

Kingdom Exiles Part 5

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[0 : 00] 1 Peter chapter 2. Once again, we're back in this great test. I'm going to start reading in verse 11.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable so that when they speak against you as evildoers, not if but when, they may see your good deeds and glorify God in the day of visitation.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you shall put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. That is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated.

[1 : 19] Whenever a government becomes tyrannical, the people begin to talk of resistance and revolution.

But a problem with revolution is that the new government realizes it has to protect itself from those whom they replaced, whom they didn't kill, imprison, or exile.

And then the new government becomes the new tyrant to protect its power. Just ask Cuba. The American Revolution is one of the more successful revolutions.

But then I think the Native Americans and African slaves of that time would tell a different story. Christianity is a revolution.

But we wrestle not against flesh and blood. We are a revolution against the kingdom of darkness, led by spiritual forces of wickedness, whose chief is named Satan.

[2 : 35] These forces assault our own hearts, even, and wills, all too often, leading us into sin by hooking on to our desires.

These forces use human beings, governments, corporations, to do their bidding. But they are the power behind the human authorities that reject the living God and his most great son, Jesus.

They are the power. This is why human revolutions of force tend to fail. They don't get to the real problem.

But just like the Roman Empire discovered in other kingdoms and corporations and whatever have learned, the kingdom of God advances steadily under the banner of his king.

How? By subverting human power with holy, peaceful, submissive living. Where is your power?

[3 : 52] Where is your power? Now, keep in mind, when I say subversive, we talk about subversive living in Christ as a way of overthrowing the kingdom of darkness.

Subversive means our lives under Christ undermine the worldly system of living that leaves God out. It undermines that system by showing an alternative that's better.

We're not better, but the kingdom that we serve and the king that we serve is much better. So our lives, so Peter in this, this is just kind of review real quick.

Peter in this passage urges us to live as sojourners and exiles. Remember that. We're not, we are passing through, but we're still to get involved. But we belong to another kingdom.

We are to remember that our holy life, holy living, is to be, that is to keep our lives honorable. Holy living is our way of demonstrating the reality of a real, of a new king and kingdom.

[5 : 04] That's how they see that Jesus is real. They tend to look in particular at his people. History, declares it, but they can't see history.

They can see us. And so a closer walk with the filling of his spirit is so important that we allow him to remake us into his image so that people see who Jesus is in us.

Now, when we do this, when we do this, it may not always turn out to feel good.

That's why he says when they speak against, when, remember, when, not if, when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on a day of visitation.

Your holy living, your righteous living in Jesus will offend some people. Not because of you, but because of Jesus in you.

[6 : 19] You see, his holiness offends. Without Jesus in your life, you'd be offended too. And you were offended. You were, you were like Peter, you were like, Lord, get away from me.

I'm a sinful man. Or like Judas, I got to get rid of this guy. Because he's not doing it the way I thought he would. Yes, it will be, you will be put upon sometimes.

But then he says, let your good deeds shine still. So that God is glorified on the day he comes. The day of visitation. Some people will rise up and give God praise for your life.

Just to review. But here's, here's the shocker. Moving on. Here's the shocker. I wouldn't have gone here. I'm amazed. Peter just, the Bible doesn't think the way I think.

God doesn't think the way I think. Amazing. So here's the shocker. In our omniscient way of living, Peter tells us as kingdom exiles to submit to all human authorities.

[7 : 36] You just told me I'm an exile and a sojourner and now you're telling me to submit to worldly systems of authority?

I didn't expect that. So we got to think about it. It's interesting that literally he says, submit to every human creature or human creation, literally.

Now before we get into the particulars of that, of all that, I want to ask an important question. I got to back up. Get back up so we can get a running start. Where does human authority begin?

Where does human authority come from? He wants us to submit to it. Where does it come from? Well, you know the answer.

The Ten Commandments. You know that the first four commandments begin with God. God is the ultimate authority in the universe he created. He is master over all things and beings. He is the one who's delivered us from bondage.

[8 : 36] So it begins with him. But then the last six commandments focus on how we treat one another as human beings. And look at Commandment 5.

Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God has given you. That is the first commandment after God.

Parents. This is where human authority begins. It begins in the family with parents serving under God to govern their children.

From there we get tribal leaders and governors and mayors and governments. The Westminster Larger Catechism question 24 helps us here.

Did you get that? Yeah. Did you get that, Daniel? Is it on there? Double L-C? Do you have that one? Back there? I wasn't sure if Daniel got it or not. Okay, you gotta listen to it. Okay. Westminster Larger Catechism question 24.

[9 : 43] It asks this question. Who are meant by father and mother in the fifth commandment? Who are meant by that? Is it up there? Oh, good. Good. By father and mother in the fifth commandment are meant not only natural parents but all superiors in age and gifts.

and especially such as by God's ordinance are over us in place of authority whether in family, church, or commonwealth government.

You see, the church has always understood that to be true. That human authority begins there and moves outward into government.

It's interesting. It's interesting that when a child in the old covenant would not obey his parents meaning he had little respect for them he could find himself as an adult.

This is an adult. This is Deuteronomy 21. He could find himself being put to death. And in that passage it talks about if your child is a glutton or drunkard.

[10 : 49] So we know we're talking about adults here. You know, but if an adult child did not respect and honor his parents which was the first place of authority he could find himself on the wrong side of the dirt.

We have no record of that actually being done in the Bible but that is on the books. But here's the thing. Why is this so important? Because if a child would not obey his parents then he'd have little respect for any other governing authorities as he matures or she matures.

When our culture American culture now chips away at parental authority it doesn't realize it is chipping away at a person's respect for all authority in our schools on our jobs government and even God for the fifth commandment as I said comes right after our relationship with God.

So that's where human authority comes from. So when Peter is talking about all human institutions or authority structures you gotta understand it begins in the home.

That's why parents it is not your job to be your child's best friend. It's your job to be their parent. And that's good.

[12 : 29] That's why we call them children. Immature. Growing. Getting there. But they need us to not be buddy-buddy.

No one being your child's friend. But first of all being a parent. Guarding. Guiding. Teaching. Instructing. All in love.

Because if they don't respect you they will not respect any other authority later. That's back I just got my back up now we're moving forward right? Back to our text.

Subversive holy living means we submit to all human authority. Be subject. That's a command by the way. Be subject. He is not giving you an option.

He's not giving us an option as God's people. Be subject to all human authority for whose sake? The Lord's sake. The text. The Lord's sake. That means for his glory doing his will.

[13 : 34] Be subject. Examples that he will give in the passage. What is he talking about? What authority is he talking about? He will talk about the emperor.

Government. He will go on to talk about slaves to masters. We don't have slaves today. We talk about employees and employers. Work.

Economics. He will talk about wives to their husbands and also he calls husbands to respect and honor their wives. So the family. In chapter two into chapter three he uses these examples to talk about what it means to submit to human institutions of authority.

Now when it came to government you got to keep in mind and this is important this is where we live right when it came to government Peter as well as Paul in Romans 13 were talking about Caesar.

Submit to Caesar. Paul in Romans 13 this is beautiful in many ways but scary.

[14 : 46] Romans 13 I don't know if that's oh it is up there let every person be subject a command now that's a command to the governed authorities for there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgment for rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad he's talking about Caesar people would you have no fear of the one who is in authority then do what is good and you will receive his approval for he is God's servant for your good but if you do wrong be afraid for he does not bear the sword in vain for he is the servant of God and an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrong doer therefore one must be in subjection not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience for because of this you also pay taxes for the authorities are ministers of God attending to this very thing pay to all what is owed to them taxes to whom taxes are owed revenue to whom revenue is owed respect to whom respect is owed honor to whom honor is owed

Peter and Paul drinking from the same fountain are calling upon the Christians of their day living under a truly totalitarian regime to submit to the governing authorities in that land and I think as I mentioned the word institutions can be translated literally creation or creatures Preston Sprinkle in his book on exile says this the regions his his audience Peter's audience was sojourning in were rife with emperor worship perhaps Peter deliberately called the emperor and governor creatures as a reminder that they weren't divine they were created and controlled by the only one who is divine and keep in mind anything that we create bears that limitation and it was it was a message and reminder to God's people that though they were to submit to human authority they were to remember that those to whom they submit are just humans with limited power and wisdom because after his resurrection

Jesus told us in the great commission he said simply this and this is where it begins all authority in heaven and in earth has been given to me to me so again who's who's really in control here who's really governing the universe who's governing all nations and governments and leaders who is in control the Christians understood that though they submitted to the Caesar they recognized that Caesar never had the last word the human authorities were at the mercy of their creator whom

Christians call father no matter what government or corporations or authorities and powers do we must remember he's in control we are never at the mercy of the government or any entity but we are always at the mercy of him who is the father of mercies listen this is why abusive of totalitarian governments what I mean by totalitarian no freedom of opposition or differing opinions that allowed those governments fear Christianity totally afraid that's why they clamp down that's why you find in those types of countries there is no freedom of religion they may say so but when it comes to Christianity has to be controlled because we're not afraid of the government because we serve a higher authority who demands our first loyalty and fear submit but remember submit but do not fear submit without breaking the law of God and recognize that

Jesus is Lord Jesus is in control and even Jesus himself submitted to the powers though they were unjust he submitted to them 1st Peter 2 Peter's gonna talk about it for to this you have been called because Christ also suffered 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 on his body on the tree that we may die to sin and live to righteousness by his wounds you have been healed for you were straying like sheep but now have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls Christ suffered unjustly under an unjust government that he might save us that through death who would appear to be weakness he might deliver all of us who fear death he might deliver us from the power of death and bring us into the kingdom of life and light in his father you see if our

[21 : 36] Lord conquered death who should we fear again if our Lord submitted to the government authorities even unjust to the point of death he showed us something that it is through death it is through weakness that Christians overcome evil not through might but through weakness that we win see God can use submission to bear witness to his reality because we look like Jesus we are to be the best citizens of our countries we are to be the good citizens in every country that we inhabit as exiles we are to be those who show proper respect to our leaders and who pray for them when's the last time you prayed for your president that should be a regular part of our prayers our mayor our governor do you pray for them if you're not praying for them on a regular basis you're missing what scripture is saying to you pray for first

Timothy two first of all then I urge that supplications prayers intercessions and thanksgiving be made for all people for kings and those who are in high positions why why does Paul tell us to pray for them here it goes that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life godly and dignified in every way you see the apostles understood that that that that that prayer God can use our God responds to our prayers to accomplish his will and the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord and like a water course he can turn it wherever he wants it to go I wonder sometimes that we're getting the government that we deserve because we don't pray let me toss out a couple problems we have in our country with everything the Bible says here

Christians are notorious for speaking disrespectfully of our leaders y'all got real quiet because you're guilty I know I try to avoid it but I slip into it it's it's so easy even in this current presidential election too many of us sound just like the world in their disrespectful language about President Biden VP Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump we insult all of them with ease and consider it freedom of speech how do you speak about your president y'all looking at me real funny but I'm in the book I don't know where you are I'm in the book I'm gonna stand over here in scripture and let you deal with that how do you speak about your president nothing you don't have nothing you can't disagree but how do you disagree what do you write online or give amen to like online as people talk disrespectfully

I mean saying heinous things ad hominem attacking character and personality and going that should never be said among us never ever don't mean we don't disagree I didn't say that so make sure you got that but how do you speak listen our country gives us freedom of speech but God doesn't God regulates our speech let your speech be seasoned with salt that have been ministered grace to the hearers James warns us about the tongue how we curse people and then bless God we curse our president we land blast we say horrible things I'm not saying we don't disagree I'm going to keep saying that because I want somebody to go out of here and say pastor may the

Lord smite you we we can disagree but are your words building up those who hear your words are you a gossip are you a slanderer you don't even know the truth all you read was an article online you have no idea if it's true be careful about believing everything you read I'm talking across the aisle here people I don't care who you vote for we're all guilty but we need to deal with it we are notorious for speaking ill even the apostle Paul was rebuked when he spoke disrespectfully of a leader did you know that Acts chapter 23 and looking intently at the council

[27 : 42] Paul said brothers I have lived my life before God and all good conscience up to this day and the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth then Paul said to them God is going to strike you you whitewashed wall then someone said are you sitting to judge me I'm sorry Paul said are you sitting to judge me according to the law and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck those who stood by would you revile God's high priest he was unjust an unjust high priest would you revive him and Paul said oh I did not know brothers that he was the high priest for it is written you shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people Exodus 22 28 the apostle Paul when he inadvertently spoke evil or better yet the passed judgment upon a leader who was being unjust repented when he found out who he was if he repented

I think probably every person in this room probably needs to repent because we treasure in this regard we treasure the constitution the first amendment more than we treasure the word of God on this issue I told you this is going to be weird second thing I said there were two problems we face too often we are busy fighting to get or maintain Babylonian power get our guy in power run get our guy in power when Jesus way is death and resurrection and spiritual power see we love

Babylon more than we love the kingdom and we will fight to protect Babylon we got to get Christians in power we got to get our people in power we got to get our people in government we got to make sure we do we really not saying it's not wrong Christians should run for government Christians should be in every area of creation is ours okay we need some of you to run for office in Chattanooga and I hope you will but remember it's still Babylon are we fighting for power in Babylon can I ask you a question do you believe holy living for Jesus is more powerful than the vote think about it get back to me submission does not mean total absolute obedience it is qualified we submit as long as it does not violate

God's clear word on our life and conduct and here's the difference between the culture of the text and our culture you see they're in the Roman empire when they spoke out they could die it was dangerous you don't see any riots you don't see Christians picketing and and and and Gavin and you know standing in front of the emperor's home going down with Caesar Caesar unfair you don't see that kind of stuff because that was death Paul said pray for them so we can live a quiet life why so the gospel can spread more easily Christians running for their lives now God still blesses even though they were being hunted at times and persecuted the faith still grew but Paul didn't pray for that he prayed for peace he wanted God's people to live in peace God wants us to live in peace as much as is possible but this is

America and we have freedoms amen to that freedoms to disagree with our government freedoms to speak and call our government onto the carpet and say you have violated the word of God we have the freedom to do that amen freedom to say Lord that law is unjust we want to change that law amen freedom to say to a politician who cheated on his wife or was abusing his authority sir ma'am you are wrong and we are going to vote you out we have freedom for that and we should exercise that freedom they didn't have that freedom in first century we do but Paul said do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil don't use the freedom we have to violate the word of

[33:11] God don't use the freedom you have to use your mouth and your keyboard in a way that dishonors Christ use the freedom that we do have but use it rightly use it in a way that honors God what would it look like here we go if you got into a discussion with people around you talking about politics and they're running down and saying horrible nasty things about the president what would it look like if you spoke respectfully of the president in their presence what would look like if you spoke respectfully of the mayor or the governor in their presence what would look like if you refused to follow people in their slander and attack what would that say what would look like on your job as you around the water cooler complaining about the supervisor complaining and talking about what would it look if you refused to do that and said hey there's problems but what would it say when students are complaining about a professor and he's a pain and just running the guy down or her for that matter and what would it look like if we spoke respectfully of the authority over us even though we may disagree but did so respectfully not using our freedom as a cover up for evil what would it say holiness is powerful it's powerful let me end with an example we mentioned this before but we didn't go through all of this

Daniel chapter one an example Daniel and his friends submitted to the Babylonian culture in every way that they could they accepted new names new Babylonian names they got a Babylonian education they were being prepared for government service in Babylon and they did serve the government of Babylon for years and years especially Daniel because see doing this did not threaten their identity as the people of God it seems they knew about Jeremiah's prophecy to seek the welfare or shalom of the city which was Babylon but they drew the line in two places they would not eat Babylonian food and that would have been strange because they were being offered the king's food they were offered the best food gourmet Babylonian cooking they were needed in some way they saw that as violent the

Jewish dietary laws that they were given by God would defile them so they refused maybe the king's food was related to the idols or false gods of Babylon we know that's true in the New Testament so they abstained from that they also oh by the way they gave an alternative we're not going to eat your food but here give us vegetables and water by the way that's the Daniel diet y'all vegetables and water so if you're on a Daniel diet and you're eating more than vegetables and water yeah right okay I'm sorry no charge for that that was just that slipped out they gave an alternative they said hey we won't do this but we'll do that they were working within the system and God gave them favor within the system we got within the system of

Babylon and if we stay faithful to the Lord he'll give us favor in different places come on somebody anybody out there also they refused to worship the Babylonian gods and they kept up their faithful devotions to the Lord walking in righteousness before him we know that Daniel prayed three times a day to the living God who is sovereign over all the earth not only culture due to their faith in God fiery furnace and lions them they went there because they would not compromise the living God they lived within Babylonian culture but they did not fully assimilate they didn't fully fit and that is where they got into trouble do we fit have we gone native to Babylon do we sound like our neighbors do we sound like the rest of the talking heads slandering people and blasting folk no respect you know

I want to tell you something Joe Biden is President Joe Biden that's called respect if Trump wins he'll be President Trump to you and to me if Kamala Harris wins she'll be President Kamala Harris not Kamala not Biden not Trump I had an elder one and years ago Billy remembers he would go to the men's room and he would say I'm giving Hillary a message for Bill that was his line is that you how you talk about the president of our country you revive him that way would you revive her that way if she wins family we're

[39 : 24] Christians we will not bow down to the idols but we speak with love and respect and it will be a light to those around the saints we're not revolutionaries we don't join we don't charge the capital that's not us sure we can we have the right to pick it and have signs what does your sign say if you go out there when people are yelling horrible things if you're in the crowd what are you saying we can do these things but how are we going to do it we subvert the system of darkness by being light not by becoming darkness all right I'm done I'm just yeah whatever done with that I'm reminded of

Moses in Hebrews 11 by faith Moses when he was grown up refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin he considered the reproach that's disgrace insult shame of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt for he was looking to the reward by faith he left Egypt not being afraid of the anger of the king for he endured as seeing him who is invisible do you see Jesus brothers and sisters do you see Jesus if you are seeing his glory and his majesty he will give you strength to navigate the system without going native and falling into it he will give you strength even if you get slapped for it he will give you strength to stand but we must stand on our knees we must not give in to the darkness we respect authority but we do not compromise

Christ and his kingdom father will you please let us reflect upon your word about this help us lord you've called us to be different in this political season lord make your church different make us light in the darkness deliver us from partisan politics and deliver us from hate speech and chewy hate speech deliver us from disrespect of authority around us lord help us to be good citizens and to also to always keep your word first and your kingdom first help us to see Jesus amen