

# “The Mysterious Witness of Submission and Suffering” // 1 Peter 2:13–25; 3:15 // 5 – *I am An Alien*

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## CMO announcement:

- For the last several weeks you’ve heard us talk about... CMO. Let me explain. Christmastime is a big time for generosity at the Summit. There’s a couple of ways people do this:
  - A lot of people give to help us reach our community... God is doing a lot through this church. This past year we have baptized well over 700 people; we’ve started several new ministries—to prisoners, to unwed mothers; within our church; there’s a lot we need to do... it takes facilities to reach people: we need parking! We need to improve our children’s areas; we are slammed at our Brier Creek campus and need to create new spaces; we need to start a new campus in CH; we want to do new outreach events like ballpark services.
  - The other thing we do is, as a church, give a lot of money away every Christmas to plant churches and bless the poor around the world. Our goal is to give away \$625,000 toward that this year.
- So, two ways: give generally to the church for what God is doing here; the other is to give to a special offering that we give away. Honestly, I want you to give generously to both this Christmas. We have a responsibility to both: to invest in what God is doing here to reach this community; our neighbors; the poor among us; and we have a responsibility to give away our stuff to what God is doing in the world. The local church is a great way to take a holistic approach to charity.

- North Africa: I got a great report from our team this week: On Friday they baptized 20 new believers; 3 new churches

Glad to start with good news, because I can’t imagine a more unpopular topic than the one I’m going to talk about today (I’m talking about “Sarah Palin at an NPR fundraiser” unpopular):

## ***Submission and unjust suffering.***

I’m going to show you that both of these are valuable; they are part of the plan of God for your life; and, they are part of how God intends to use you in the world.

## ***To this audience I’m speaking to, talking about submission is like rubbing a cat’s fur the wrong way. Why?<sup>1</sup>***

1. *You’re sons and daughters of Adam*, the original rebel.
2. *You’re Americans*, and rebellion is part of our national identity. Don’t believe that, ask the British. We came to be by rebelling, and we generally think that was a good thing, so now we like to rebel against anything we can, just to keep in practice incase a real need to rebel re-presents itself. If the Redcoats come back we want to be ready.
3. *The value we place on the freedom of speech seems to foster rebellion:*
  - The culture of open, free speech makes us talk about all authorities like they are idiots. You hear this when you listen to talk radio; that place where all the collective wisdom of the universe gathers. You hear people talk about politicians like they are just absolute idiots. “What Obama needs to do to fix this economy... what Congress needs to...” If they’d just do this everything would be fixed. I’m like, “I’m sure none of their advisors ever thought about that.”

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<sup>1</sup> List inspired by Mark Driscoll

- Our belief in the freedom of speech makes us revel in trashing authorities. (Sometimes we forget how unusual this is in the world: When I lived in Indonesia, whenever anyone would talk about the government, they would lower their voice. I'd listen and be like, "Oh, you should call that into a talk radio show." Those don't exist. Raudel, our Spanish pastor who is from Cuba, said that when he first arrived in America he opened his window and screamed expletives about Fidel Castro and thought, "Welcome to America.")
  - Don't get me wrong; I love the FOS; it just feeds a culture that despises authority.
4. We're post-1960's, where rebellion became a civic virtue.<sup>2</sup> Which, in some ways, can be good. civil rights, good. In other ways, not so good: dropping acid and rebelling against deodorant.

My whole point is that insubordination is part of our cultural ethos; it's just the air that we breathe. You don't even know it; your post-1960's American sons and daughters of Adam. The only people more rebellious than you might be Texans.

[13] Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,

- Which ones? "every human institution" (vs. 13) Parents; teachers; bosses; government leaders; even leaders in your church where they have rightful authority.

whether it be to the emperor as supreme, [14] or to governors

- Here's what is significant: Who is emperor? Claudius (who by any estimation was an idiot and totally dominated by the special interest groups around him); after that, Nero (his first act of lunacy was deifying Claudius; then he developed this theory that his mom was trying to assassinate him so he poisoned her; he

fashioned himself as a musician who would make his whole court listen to him play... the historian Suetonius said that he played for so long women would fake going into labor). These guys were not paragons of justice, equity and godliness.

- But Peter says, "Be subject to them; even those occupied by ungodly people." *People always say: what about civil disobedience?* And they use some example of like *Corrie Ten Boom* (remember, she hid Jews in her closet and when the Nazis came looking she lied to them)... or MLK and the Civil Rights movement.
  - And I appreciate those examples, but let's be honest, most of you aren't in those situations.
    - How many of you have Jews hiding in your closet? And last I checked the Nazis don't have a strong presence in our government.
  - Martin Luther King, *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*, explained that they tried to obey every law they could; and they disobeyed peaceably the ones that were egregiously unjust.
  - Peter says, 'obey the laws; respect the authorities; pay your taxes'
    - Every so often I'll talk to some young graduate student who manages to find a website explaining why we shouldn't have to pay **taxes**. No, civil disobedience does not apply to you.
    - Or somebody explaining to me why we should **legalize marijuana** (they always know 2 verses); Gen 1:12, "*and every seed bearing plant that the Lord gave is good.*" And Matthew 7:3, '*Thou shalt not judge.*' So, "Marijuana should be legal!" Maybe you're right. (I don't think so), but it's not, so you are to submit.
    - "Well, I don't agree with the policy on underage drinking. I'm old enough to die for my country, but not to drink a margarita?"

<sup>2</sup> Based loosely on thoughts by Mark Driscoll on this passage.

- Do you see that phrase, “for the Lord’s sake?” When you disobey an authority, God views it as disobedience to Him.
- Some of you are out of fellowship with God because you are in rebellion to God ordained authorities in your life. I told you this was unpopular.
- Yes, Peter understood justified civil disobedience. He would end up being crucified upside down, by the state, for refusing to stop preaching the gospel. But that’s not the situation most of you are in!
- Let’s do a heart check for a minute: **For many of you, your problem with submission to earthly authorities is a problem with authority in general.** You don’t like anybody telling you what to do, including God.
  - God will never be known that way. He is known only in absolute surrender and submission. Some of you act like you want to know God but you’re not willing to do what He says. God is the Almighty God, and if you don’t approach him in submission and surrender, you won’t know him at all.
- Let me deal with one more: **Parents:** for a time in your life, they represent the authority of God in your life. Scripture tells you to obey them.
  - Now, as you get older, that changes. The Bible never tells adults to “obey” their parents.
  - Parents, for a while, stand in the place of God in our lives. They teach us to relate to God and to become the men and women God created us to be. They’re like training wheels by which we learn to relate to and obey God. Obeying them is not the ultimate point; obeying God the eternal Father that they represent is the point.
  - So as you become an adult, you honor them by growing up to become what God intended you to be. If after you become an adult your parents are hindering you from that, you can still honor them even as you disobey them.

- I have college students tell me, “I’m graduating from college and I feel God is leading me to the mission field but my parents are saying, ‘no’, do I have to obey them?” No.
- **You most your parents is becoming the person God intended you to be, even if they don’t want you to.** I’m not talking to teenagers here... when you’re in the house, you obey. But as you become an adult, that shifts to honor, and you most honor them by becoming all that God intended you to be.

**Submit to all of them... Peter gives you two reasons why we are to obey:**

**[14]—as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.**

1. **These are institutions ordained by God (vs. 14),**
  - These institutions are part of what we call “common grace,” institution left by God even in a fallen world to keep order.

**[15] For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.**

2. **Our humble submission to authority and civic “goodness” are God’s ordained way of putting to silence the ignorance of foolish people (vs. 15)**
  - Remember Peter has been talking about your conduct giving a demonstration of your new citizenship? This is his first application.

He fleshes this out:

**[16] Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.**

- Ready to think with me? *Why do most people submit?* They submit because they have to! Either they know if they don't they'll be punished; or, they have something to gain.
- Peter says, "As a Christian, you're free of both."
  - You no longer fear what government can do to you. You're not even afraid of government taking your life, and if they take it from you, like they did Peter, you'll face that.
  - No longer do you obey because that's the way to get ahead, because now you trust God to take care of your need.
- So you are free of the captivities that control the world's obedience, but now you have a new motivation. You are servants of God and you submit to human laws for God's sake; for the gospel's sake!

He continues: [17] Honor everyone.

- The world honors people because you get something in return from them. Not the believer. The believer honors them because they are in the image of God.
  - There are some places where the customer service is unbelievable. Disneyworld. Hyatt hotels. I feel honored. But I always realize that they are doing that because they want my money. Honoring me gets them something in return.
  - As a church, that's not why we honor people. We honor them because they are in the image of God and they are precious to God.
  - An unwed mother with 3 kids pull onto one of our campuses our First Impression team wants to run to her and help her not because she might give a big check into the offering, but because she is made in the image of God and precious to God.
  - ***We honor people for Jesus' sake; not because of what they can do for us but because of what Jesus has done for us.***

**Love the brotherhood.** That's a special love for the church

**Fear God. Honor the emperor.**

- Notice a little irony here: Peter uses the same word for the emperor that he used for people. See that? Honor/honor. The Romans insisted that the emperor was a god. So Peter gives a little jab there. Honor the emperor... like you honor all people. Because he's just a man, he's not God. He has a high position, but
- See how he says, "Fear God"? That means, "Don't fear Caesar. Caesar is not god. Fear God, because God is God." Honor the emperor.
- *But I do want to make sure you get what Peter is telling you to do...*
  - Honor your government leaders. Some of you say, "Well I didn't vote for Obama." It doesn't matter. Some of you, the dishonor you show to our President Obama is sinful. For others of you, the way you spoke about George Bush was sinful.
  - I think you should keep that in mind as we approach election season. It doesn't mean you don't degree or even criticize; you can and should. But you never cease to honor and obey.
  - I learned this from my parents. My parents had STRONG political convictions, and they would express their opinions very clearly, sometimes with passion and anger. But at the end of the day they'd say, "But he is the president. And we must honor and obey him."

When you live this way: when you are submitted for Jesus' sake and not just for personal gain; when you honor people irrespective of whether they can pay you back; when you are devoted to doing good and blessing others (vs. 15); Peter says, you can put to silence, at least a little, the ignorance of foolish people.

- *Have you ever experienced the ignorance of foolish people?* Let me say something I hope encourages you, or at least puts some things in perspective: The church, the true church, in every age has always

been the subject of derision. That's not new with your generation. That's not something *The New York Times* invented.

- In the 1<sup>st</sup> century the rumor among the Romans was that Christians were cannibals. In their services they would eat flesh and drink blood. If you're new here, that is not true. Where they got that from was the fact that Christians observe the Lord's Supper, where the bread symbolizes Jesus' body and the cup symbolizes His blood, and we do that, but we don't take a member each week and turn them into a buffet.
- The Romans accused the first Christians of being seditious; anti-government; hateful; even atheistic and immoral (because they wouldn't worship idols).

Peter says put them to silence by overwhelming them with goodness.

- Summit, I don't know if you know this, but you are often the subject of derision in our community. Don't be discouraged by that.
- You want a couple of examples:

I went on and searched a few blogs:

- The authors of this one blog (which I'll leave nameless) came to a sermon a while back where I explained that before God we were all sheep, and so because of that we shouldn't trust our abilities to figure things out but in God's willingness to lead and guide us. And I talked about how silly it was to strut your intelligence before God. They said, "Clearly this is how this works: congregation members have a legitimate question and concern, but when they come to me, "the shepherd, who is only "of average intelligence and educated in average "Christian" institutions, he is now elevated to a higher level. He is the kingpin and cannot be questioned by the "dumb" sheep..." NOT TO MENTION IN THAT SAME SERMON I TALKED ABOUT HOW I WAS A DUMB SHEEP and I am dependent

on God's leadership as much as you. Here's where it gets good: "A very significant factor to consider is that 70 to 75 percent of the congregation members are college women. It certainly appears that Greear has been elevated to mega pastor status because of the loyalty of a congregation that is comprised primarily of young college women... Turns out that "Greear is most likely just another "ho hum" authoritarian disguised as a "cool dude" pastor..."

- First, that is not true. I look around this room and I see lots of unattractive guys. Now, it's true, there are a lot of beautiful girls here... I tell guys when they can't find a date here that that's like going to the ocean and complaining that you can't get wet. But 75%?
- Second, here's the irony. One of the things this blog really goes after is our church's stance about the spiritual leadership of men in the home. But they are the ones charging that you girls are too stupid to think for yourselves and you dumbly follow an authoritarian leader. Guys are smart enough not to be swept in.<sup>3</sup>
- Here's a second one: I was invited a couple of years ago to speak at our city's annual MLK rally because the city council told me that our church represented the spirit of brotherly love that brought peace to our city. This blogger on this fairly well known site said (in the comments) that we were hateful people and that people who hate our community should not be allowed to speak to it... They said, and I quote: "This is guy is an EXPLETIVE. A progressive forward thinking city like Durham should not be allowing these people any part of honoring our heroes."

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<sup>3</sup> Here was the real kicker: someone commented on the blog that they went back to listen to the podcast and didn't hear the things this lady was talking about... and she said, "They edited it out. They always do that when someone criticizes them because they are obsessed with everyone's perceptions of them."

- How do put these things to rest? Preach angry sermons and start a blog talking about how dumb they are? Tempting. No, you do so by overwhelming them with kindness. It's not going to shut everyone up, but it makes what they are saying seem silly.
  - BTW, the city council responded that it was because of how much our church was doing to serve the poor of this community that they were inviting us to speak. They said, "You can't argue with the fact that everywhere this city has need there seems to be someone from the SC there!"
  - This person responds on the blog: "Just because a church spends countless hours helping the community... (doesn't mean we should let them speak to us.)"
    - My thought: Maybe if you'd spend more time serving the poor and less time blogging in your momma's basement you'd be invited to speak at something like this... Change out of your Underoos turn off Worlds of Warcraft and do something with your life." (I'm probably not embodying the spirit of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter there.)

Also, this works for you personally, too

- FL kid whose dad was an atheist

*He goes on to talk to people in really bad circumstances.*

**[[18] Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect,**

**...not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. [19] For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. [20] For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a *gracious* thing in the sight of God. )**

**[21] For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.**

**[22] He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.**

**[23] 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.**

Want to hear where I violated this? Hotel story

- Christ had 2 things: **1. Faith in God's ultimate judgment.**
  - Paul tells believers not to take vengeance but leave room for the wrath of God. God is a God of justice. Do you understand what hell is? Hell is ultimate righting of all wrongs.
  - People's sins will be paid back in one of 2 places; in hell, or on the cross.
  - So I don't have to take that responsibility on myself! That's what Christ did. He entrusted Himself to God.
  - The only way some of you will escape the bitterness and the insane urge to get people back is to learn to rest in this fact.
  - I've used the example before of **Miroslav Volf**, the Croatian

**[24] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**

**2. Love for us.** He suffered in our place.

- **He died voluntarily:** Jesus is the only one who has ever voluntarily died. You say, 'well, that's not true! Some people have died voluntarily for great causes!' No. They might have chosen the moment or maybe the means by which they died, but they did not

choose the fact of their death. They already had to die. Jesus is the only person to die who never had to; but he chose to do it.<sup>4</sup>

- Peter says, “We were the rebels who had resisted authority; the servants who rebelled against our rightful master; the unjust ones who rejected the rightful rule of God.
- Jesus was the Lord who submitted to death; the master who became a servant; the rightful ruler who suffered our injustice; by but by submitting to our injustice, He redeemed us.
- So now we should do likewise! Now we take His posture toward others to redeem them.

See? **By his wounds you have been healed. [25] For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

- This was how He awoke us from our sin. This is how God uses us to awaken others. How does God use you to bring back other straying ones? By the way you suffer. You show you have a faith in God’s justice that is greater than this world, a joy that is imperishable, that can’t be touched by the threats of this world, and a selfless love for others that is beyond the reach of this world!

Jump down to 1 Peter 3:15 where Peter picks up this thought.

**[15]... but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,**

- Holy: distinct. Separate.
  - In control: To honor Christ as holy means to “trust that Christ, not one’s human opponents, are really in control of events.”<sup>5</sup> That all angels, authorities and powers are subject to Him (vs. 22)
  - Holy means “separate from the world” in that he is better than anything else the world has to offer.

<sup>4</sup> His death was not one under compulsion; but one of freedom and authority. He said, John 10:18, “no man takes my life from me; I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down...” From Tim Keller sermon on this passage.

<sup>5</sup> Grudem, *1 Peter Commentary*, 160.

- Set apart Christ in your hearts as holy: that He’s fully in control and worth more than anything else the world can give.

***always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;***

- Amaze them by how you suffer, to the point they ask you about it! *How can you have joy in this circumstance?* This is how you’re going to show the beauty of Christ.
  - We always want to show the world the power of God by the way He prospers us, and heals us, *and He does that.*
  - If God only blessed us with health and wealth all the time, the world would not be amazed. Everybody rejoices when they’re healthy and wealthy...
  - ...but when you rejoice in cancer, or even when you’ve been fired, that’s when you show that you’ve got a hope that goes beyond what they hope in; a joy that pain cannot take away, and a peace that passes all understanding.
- When was the last time someone was so amazed at how joyful you were in suffering that they *asked* you about it? That is God’s attention and what may be, in our cynical, post-Christian age, our most powerful witness.
- ~~Paul in Acts 16.~~

## Conclusion:

So much stuff I have to skip, but I need to close. Let me close this way, with one very important observation, especially for those of you who have a hard time believing in Christianity.

What you see time and time again from this book of 1 Peter, it’s on every page and runs through every verse, is that ***Peter really believed in the resurrection!*** Peter bases his whole hope on the fact that Jesus

really was raised from the dead; Jesus really in control; and something happened on Calvary that redefined everything!

See, a charge I often hear made is that the disciples kind of made up the part about Jesus rising from the dead to convince people to go along with their new religion or system of morality.

But Peter bases all his hope on the fact that Jesus was resurrected. He's not trying to gain power here; he's teaching people to submit and to suffer with joy like he is because of the hope of Christ's resurrection. If that wasn't true; if Peter knew he was lying, there would be no basis for his instructions or hope in suffering!

Peter believed that Jesus rose from the dead. Peter is saying *"Christ is in control. Christ is the God of resurrection. Christ is worth it."*

You might say, "Well, maybe he was confused. Maybe he thought he saw Jesus." Some guy claimed to see Jesus' face in a grilled cheese sandwich." Remember that internet story a few years ago? Grilled Chees-us. Test that theory out.

- Jesus appeared to all the disciples, separately and together, over the space of about 3 days. *This is not one of the disciples saying, "I think I saw Jesus as the 7/11..."*
- Paul says he was seen by over 500 at once and gives their names so that people can go check it out. People don't "group hallucinate." If I said that Elvis came and did a special song at our church, and told the newspaper that, they'd ask you, and you'd say, "Our pastor is crazy."

The hope of all of this is the resurrection. Place your hope in it because it is the strength to do all these things we're talking about, and everything else in the Christian life!

I know some of you are suffering. Unjust things are happening to you. I'm not telling you not to say anything. Sometimes you need to. I am saying suffer well, and in your suffering show that you have a hope

that suffering can't touch and a love that goes beyond anything this world knows.

I am not trying to minimize suffering; I am saying there can be a sweetness in it as you realize it is part of the plan of God to redeem the world, if you embrace the hope that is in the resurrection.

# Bullpen:

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**24:** I know more trouble is coming, but I also know Jack makes it through the end of the season!

- **He took our sin:** Say you owe the IRS a lot of money; going to jail. Your friend decides to pay all of it for you. She's worth exactly what you owe. She's ruined but you are saved. They take everything away from her. Tax-wise, she's righteous tax wise, but she's treated as unrighteous for your sake. She's been gutted
- ~~This is not slavery like in the *antebellum* South or North.~~
  - ~~That is forbidden: (1 Tim 1:9; or sex slaves, Deut 21:10-14)~~
- ~~Indentured servanthood: Still not a great system.~~
  - ~~How the Bible changes societies: plants a seed.~~
  - ~~If Bible had laid out a manifesto... it would lead to revolution and the central message would be obscured.~~
    - ~~So, it plants seeds that unfold. Gal 3:28. Constant laws in the OT about the kind treatment of servants; hospitality to foreigners.~~
    - ~~Robert Alter~~
    - ~~Best work on slavery: 3 volume work by African American scholar Thomas Sowell. Says there were 3 major slave trades: Western; Arab; African. Only in the former was it ever ideologically opposed. Slavery was done away with by the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley, and Wilberforce.~~
- It is true: lots of people die for a lie. People don't have this kind of courage for something they know to be a lie.
  - Chuck Colson
- You say, "Well maybe Peter is wrong?"
  - He saw him with his eyes!

Base your courage on the resurrection!

Otherwise, what motive would there be for lying? People sometimes say, "The supposed miracles; resurrection of Christianity does not prove anything.... Lots of people have believed in a lie." Here is why this miracle is different. Peter bases all his hope on the fact that Jesus raised from the dead. What is Peter's motivation for submission and suffering... all of it hinges on Jesus raising from the dead. Peter is not gaining power or money. He's not teaching rebellion or prosperity.

*yet do it with gentleness and respect,*

[16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

- Vigilante response is evil. Rebellion is evil. Retaliation is evil.
- “When you sin, you don’t say, ‘I think I’ll hit Jesus one more time. I think I’ll put one more nail into him.’ You don’t say this. You say, ‘Well, if you had my husband you’d do the same thing.’ Or, ‘that’s not what expert opinions say...’ **But this is why the cross is here. It brings you to your senses.**
- **You don’t bring good about through evil.**

[3:14] *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.*

- Not just in eternity, but now. [3:12] *For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.* Quote from Psalm 34.

[8] Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. [9] Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. [10] For

“Whoever desires to love life  
and see good days,  
let him keep his tongue from evil  
and his lips from speaking deceit;  
[11] let him turn away from evil and do good;  
let him seek peace and pursue it.  
[12] For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.  
But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

[13] Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? [14] But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, [15] *but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect*, [16] having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. [17] *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

- Vigilante response is evil
  
- Slavery in the Bible (Platt)
- We gain power to endure in suffering by our hope in the imperishable
- We do all “to proclaim his excellencies”
- How you respond when the guy next to you snakes your sales is a demonstration of the excellencies of Christ