

PETER'S EPISTLES

1 Peter: Living In Conflict With The Culture **XI. Relating Righteously To Godless Overseers** **(1 Peter 2:18-25)**

I. Introduction

- A. Several believers in different states of the nation have reported on the increasing difficulty they face in living in accord with Bible truth since doing so conflicts with the godless world's deteriorating culture around them.
- B. "First Peter was written to Christians . . . whose stand for Jesus Christ made them aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 837), so we study 1 Peter for insight and edification.
- C. 1 Peter 2:18-25 calls us to relate righteously to godless overseers, and we view it for our application:

II. Relating Righteously To Godless Overseers, 1 Peter 2:18-25.

- A. The Greek text's word for "servants" (KJV) in 1 Peter 2:18 is not the common term for slave in *douloi*, but *oiketai*, "household or domestic servants" that "was relevant to a large number of Peter's readers," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 795; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 847.
- B. ". . . (U)nderstood punishment and suffering was common" for such servants, so though we do not face the institution of slavery in our era, this passage is very applicable to a wide variety of social arrangements in business or institutions where subordinates suffer injustices from overseers.
- C. Peter's words to afflicted subordinates are thus certainly applicable for us today (as follows), 1 Peter 2:18b-25:
 1. Believers in subordinate arrangements in human institutions must submit to their overseers with all respect not only to those who are good and "gentle, kind" (*epieikes*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 292), but also to the "crooked, unscrupulous, dishonest" (*skolios*, Ibid., p. 763), 1 Peter 2:18b.
 2. Such submission is "commendable" (*charis*, "grace," Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 847) if for the sake of conscience toward God one "bears up under" (*hupophero*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 856) suffering such unjust "affliction" (*lupe*, Ibid., p. 483), 1 Peter 2:19.
 3. Peter added that there is no "credit" (*kleos*, Ibid., p. 435) for being punished for having done wrong, but if we do well and suffer for it, that finds favor (*charis*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) with the Lord, 1 Peter 2:20.
 4. To back up this claim, Peter referred to our ultimate example in the Lord Jesus Himself, 1 Peter 2:21-25:
 - a. We believers were called by God to suffer for doing well, for even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ suffered on our behalf, leaving us an example that we should follow in His "footsteps" (*ichnos*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 385), 1 Peter 2:21.
 - b. Those footsteps included the following infinitely gracious acts of our Lord in our behalf, 1 Peter 2:22-25:
 - i. Jesus did no sin nor was "deceit, treachery" (*dolos*, Ibid., p. 202) found in His mouth, v. 22.
 - ii. When He was then reviled, He did not revile in return, when He suffered, He did not threaten in return, but He entrusted [Himself] to the Father Who judges righteously, 1 Peter 2:23 ESV, NIV.
 - iii. Jesus then bore our sins in His own body on the tree, thus becoming a curse for us, for all who hung on a tree were cursed of God (Deuteronomy 21:23), that we, being dead to sins might, live unto righteousness, by Whose stripes we were healed, 1 Peter 2:24 NIV with Isaiah 53:5.
 - iv. Ultimately, we were as wayward sheep, but now by Christ's infinitely gracious work on the cross in our behalf have we been "turned about," "returned" to the "Shepherd" and "Overseer" (*episkopon*) of our souls, 1 Peter 2:25; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 848.

Lesson: *Believers who function in subordinate arrangements to overseers in human institutions are called of God to follow in the footsteps of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in how they relate to those overseers, even to the ungodly and difficult ones. Like Christ, they must submit with all respect to their overseers and bear up under unjust affliction, for doing so is commendable before God. Indeed, Christ Himself left us the great example in His sufferings of having no deceit or treachery in His mouth, of not reviling when reviled and of not threatening when suffering, but committing Himself to God the Father Who judges all men righteously. Remarkably, Jesus went so far as to submit to the human authorities over Him to where they made Him to be a curse for us, hanging Him on a cross, that we might be saved from sin and live unto righteousness as people who were once wayward, but who by God's grace have been turned around to return to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.*

Application: *May we believers who live in subordinate arrangements follow the footsteps of our Lord in relating to our overseers, even if they are ungodly, as that which is commendable before God.*