

WHO WANTS CHRISTIAN EMPLOYEES?

1 Peter 2:18-25

Classified ad in San Francisco Chronicle, under "Wanted:"

"Executive, age 22-80. Job entails sitting with feet on desk from 10 am to 4:30 pm watching others work. Must be willing to play golf every other afternoon. Salary starts at \$1,000 a week."

But, wait. There's a footnote: "We don't really have this job open. We just thought you'd like to see in print what everybody's applying for. [AP, 6-20-90]

Many employers—even Christian employers—don't want to hire Christian workers!

Serious indictment of Christians in 21st century

- Not considered desirable employees
- especially by Christian employers!*

Peter's idea—**Christians ought to be the best employees out there!**

Our response—we aren't willing to do our part because someone else isn't doing their part.

That's the main issue at stake in this passage—

We're to do our part to be faithful and glorify God in the workplace, whether anyone else does his part or not.

I can't worry about the other guy—I can only do something about my part!

Worst Case Scenario— What happened to our Lord?

CALL TO GOOD TESTIMONY IN MIDST OF SUFFERING 2:11-4:11

Main principle: **Christian hope should make a difference in our lives, even when suffering.**

Importance of good deeds 2:11-12

Importance of submission 2:13-3:7

Peter's interest: testimony of God's people before authorities.

In world characterized by rebellion and lack of respect for authority, it's hard to submit to authority when those in command abuse their privileges.

Nevertheless, it is precisely that submission to authority in the midst of persecution that will demonstrate that we are suffering on account of God and not for evil deeds.

Therefore, three areas of authority are defined and submission to the authority which God has established enjoined.

i. In the sphere of government 2:13-17

ii. In the sphere of work 2:18-25

God's people should be known for their faithfulness in their work and their submission to their boss.

THE COMMAND 2:18

Part 1: We're to BE SUBMISSIVE to our boss, giving them proper respect.

The slave/master relationship was used because it was the most common pattern of that day.

The particular reference here was to household slaves—it includes all the members of the household, even the women and children.

Barclay indicates that there may have been as many as 60,000,000 slaves in that day in the Roman empire.

About 500,000 of 870,000 people living in Rome at that time were slaves [*nearly 2/3 of the population!*]

These slaves were not just the laborers. Most professional or service professions were slaves in those days: doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, secretaries.

They were the ones who did the work. Who would do work if you could afford to pay someone else to do it?

Slaves had no rights. They were their masters' property.

There was no more basis for complaint than when a master threw a possession and broke it!

Aristotle, in one of his less brilliant moments said:

"Masters and slaves have nothing in common. A slave is simply a living tool." [That means doctors, lawyers, teachers, too!]

Frequently they even "bred" their slaves to raise powerful workers for themselves.

The same principles are applicable in a somewhat more general way to any employee/employer relationship today. It lacks some of the social implications, but the general rules of the game remain the same.

**Part 2: They were to be submissive to their boss
WHETHER THEY WERE GOOD AND
CONSIDERATE (reasonable, fair), OR
CROOKED AND UNJUST.**

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE 2:19-20

As we noted last week, as Peter treats each area of authority, he applies a universal principle that applies to every area of submission:

We are to submit to the authority God has established, regardless of how the authority treats us—even when they abuse that authority.

I am responsible before God for my part; the boss is responsible for his.

"THIS IS GRACE"

What is grace? Being able to suffer unjustly!

It's not grace—and we deserve no credit, WHEN WE SUFFER BECAUSE OF SIN—i.e., when we are rebellious and suffer for it!

Paul Cedar: "A number of years ago, I met a man who had come to Christ through the influence of his son who had personified this kind of behavior to his father.

"The young man had been stricken with polio at an early age and was badly crippled in both legs. His father became bitter over this malady which had afflicted his only son. He became an alcoholic and began to mistreat his wife and son.

"Life became "hell on earth" for them. The mother and son began to attend church and both received Christ. Their hatred and

resistance changed to love and concern. One evening, after the father had beaten the boy badly, he realized that the boy was expressing love to him rather than fear and hatred.

"He was touched by that response even in his stupor. He asked the boy why he was responding that way and the young man replied, 'It's because I love you, Dad. God loves you, and so do I!'"

"That night, his twelve-year-old son explained how to trust Jesus Christ personally. That is the potential power of 'supernatural' living in relationship to harsh masters, bitter parents, and to all those who don't know Him."

This same principle is true in every sphere of authority, in the work place, between father and child, between husband and wife.

THE SUPREME EXAMPLE—Jesus Christ 2:21-25

The last thing to be controlled and brought into subjection is the mouth.

Christ didn't talk back to the civil authorities.

Because of His submission, we have healing.

If *He* did it, how much more am I responsible to do it?

We are to follow His example.

Even if we suffer unjustly, we are to submit.

(This is totally contrary to the world's philosophy).

HE LIVED AS OUR EXAMPLE 21-23

Lesson 1: Suffering is a basic part of God's purpose for our lives. 2:21

"You have been called for this purpose"—We have been called to do what is right, suffer for it, and then patiently endure it—just as Christ did!

Lesson 2: (Jesus proved that) A person can be in God's will, be loved by God, and still suffer unjustly.

He left us a pattern to follow (letter copying in grade school)

We are to imitate His example.

Peter had seen the example.

We should walk in his footprints (steps)

(Ex. following in the mud or snow)

Instead of hatred, bitterness, and revenge, Christ demonstrated love and forgiveness.

v. 22– He did not sin [period! EVER!]

No "deceit" was found in His mouth.

=> bait for fish > guile, cunning treachery

He didn't use his mouth to fight back.

He didn't try to set traps for them—even thought they did for Him.

v. 23– He was abused (railed at, reproached), but He didn't fight back.

He suffered, but He didn't threaten them.

He kept on entrusting Himself, over and over again, to the one who judges justly.

Application 1: We, like Christ, are to demonstrate love and forgiveness, rather than hatred and bitterness.

Application 2: We, like Christ, are to entrust ourselves to Him who judges righteously.

HE DIED AS OUR SUBSTITUTE 24

The series of ways in which He serves as our example continues.

Lesson: Through His death, the very people who commit such atrocities find life.

That's how we're to function in this world.

Application: If we suffer unjustly, that suffering just might become the means by which the persecutor will find life.

HE CONTINUES AS OUR SHEPHERD AND GUARDIAN 25

We were wandering around like sheep, lost, without a shepherd.

Lesson: His suffering brought us to the Shepherd and Guardian (overseer).

Wiersbe: "In the O.T., the sheep died for the shepherd; but at calvary, the shepherd died for the sheep."

Application: Our suffering could attract some other wandering sheep to Him (the Shepherd and Guardian).

It isn't easy to make a 40-foot, 45-ton, untrained whale do what you want it to do, even if it's for its own good. That's what friends found out when a humpback whale, affectionately named Humphrey, made a wrong turn during his 1985 migration along the California coast. The wayward mammal became a celebrity when he turned into San Francisco Bay, swam under the Golden Gate Bridge, and managed to navigate 70 miles up river. For more than 3 weeks, Humphrey defied all efforts to get him back to salt water. Finally, marine biologists tried to lure him with the recorded sounds of feeding humpbacks. It worked. Humphrey responded to the "happy humpbacks" and followed "them" back to the Pacific.

The lure of happy sounds works not only with lost whales but also with lost people. God makes our lives appealing to those who don't know Him. His Spirit brings conviction and creates a desire for what we have.

What difference would the application of these principles make in your life?

What does God want you to do about it?