

*13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. 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.*

A couple of items in the news this week that caught my attention and help us in understanding what Peter has been telling us in this passage. Two stories combined in my brain and I couldn't get them to go away, so I'll share some thoughts.

I listen to people speak on the radio often as I work. Much of what I do is hand work and can be done while I'm listening to things unrelated. It's funny I would combine these two.

On NPR, Terry Gross was interviewing Bill Moyers who is now in his 80's. He's been all over the world interviewing people and gathering stories. He was press secretary to Lyndon Johnson.

And the conversation turned to death, final things, religion, answers etc. and Terry Gross asked Moyers about being a Baptist pastor. He said; "seminary answered all of my questions, and then life questioned all of my answers". Somehow he ended up with nothing. A complete unbeliever. He walked away from christianity. He couldn't make the Bible's answers fit the worlds questions.

Likewise I listened to a story about an evangelical baptist cleric in Great Britain named Steve Chalke. Chalke came out this week and said that the story of original sin in the garden of Eden was just a parable. An attempt to explain the unexplainable in the world and no more. It didn't really happen to the first 2 real people . It's a story. A myth. He said; "Christians put too much emphasis on original sin."

He's on the same path as Moyers. Abandon the Bible as revealed truth

and figure things out on your own. Human reason trumps biblical revelation. And sooner or later you're a Bill Moyers, once upon a time a baptist seminarian that no longer believes, or you're a Steve Chalke teaching your people false doctrine.

Why is this important? How does faith grow strong or fail based on these 2 stories? And thousands of other stories just like them. Shipwrecked faith. Why does faith go off the tracks and become a train wreck? We see it all the time, and indeed it's as old as christianity itself. Nothing new here.

*18 Timothy, my child, I entrust you with this command in keeping with the previous prophecies about you, so that by them you may fight the good fight, 19 holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and **thereby shipwrecked their faith**. 20 Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme....1 Tim. 1:18 - 20a*

Original sin. A literal view of Genesis 1 - 3 is the only basis that faith can survive in. Original sin is ground zero for the meta-narrative of this book. Nothing makes sense around us without this base line truth.

Meta narrative is a big word. It means the big story within all of the individual stories. The big picture. Why the book IS and why it defines the world condition and where things are going.

God made a perfect sinless world. Man abandoned God and chose to obey the serpent. God set His world aside for a time, He cannot fellowship with evil. Every man after that is born broken. Fallen. Sinful from their mothers wombs. Sin is inherited. We all are born with the "sin" gene as it were.

And if that weren't devastating enough, Satan usurped the throne of this world. He rules it. The entire world of sinful men, owned and led by Satan are in a rebellion against God who created a perfect world. Sinful men, hate God.

God sent His Son to take the penalty that each person born into rebellion

was guilty of. Redemption is possible in Christ. And lastly, in the giant meta-narrative, Jesus, the Son of God, Co-equal with God the Father, will return to this world, depose Satan as ruler, put away all evil, and restore God's creation back to the Glory it once had before the rebellion of sin.

Full circle. Beginning perfection. Sinful rebellion. Plan of redemption. Ultimate reconciliation, judgement and return to glory. That meta-narrative ties every individual story in all 66 of the books that make up our Bible, together. We can see exactly where we are in that grand "big picture" and how everything else that happens around us is explained. It fits.

How do you explain ISIS and Islam? Evil that has fomented right at the surface. Men cutting other men's heads off, in the name of Allah. The meta-narrative I just gave you in a very few words encompasses that, and all of the other evils this cesspool of a world is drowning in. Satan rules.

Brutality against the helpless. Little children battered, brutalized and ruined. Women beaten and degraded. Gender confusion. Culture of death. Two headlines this week: National Review *Oregon's Radical, Grisly Abortion Law* The Federalist —*Oregon Passes Bill To Force Taxpayers To Pay For Abortions, Including Of Noncitizens*

What is happening to the helpless in our nation and indeed the whole world is sickening. It dulls the senses. You need a faith based in a book that answers the questions this world will raise. Satan rules. Evil reigns. But redemption is possible, and ultimately, God will crush evil and depose Satan and reign.

Why does He wait? Why does He allow the evil to continue, even for another minute? God has a sovereign plan. We as pots don't get to question the potter. Evil will reign here until God's plan and purposes are complete, and every promise in this book will be fulfilled.

The big picture answers every question that caused Moyers to say; *seminary answered my questions and life questioned my answers.*

My answers are solid. Based in the literal interpretation of God's book. Revealed truth. My faith is based in that foundation of stone. Nothing this world can throw at me can upset the answers of the big picture story of this book. I look around at the evil and injustice here, and say, "Of course!" Satan rules. What do you expect. But God in His perfect sovereign plan will come and judge this place. Soon, we hope. Soon.

Last week we discussed what I thought was an interesting topic. The slander against Christians from the world that is normal. God's people will always be slandered. We're enemy combatants on Satan's turf. To think we could avoid the world's slander is foolishness.

There was another interesting story this week in the news. Jeff Sessions spoke at a confluence of a group called the **Alliance Defending Freedom**. I honestly hadn't paid any attention as far as name recognition, but when I was curious and googled for a bit more information, in the "people also searched for..." section some names came up that I do recognize. **Focus on the Family**, **American Family Association**, and **Family Research Council**.

So we're talking about a good group, trying to accomplish good things. Conservative Christians trying to uphold families and family values and trying to help do what they can to retain religious freedoms.

Another group, the Southern Poverty Law Center blasted Jeff Sessions for mingling with and speaking to a "**hate group**". The news media picked up on the story and spread that language far and wide. Alliance Defending Freedom is a hate group and Jeff Sessions is guilty of that shame by association.

This kind of slander is a tactic of Satan. Notice that calling people who disagree with your world view a hate group goes right to the core and assigns motive. The only possible reason to disagree with progressives over what is actually right and wrong is a motive to hate people. Christians are haters.

I just thought it was a perfect example of what we taught last week.

Expect to be slandered. When the news media joins in the slander, unrestrained, it becomes a bon fire. Kristallnacht. The world categorizes christians as a hate group. Should we be surprised. No. Satan rules.

But here, Peter gives us the only formula forward. It was no different then than it is now. Christians are aliens. Strangers. Different from this world. In fact they shine righteousness into the darkness and sin is revealed. The world hates that. Still, Peter says;

*11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

The way we live in the midst of Satan's world is to shut up the slander by living in a way that disproves it. Keep your behaviour excellent. Lovely. Winsome. Classy. Noble.

That church that is in the news all the time bashing gays and crashing funerals carrying around their hate signs is just making it harder for the rest of us who are trying to live in a way, within the world as aliens and strangers, that aligns with what Peter teaches here. Satan loves those guys. Free fuel from so-called christians for his fire.

Peter gets down and dirty practical here.

*13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution,*

Peter is talking about governing authorities. God sovereignly places governments in place in order to keep sinful men from just running amuck.

Paul tells us all governments come from God. He is ultimately in sovereign control. And governments both good and bad come and go at His pleasure, but always the purpose is to control the anarchy that happens when there is no control of evil men at all.

We've just witnessed first hand what happens when a no government situation forms a vacuum. Evil runs rampant. You get ISIS. People running around chopping other people's heads off or lighting them on fire, in the name of Allah. Complete anarchy and destruction.

We haven't seen anything yet. If you're curious about what happens when restraint against sin is completely gone, read the book of Revelation.

So, even bad government is better than no government. Sinful man defaults to anarchy and murder without some kind of restraint.

Peter says, while we're left as aliens and strangers in this world, for the sake of the honor of the name of Jesus, submit yourselves to whatever government is there. Christians are not subversives always plotting the overthrow of the government.

We are sojourners who behave ourselves according to the laws and edicts of whatever government happens to be in control wherever we are at.

I read about India's government last week. In the last few years the government has leaned farther and farther towards the Hindu religion. Open persecution of christians broke out in some sectors. So I wrote to our Daniel and Jhansy and said they were in our thoughts and prayers, and how is it going for them?

Hello Pastor Jim,

Greetings from Vizag. Yes, it is true that our brothers and sisters in the Lord are facing persecution in other parts of India. We don't face any difficulties with the government here. We praise the Lord!

Thank you for your email and prayers for the church in India. We are all praying for you and we are grateful to Tonopah Church for your investment in missions works in India. The Lord has been gracious to us. He is sovereignly adding people to our church in Vizag. We are training men and women for a formal church launch towards the end of this year.

Daniel follows Peter's model given here. You work within what is in

place, and you thank God for His sovereign mercy. We've got bigger fish to fry than overthrowing the government. We quietly work within whatever government God has allowed to be in place, and He sovereignly takes people out of Satan's world and adds them to His church.

*13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*

We honor and respect the authority of our president. We honor and respect the authority of our federal government. I just mailed off \$926 more dollars the IRS said that I owed from 2015. We honor and respect our state governor. We obey the laws of the United States and we obey the laws of Nevada.

We honor our county government. We pay our property tax bills. We wave at and are thankful for our law enforcement officers around town.

What happens when a government that is in place calls good evil and evil good? What do you do then? What about Oregon, who forces it's citizens to pay for babies to be murdered? And allows lawsuits against bakers and photographers and florists that quietly seek to demur from providing services at so called gay weddings out of conscience?

In those cases, christians are to be salt. We are to take every legal and lawful avenue to challenge those wrongs. That can be done excellently. Nobly. Quietly. We don't burn down the state house. We don't try to assassinate the governor. We take every legal recourse. Always with the excellence that Peter dictates to us.

These are our marching orders. This is how we live in this world, so that ultimately, God is honored because of us, and not blasphemed.

What if push comes to shove? What if the government orders me to do what this book says I may not do? Then what?

Guess who our example is? It should be of no surprise that the one who paved the way for all christians after him in this situation is one; Peter. Not once, but twice in Acts.

*Acts 4:...18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than God. 20 For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." ...*

*Acts 5...28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us responsible for this man's blood." 29 But Peter and the other apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men.*

If what the government orders you to do is in conflict with what our heavenly master clearly tells us to do, we obey God. Peter and John did that and when the government threw them in jail, they went quietly to jail.

That's how we roll.

*15For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

Is there any evidence that living quiet dignified sanctified Godly lives will silence ignorant men? I believe that within that verse is a promise. It doesn't occur with all men. But the promise is that some will be persuaded by our consistent Godly lives, and will join with us.

And you can read in history that the more difficult the challenge to the christians, the more this promise is fulfilled. Christians who maintain a quiet Godly witness in the midst of trouble and persecution will by their consistent lives, win some.

We honor God by living this book. Some men will take note and listen. This book promises that.

*16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

We have been set free so that we can be slaves.

Christ died to free us from the bondage of sin and Satan. We are free of this world and it's ruler and it's sentence of death through sin. Free! Jesus purchased that freedom for us. But on the other side of that coin it says, *but ye were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body.*

We were bought and given freedom from our old taskmasters. Sin and Satan and death. But we were set free so that we could be slaves of our new Master. What a sweet slavery. Our new Master showers us with every blessing in the heavenlies.

This is all crazy talk to a world that cannot fathom what we're talking about. You signed up for slavery?? That's why they need to see us living it. Our lives are our silent witness. In time, if God is gracious to them, they may be silenced and beg to know how to also be slaves to such a Master!

*17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

This week out at work I learned that one of our team members is a gay man. And the first thought in my mind was that I hope I get to share with him that as far as I'm concerned he is of value and that my book says that I need to honor him and love him unconditionally.

That's different than the worlds version of respect that is being forced down our throats. If I get the opportunity I need to share the clear biblical perspective, but that opportunity may never come. Meanwhile, he's no different than any other sinner that God tells me to honor and respect and yes, love.

The world needs to see christians obeying this verse. The world is watching to see if christians respect all men.

Love the brothers! The world is watching to see if christians even honor other christians. Yikes. You go on line and read how christians talk to each other, and if you're the world, you say, those guys treat each other worse than the non christians treat each other. Why would I be drawn to that. It's like a bloody free for all.

Note the language. Honor all men. Love the brothers. Fear God. In increasing succession each word is of more depth and gravity than the last.

The world is watching and noting whether I respect other men. They're judging me on how I love my fellow christians. And they're watching to see my obedience to my master. If I don't obey His voice in this book, will the world look on and say that I was any different than they are?

MacArthur has a story he tells of preaching one evening up at Wayside Honor Rancho. That was a minimum security prison similar to our local one. John's father in law ministered there faithfully for years.

John says one of the inmates came up to him and was praising him about the lesson and also assuring John that he was indeed also a christian. And John says, what're you doing in here? And the guy says he had a bunch of outstanding warrants for his arrest and they caught up with him.

And John made the point that your witness either helps or hurts the cause of Christ. In this case, maybe it would be more help if that guy didn't broadcast that he was a christian.

Finally, Honor the king. Our King is Christ. But our book tells us to honor our worldly rulers. I haven't always been a perfect example of that.

We're back to honor here. Honor all men. Love the brothers. Fear God. Honor the king. Honor the president. Vote for the one that most closely regards the values of this book. But no matter who God puts in the office, when he's there, you honor him.

Christians are not subversives. It's pointless for us to try to overthrow the earthly government. The government we long for is coming when Christ returns and rules on the throne of David. Until then all governments are hopelessly flawed. God sovereignly places Presidents and Kings, both good and bad. He tells us to honor them.

*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.*

Again, this is the same idea. The world is watching us. If indeed we are aliens and strangers, the world is watching us. They're watching to see if our lives are any different than any other Joe bagofdonuts in the world.

They're watching to see if our behaviour is excellent. They're watching to see if we respect others, saved and lost. Gentle and reasonable and difficult. Like us and different from us. How do we treat them. Do we respect them?

They're watching to see how we treat each other. How well do we love the brothers and sisters. Are we really any different than the world?

They're watching to see if we indeed fear and reverently obey our God. Do we do what this book commands? Is God 1st in our lives, or is He only marginal. Sort of an occasional God when we can fit Him in conveniently. Don't think any of these is lost on the watching world.

The world is watching to see how we honor our government and our leaders.

And finally, the world is watching us at work. Vs. 18 is talking about those who are in authority over us in our work places. This is critical.

The world isn't stupid. We claim to be different. Distinct. Strangers and aliens. And the world is watching us at work. Are we really any different? How is our work ethic?

Peter says, if your boss is nice, that's great. But if your boss is horrible and makes your life miserable and demands too much, you don't get a pass. This verse is not hard to understand.

*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.*

45 years ago the Jesus movements and Jesus people were a big deal in southern California. It was a movement that was showing the world that all of the old status quo's were not necessary to be a christian. Jesus wore sandals. Jesus had a beard.

There was good and bad I suppose in all of that. We had looked like Mormon missionaries long enough I suppose. Some change was good. Some went too far.

But in that era there were the bumper stickers. Remember those. Honk if you love Jesus. And the IXOYE fish. All that stuff. And I never put any of those on my cars. Why?

This is a true story, Pam will rat me out. I didn't put them on my car because I was a horrible driver. Perfectly awful. Inconsiderate and nasty. Susceptible to road rage. I needed to get out of Los Angeles badly.

Even then I was aware of what Peter is saying here. I knew I was awful and I didn't want to dis-honor the Lord by advertising that I was a christian. Some bone head cuts you off and he's got a bright lime green "honk of you love Jesus" sticker on his bumper as you're trying to avoid going into the ditch. It took me forever to grow up.

The world is watching us. I'll close our thoughts by returning full circle to where we began. A little phrase in vs. 13

*13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution*

For the Lord's sake.

We are strangers and aliens in a foreign land. The residents of that land are watching us to see how we live.

*2 Cor. 5:19,20 say; ...19 that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us.*

We keep our behaviour excellent in this world, for the Lord's sake, because we are ambassadors for Christ. God is making His appeal to reconcile the world . . through us. Our words, when the opportunity comes, will be empty if our lives don't measure up.