

Be Like Christ

I Peter 2:18-21

INTRODUCTION:

We, as Christians, have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ. Peter is trying to drive home this point: "**You do not belong here!** **You are an outsider and a foreigner here.** If we do not understand this basic truth, then we will not understand what he is teaching us in the rest of his letter. He is going to tell us in today's passage **how to live as foreigners** in more detail. We all being called to **LIVE LIKE CHRIST!**

All Stand and Read Scripture

1 Peter 2:18-21 (NASB)

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God. ²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

Prayer

Since we have been saved by the grace of God (a salvation that we do not deserve) and have been purchased by God with Christ's blood on the cross, we NOW belong to God and are no longer our own.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Do you want to know **HOW** you are to live your life for God? Starting with this passage, Peter discusses the **effect** of our salvation on our life and our relationships. Peter is going to go beyond submitting to governmental authority. He tells us that we are to change our mindset from human understanding and take on the "**the image Christ**".

Romans 8:29 (NASB)

²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

BODY:

I. Traits of a Transformed Life in Christ.

1 Peter 2:18-19 (NASB)

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly

Peter is not just referring to slaves and slave owners here. He is referring to anyone who has authority over us. We are servants to many masters. TO BE LIKE CHRIST, Peter tells us that we must be in submission to all of them for this honors God.

- God.

John 12:49-50 (NASB)

⁴⁹ For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment *as to* what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

- Government

Matthew 22:21 (NASB)

²¹ They *said to Him, “Caesar’s.” Then He *said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”

- Church Leadership.

Hebrews 13:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

- Family.

Colossians 3:18-21 (NASB)

¹⁸ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. ²⁰ Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

- To be like Christ means to have a proper employee/employer relationship.

Colossians 3:22, 4:1 (NASB)

²² Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who *merely* please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

⁴ Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

We live among harsh employers, unjust government leaders, and unjust laws. We cannot decide to disobey because they are ungodly. Our call is to be submissive whether it is just or unjust.

The General Principle:

We are commanded to be submissive to all authority (both just and unjust) except when one of those authority figures commands us to do something that is forbidden by God.

Paul gives us the perfect explanation of how our submission works.

Colossians 3:23-25 (NASB)

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. ²⁵ For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

When we submit to human authority, we are in reality submitting to God. God is our true authority. So when we are told to do something that is contrary to God's law, we must submit to the higher authority, GOD! After all, our masters would not have any authority if God had not given it to them!

John 19:11 (NASB)

¹¹ Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

Endurance under Unjust Suffering.

Christ was completely innocent, without sin. He is the only One Who has ever truly been innocent. Suffering greatly. Yet He did it humbly and patiently and He **endured** it.

We will endure suffering. How we handle that suffering is important to God.

- Losing a loved one.
- Dealing with the knowledge that a loved one is terminally ill or permanently injured.
- Living under a false accusation.
- Personally dealing with a illness or injury.

We are called to endure all of these things. We are to be humble and patient with our trials instead of becoming bitter and angry. Peter is pointing out a specific suffering here. It is when we are being treated unjustly by someone we are submitting to. Remember, we are to submit to not only those who are good, but also to the harsh. We are to endure this harshness as Christ.

It may take the form of...

- Being persecuted by the government for your faith.
- Being passed over again and again for a promotion at work because of your faith.
- Enduring a spouse who is antagonistic that you have faith in Christ.

But in all of these situations, we are called to **BE LIKE CHRIST!**

- To endure it humbly and patiently without becoming bitter and angry.
- Without becoming a complainer.
- Without throwing violence back against it.

Peter tells us if we suffer because of our sins, what credit is that? Even enduring it with patience has no value because we deserve the suffering we receive. But, if we do right and suffer for it and patiently endure it, it finds favor with God.

We are expected to be extraordinary people. We are expected to **BE LIKE CHRIST!**

Christ is our example. Submitting to authority and enduring unjust suffering are at the core of what it means to "Be Like Christ".

Philippians 2:5-8 (NASB)

⁵ Have this **attitude in yourselves** which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

"Emptied Himself" is also translated "No Reputation". Paul says to have the mind of Christ. If we could summarize this in one word, it would be "Humility". Christ endured suffering in a patient and humble way.

II. **The Call to Be Like Christ.**

1 Peter 2:21 (NASB)

²¹ For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

We like to think of ourselves as a person who occasionally does sinful things. We do a few isolated acts that we should not do.

When the Bible says that we are sinners, this is not exactly what it means. It means that at our core we are contaminated and putrid. You are not just doing a few sinful things, you ARE sinful to the core.

ILLUSTRATION:

If you were to pour a quart of sugar in a bowl and stir in a half pint of vinegar. The vinegar would destroy the purity of the sugar. The vinegar would eventually dry out and leave the sugar as a discolored chunk of contaminated worthlessness. Even though you could take that chunk of discolored sugar and grind it back into granular form and even though you could add whitening to it and make it white again and make it look like pure granulated sugar, it will never again have the taste or smell of pure sugar. It is contaminated and stinks!

This is what sin has done to us. It has taken the perfect person that God created, and like vinegar in sugar, sin has contaminated us to the core. As sinful people, we are in rebellion against God. We are **infiltrated** with sin.

Peter is exposing that condition to us here.

"**Being Like Christ**" does not mean that we **DO** a few simple actions for Christ. It means that our "OLD MAN" who says "**Look out for #1. I have my rights. It's all about me**" has to **DIE** and we have to put on the "**NEW MAN**". We have to put on a new mindset based upon the Holy Spirit's guidance in the scriptures.

We have to "BE LIKE JESUS". We no longer serve ourselves we serve our new Lord who has purchased us with the blood of His Son. We are no longer our own, but we belong to Him. And we find favor with God when we submit to human authority and endure unjust suffering because, when we serve man, we are in reality serving to God!

We have to "**Be Like Jesus**" Who is totally opposed to everything that is natural to man.

It is not natural for me to want to submit to authority. EVERYTHING within me HATES it.

It is not natural for me to patiently endure suffering, even when I deserve it, let alone when I am being treated unjustly. But, **that is Jesus!**

As Christians, we are now citizens of the Kingdom of God. This world is just a temporary residence for us and we are to be as foreigners living in it. We are to avoid the lusts of natural man which wages war against our soul.

We want to pretend we are like Christ because we do some surface things. **NO!** It is much deeper than that! It must cause us to look at our very being and say "**I HAVE to DIE!**"

What I want as a man is all wrong. What feels right to me is evil. I've got to die to worldly ways. I've got to learn to **Live Like Jesus.**

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)

² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We have been shown the **traits** that we need to incorporate in our life in Christ and we have been **called** by God to exhibit those traits. We also see that there is a reward for BEING LIKE CHRIST.

III. **The Reward for Being Like Christ.**

1 Peter 2:18-20 (NASB)

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ **For this finds favor**, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, **this finds favor with God.**

God **finds favor** with us when we attempt to live in the image of Christ. Notice in verse 19 it says that we are to be submissive to all authority and endure unjust suffering "**for the sake of conscience toward God**".

This refers to our constant awareness of God and the realization that we are His and we are living FOR Him.

Galatians 2:20 (NASB)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Jesus submitted to earthly authority and endured physical suffering because He was looking toward the reward. He had to endure these events in order to accomplish His purpose...to do the will of God and to save us from our sins by bearing them on the cross.

Jesus looked beyond the current circumstances and saw God's final judgment and realized there was a final reward. By faith we can also see the reward.

Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)

² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

When we endure these trials with joy, they will solidify our faith.

Peter 1:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

We see past the trials and realize that God is doing something that will result in our reward. There are blessings for our suffering.

Jesus said.

Matthew 5:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; CONSIDER THIS...

We do not submit to any authority or endure any unjust suffering in a truly selfless way. We do it because we know that God expects it from us.

Jesus endured the cross because He knew it would be worth it all. And YOU can endure because God has promised that we will be rewarded for it in the end.

I NEED TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR.

The promise of a reward is not promised during our lifetime here on earth. The promise is for those who endure to the end and find their names written the Lamb's Book of Life.

CONCLUSION:

If you are here this morning and you have not submitted your life to God, now is the time.

Romans 6:3-7 (NASB)

³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin.

When you are buried in baptism, we arise to walk in newness of life. The vinegar has been removed from the sugar and you are pure again. Your sins have been forgiven and you are promised that the Holy Spirit will indwell within you.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, do it today. Don't wait until you have cleaned up your life. **You don't clean yourself up to come to the Christ; you surrender yourself to Christ, to let Him clean you up!**

He is Lord.

He is Lord. He is Lord.
He has risen from the grave and He is Lord.
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord.