect justice is coming, but perfect Grace is here now. Let us display such grace to our unjust bosses and coworkers. Let us have compassion on them and not think that we are better than them. We are beggars telling other beggars where we found bread. Let this be our **focus** until we are in the presence of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Last Verse and then we will pray.

2 Corinthians 4:7 - These are the words of the apostle Paul who suffered far more beatings, stonings, imprisonments, and dangers in order to display Christ than anyone in scripture:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that **he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence**. For it is all for your sake, so that as **grace extends to more and more people** it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this **light momentary affliction** is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Lets Pray.

Father help us to be a people who display grace in the workplace. Help us to live holy and upright lives in the midst of a twisted and crooked generation. Help us to be able to endure the unjust treatment that comes our way for being obedient to your word. Give us a heart for the lost around us, not only to those who are our friends and family but also to those who mistreat, accuse and revile us. Help us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In your name we pray. Amen.



