

# Living to Display God's Grace: Submission to Civil Authorities (Part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] it is well with our souls because Jesus lives. And he gets the glory. Well, friends, let me invite you to turn to 1 Peter.

And for those of you who are visiting with us, you're coming into the middle of the party. We have been in 1 Peter now. We're into chapter 2, verse by verse for some time. And I have really, really put the brakes on.

We have slowed down. And one of the reasons for that, and this is just in the way of helping our visitors understand some of the context of what we're doing here, coming off of all of the COVID stuff, the last couple of years, the way that worldwide this particular issue has affected churches, affected people, businesses.

It's just we're still living with it. We're still living on the other end of everything that's happened. There's been so much controversy, so much discussion, so much political stuff going on with regards to the COVID issue.

And in all of that, we have known that Christians around the world have really struggled to understand how to manage it. How much do we obey?

[ 1 : 15 ] How much do we bow to Caesar, as it were, and follow the mandates and the guidelines? How do churches come together? I mean, there's just been so many things to navigate.

We know from different sources around our nation, as I've kept up with a few of the blogs, particularly reading in Nine Marks with Mark Dever and the things that they've been talking about, many, many pastors around the country have gotten out of the ministry in the last couple of years over the kind of taxing issue that this has been and trying to manage the church in it.

There are still, our missionary contacts tell us around the world, particularly in Europe, that there are still churches that are not meeting, still believers that are not meeting.

In addition to that, there are many believers, we're being told, who have yet to come back to churches who are meeting again. They've elected to stay home and, quote-unquote, worship online.

Folks, this just creates all kinds of stuff going on. Well, I know our folks, you have been very conscientious, the people here at Grace Church Williamsburg, over the last couple of years trying to manage this.

[ 2 : 26 ] You have asked many questions of your pastors. Greg and I have not had all of the answers. We've turned us all to Scripture. We have prayed and prayed, and we have sought to honor the Lord in what we've been doing in the way of a response to Christ in the midst of all of this.

So I've put the brakes on here because Peter is dealing with the issue of submitting to human governing authorities. We want to understand Peter's heart in this.

We want to understand why this is in Scripture, particularly why, what I've been dealing with, why is it that Peter is giving us these injunctions without any caveats at all about civil disobedience?

When will we disobey? When do we do? He doesn't deal with that. That's not in here. It's not even in the white spaces. You can turn to other places of Scripture and see that, but it's not here. Now, given the context of what these people were living in at the time, this makes this teaching particularly poignant for us today.

But before we can bring the principles of Scripture in this passage into our time, we need to understand it very well for their time. Otherwise, we risk reading into.

[ 3 : 42 ] We don't want to do that. We don't want to be anachronistic in what we're doing in our understanding of interpreting Scripture. So the title of my message for this morning is Living to

Display God's Grace.

That's been the title now for several of my messages in this particular section of Scripture, Submission to Civil Authorities, and this is kind of a part three.

Let's read in our passage for this morning. We'll just deal, again, with another smaller section as I just bite off a little bit each time. We will get through this if God gives us breath for life.

I promise you. This will come to an end soon, but let's deal with it very thoroughly. Peter says in chapter 2, verse 13, Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by him, the king, for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond slaves of God.

[ 5 : 01 ] Honor all people. Love the brotherhood that is your brothers and sisters in Christ. Fear God. Honor the king.

Now, Peter will go on to talk about submission for a number of verses still. He'll apply it in the workplace as we'll understand it, slaves and masters. He'll also give Christ as the supreme example of what he's talking about.

And then he'll come to the place in chapter 3 where he'll talk about this kind of submission in marriage, in marriage. So he's got a lot to say about this topic of submission.

Now, what we've done over the last couple of weeks is take each one of the six points under understanding our responsibilities biblically to civil authority, each of those six, and I've just taken them one at a time.

My intention is to do the third one today and then perhaps do the final three next Sunday. We'll see. Mike's not very hopeful. All right, he knows.

[ 6 : 05 ] He's, brother, I know you too well. All right. Let's deal with where we've been the last couple of weeks just very, very briefly. The what of submission was my first point.

The what of submission to authority. That's 2.13. And all we said in 2.13 was submit yourselves. That's how he begins in the New American Standard translation that I teach from.

Peter is establishing that as Christians, you must voluntarily assume personal responsibility for arranging your life to comply with civil authority.

That is our mandate from Scripture, that as these injunctions come down from civil authorities, our knee-jerk, our intention, should be to arrange ourselves as best we can to be under those injunctions.

From human authority. The second point that I brought to you, the why of submission to authority, also in 2.13. It is for the Lord's sake.

[ 7 : 10 ] Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake. Here is the theological foundation for Peter's command to submit.

It is about honoring the Lord. Now, we spent two sermons dealing with those two points in the previous weeks. The theological foundation for our civil obedience that we're being called to here by Peter concerns how our submission is based on our relationship with God.

Based on our relationship with God. Our submission then to human authority is tied to our submission to our heavenly authority.

It begins in heaven and translates into how we live our lives here. Well, we can say that about all the doctrine that you and I seek to live out. We seek to live out truth, first and foremost, in honor of the author of that truth, the Lord Jesus Christ, right?

That's what we want to do, and that translates into the way we live our lives. That is by God's design. So our submission must always emulate and honor the submission of Jesus in his relationship with human authority.

[ 8 : 36 ] Our submission is for Jesus' sake when we are submitting to put him on display. Now let me say that again.

Our submission is for Jesus' sake when we are submitting to put him on display. That's Peter's concern.

If you'll hold on to that as the baseline, you'll understand much better Peter's spirit and heart in this passage. Now we come to point number three for today.

It's the who of submission to authority, taking in some of verse 14, at least the first half of it, the who of submission to authority.

To whom then are you and I being required by the Lord to offer our obedience? Peter tells his readers very, very plainly that we are to submit ourselves for the Lord's sake, notice, to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by the king for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

[ 9 : 55 ] That's the purpose of government. But he's talking here about submitting then to every human institution, to the king and all those to whom the king appoints or those who answer to the king.

That's who we're supposed to submit to. The king in this context is most likely the emperor, the Roman emperor in power at the time. Now there are lesser rulers and governors who are either appointed directly by the emperor or the king or they rule as the king's deputies.

That's his arm of authority as it extends out into the empire. All right, that's familiar to us, isn't it? We understand that kind of government. We have something similar here.

That seems clear enough. But the phrase to every human institution, that's a little trickier. To every single human institution.

It's more literally translated or rendered as to every human creature. To every human creature.

[ 11 : 05 ] Or creation is actually part of that idea. Institution, as it's translated from the Greek and the New American Standard and the English Standard Version, is the word *katesis*.

*Katesis*. It means creation literally or creature. Now that's very important for us. Obviously, though, Peter isn't telling his readers, submit yourselves to every single aspect of creation.

That wouldn't make any sense. Nor would it make sense for him to say, submit yourself to every human person. That doesn't seem to quite catch it either.

So what's he talking about? Why would he render it this way? Most translations understand it as a reference to governing authorities. Hence the idea in the New American Standard and the ESV as human institutions.

Those human governing authorities over you. All right. But according to commentator, theologian, and scholar Tom Schreiner, Peter is referring to these human authorities as human creatures.

[ 12 : 20 ] Now mark that. Human creatures, because he's emphasizing a critical aspect of their submission that relates to their cultural context, their particular context of life.

Peter's wanting to emphasize something for these people. Now please remember, folks, we're talking about Christians scattered across Roman provinces which take in much of what we know to be modern Turkey.

Peter names these provinces in chapter 1, verse 1. If you'll look there with me, he says that as an apostle of Jesus, he is writing to those who reside as strangers, aliens, pilgrims, scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, those who were chosen by the Lord God.

That's this time in history. These people are living under the authority of the Roman emperor, Nero. So, this context of life for them brings out some important features for us to understand as we consider carefully Peter's command for them to obey the emperor and all of his governors who are ruling over them at this time.

Now please remember and keep in mind as well, Israel is a conquered nation. They are subservient to Rome, aren't they? And they hate that.

[ 14 : 01 ] Christians are living in the midst of that historical context with Jews who hate Rome. Now the Jewish leaders that opposed Jesus found a way to make that political scene work to their advantage and make money.

And that's what they did. And make no mistake about it, crucifying the Lord Jesus on a human level was all about money. It was all about power. So, the leaders in much of what we know as ancient Israel, ancient Palestine, those leaders were, many of them, were corrupt.

They had basically sold themselves to Rome so that they could continue to worship the way they wanted to worship. They compromised with Rome and then they used it all to their advantage.

Keep those kinds of things in mind as we work through this. Now as we think about their context of life, let me ask a couple of questions and not assume this for our folks.

Why should we be so concerned about what this meant for the people of this particular time in history when Peter's writing? Why should we take time to consider the historical and cultural context of this passage or any passage that we read in Scripture?

[15:20] The answer is because we need to honor the way God chose to communicate His will by using human authors writing to people in the ancient world for very specific reasons tied to their cultural situation, their time in life.

When you write a letter to someone, you write that letter to a person or persons and you write it in a specific context for specific reasons and you have goals in mind.

You're communicating something in that written correspondence. So the meaning that you have as you write that out is the meaning of the letter.

Well, let's say that 200 years later, someone finds a letter, say that I wrote. I've used this example in some teaching times in the past, so some of you will know where I'm going.

And in that letter that my ancestors find in an old dusty trunk 200 years after I've been dead and gone and up with Jesus, they pull it out and they know, they know enough about me to know that great-great-grandpa Jeff was married to great-great-grandma Suzanne.

[16:33] And so they realize we were married for however many years. It's been 38 now. Maybe it'll be another 20. God willing, Suzanne, we'll see. She just needs to behave herself and we'll see, right?

We'll see how long the Lord lets us live. They pull that thing out and they find the letter and in that letter, they start reading it and in it, they realize, wait a minute.

They're reading along and it says, boy, it's for me. I can't wait to see you. I miss you so, so much. I just remember so well the times that you, and it's obvious that I'm talking about a woman that's not my wife.

This is not Suzanne. Oh my goodness. Well, it's very easy at that point if they wanted to, to read in and say, we have discovered that great-great-great-grandpa Jeff was unfaithful to in some way.

Well, then you do your research and you do your history and you find out when that was in my life and you realize that's a letter to my dying sister who has cancer and she's in the hospital and I'm writing to her to express my love to her and to tell her how much I miss her and to encourage her.

[17:53] Now, do you see how worlds apart those views are? When we read into Scripture, we're reading into God's heart and making assumptions on our bias and our prejudice and that's pure pride and we don't need to do that.

So, looking into the historical context of these people and Peter helps us gain a window into what's going on in their lives, what's happening around them and why Peter would write this letter and say the things that he says and not say other things that maybe other places in Scripture deal with.

We just need to deal with what Peter is saying and understand carefully, first of all, what he wants us to know about all of this. So, let me put this up here to make it more clear.

Understanding their context helps us with a window into what the Lord was saying to them. God's original meaning is the meaning he had for these people and that meaning is reflected in the text as it's framed by the ancient historical cultural situation these people were living in at the time.

So, folks, the aim we have in our study of the historical cultural context is to help us grasp the original meaning of the passage as the author intended to convey it to his original audience.

[19:23] That's the meaning that we're after, the author's meaning. Then, then we're in a place where we can bring it over into our time and culture and properly and responsibly apply it in our time.

Now, I want to do this with you. I want to give you several of these features, these socio-cultural features that impacted the situation.

This is all in conjunction with Peter saying, submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to the king as one in authority or to governors as sent by the king.

We want to try to capture the cultural relevance of those commands that he's giving us and that he gave these people. So, I want to give you some features. The first feature these people lived under is what Dr. Schreiner calls the emperor cult.

The emperor cult. Now, it was popular in Asia Minor that Schreiner points out that Christians felt a strong, strong social pressure to participate in what was popular in that time, this emperor cult emphasis.

[20:37] What was the emperor cult then? This bears on, I think, what Peter's telling these people. The emperor cult simply refers to how Gentile people took it in stride that their emperor was to be viewed as deity.

He wants to be worshipped and was to be worshipped as a god. Now, you understand that the Roman pantheon was like the Greek pantheon.

It was, they had many, many gods. And Romans typically, when they go in and conquer a people, they would allow the people to maintain their gods and many times the Romans would bring those gods into their understanding as well.

They weren't particular. They worshipped all kinds of gods. So, they tried to keep the people subdued and compliant by giving them a certain religious freedom as long as they obeyed Rome. Well, now you mix in with that the idea that Rome has the understanding that the emperor is a god. And he's to be worshipped.

[ 21 : 41 ] Not just obeyed. But worshipped. Can you see where this is going? It's a train wreck ready to happen, isn't it? That's exactly what I think is going on as Peter writes this.

So, the emperor was to be worshipped. Can you imagine today if we were required by law to offer worship to the president of the United States and to refer to him as God?

It doesn't... Pick your president. Any of them. It doesn't matter. Some of you are struggling more than others with what I understand that. Just pick one that you like. And we have to refer to him as God.

Alright? No matter where he stands politically. That's amazing to me to even think about that. Well, hang on to your belts.

We don't know where this is going. Nero enforced this deity worship concept about the emperor. He enforced this with intensity and cruelty. Emperor worship had been going on prior to Nero.

[ 22 : 50 ] and it had been an issue for the Jewish community for some time. So this is not a new thing. It's a growing building issue and concern for the people of Palestine, for the Jews in particular.

Caesar Augustus, you recognize that name? Caesar Augustus during the time of Jesus arranged an agreement with the Jews. Rather than worship the emperor, which the Jews refused to do, Caesar Augustus wisely declared that they could make daily sacrifices on his behalf in the temple. So we won't worship you, but we will worship on your behalf. We might say it this way. If we bring it over into our time, we might say, well, I can pray for the president, but I can't pray to the president. That's the difference. So Caesar Augustus wisely said, I'll tell you what, sacrifice on my behalf, sacrifice for me, not to me.

And he's good with that. And there were several emperors that kind of kept that in place and it helped keep the peace, and that's what was going on. But, 20 years prior to this time, prior to Nero's time, around A.D.

[ 24 : 19 ] 40, the emperor Caligula, also known as Gaius, the emperor Caligula decided that the Jewish custom of offering sacrifices for him needed to be changed to offering sacrifices to him.

He ordered his statue to be erected of all places in the temple Jerusalem. This is 20 years before this writing that Peter's making now, one generation before.

You can imagine it created a firestorm of rebellion among the Jewish people. It almost came to war with Rome. One of the Jewish historians wrote that a delegation went and met with some of the military commanders marching on Jerusalem and told them the Jewish nation will die as one man if you come and try to do this.

Also, keep in mind that Jesus had already prophesied that the temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem raised to the ground, right? Jesus had said that.

But that's not going to happen until when? 70, A.D. 70. So, we're still around A.D. 64 with the writing of this letter that Peter is in now.

[ 25 : 39 ] Now, we're 20 years prior to that, around A.D. 40. And this is all going on with Caligula. Well, Caligula, being the Roman emperor, dispatched General Petronius with two Roman legions to march on Jerusalem.

Now, I'm just going to spare you the rest of the history and just tell you how it came out. War was averted, obviously. But this incident left a very deep, deep wound in the psyche of the Jewish people.

It left them with this very sobering, sobering impact, an idea. But also, it did the same to the Christians who were living at that time.

Now, we're a generation later, past Caligula. History is repeating itself with Nero. So, do you see that these people have, do you, all right, go 15 years from now and think about the people, Lucy,

think about Lucy being grown, think about these kids being grown and looking back and talking to us about COVID.

What are we going to tell them? Oh, let me tell you, you couldn't get toilet paper for ready money. We suffered. Oh, right?

[ 26 : 59 ] So, you can imagine these people now, a generation later, telling their kids what it was like to live under the threat of two Roman legions, 10,000 to 15,000 professional soldiers marching on your city with the intent of raising it to the ground and killing everyone that's rebelling.

This is Nero. They're seeing Caligula all over again. That's what's happening in this time. That's this context that we're looking at.

Nero, by the time Peter wrote this letter in about AD 64, 65, Nero had been emperor of Rome for about 10 years. Here is where Dr.

Schreiner's insights become helpful for us. When Peter refers to the governing authorities in 2.13, he uses the word for creature, creation, to emphasize that all rulers, including the emperor, emperor, are human creations of God.

They are human. They're not gods. They're not deity. They are creatures. And if they're creatures, they have a creator.

[ 28 : 21 ] There is a higher authority in play here. Not the emperor. He's not the ultimate. Do you see what he's doing? All emperors, all people are created by God and exist under God's authority.

So, Peter is tasking his readers with balancing two realities about their submission to human authority.

It's true, human rulers are created beings like themselves, like the readers, and should never, ever be worshipped. It's also true that these people need to submit to all human authority as appointed and directed by the higher authority, God, the ultimate authority, God.

The last two sermons have established that reality. So, folks, what I'm saying is this is not mindless obedience. It might come off like that, but it's not.

Now, let me give you the second feature of this historical cultural context. The second feature, illegitimate religion. Illegitimate religion.

[ 29 : 35 ] We're just digging down into the history and culture of what we see here in scripture. For most of the AD 50s, the decade just prior to Peter writing this letter, Christianity enjoyed a kind of piggyback protection of Roman law.

Let me explain that. The reason was that Judaism had been licensed by Rome as a legitimate religion. Christianity was seen as a religious subset within Judaism at that time, in the 50s.

That all began to change in the early AD 60s. time. Ironically, the change took place mainly because of the missionary work of the apostle Paul.

The reason is because Paul taught the biblical distinctions between Judaism and Christianity and he refused to cave in to capitulate to the Judaizers.

Judaizers were Jews who were traveling around the different Christian churches being established under Peter and Paul particularly. They taught and required that to become a Christian and be a faithful Christian you had to be circumcised and then you had to keep certain aspects of Jewish ceremonial life and worship.

[ 31 : 05 ] So it was Jesus plus. Paul came along with Peter and said it's Jesus period not plus. Read Colossians and that will be settled for you.

That it isn't Jesus plus it's Jesus period. That's where we are. That's what's going on with this. The Judaizers were being dealt with by Peter and Paul particularly in their letters but the Judaizers were a formidable force.

Now increasingly these Gentile converts these Christian converts coming out of Gentile life they were showing that they were clearly not Jewish. Rome was recognizing this governors were recognizing this synagogues were recognizing this Jewish leadership were recognized all of this was coming to the fore and as that happened Christianity was then seen in Rome's eyes as religio illicita religio illicita an illegitimate religion.

That's Rome's view. Judaism on the other hand was the religion of a nation the Jewish nation so it had a history with Rome of being afforded a measure of latitude I think for its religious beliefs and practices I said it earlier so long as the Jews stayed in their place they could worship as they pleased for the most part.

That was all established decades before with other Roman emperors so that the peace could be kept. Christians on the other hand were not a nation nor was their religion sanctioned or legalized by Rome as legitimate.

[ 32 : 58 ] Christianity was simply a cult which Rome grew to intensely hate and under Nero Rome was creating ways to persecute their prejudice against Christians.

that's what's happening. Now how did Peter answer this? If you look with me again in chapter 2 of 1 Peter and be reminded church family in verse 9 how did Peter answer all of this issue?

but you are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of paganism darkness and into his marvelous light for you once were not a people not a nation but now you are the people of God's God's nation you had not received mercy but now you do you see how important that is now to these people is that starting to help it come to life for you that's right Rome doesn't recognize you as a legitimate people Rome doesn't recognize your religion as legitimate Rome has a target painted on every single one of you that are Christians but now you are a royal priesthood you are a holy nation you are now the people of

God would you rather hear that or you are citizens of Rome I would rather have I'm citizen of heaven and if I have to choose between my citizenship I choose heaven and I think you do too I think that's why you're here this morning this is Peter's answer to all of this now this brings us to the final feature the final feature Roman society the final feature I want to highlight for you in this historical cultural context to help put the setting into place for you I I've deliberately saved this one for last because I personally believe it might have been the strongest influence on Peter's reason for writing and the strongest influence on Peter's content I want this to stick in your minds not only was persecution against Christians growing in intensity but the

Gentile populace was becoming increasingly supportive of seeing Christians hunted down and exterminated why what what in the world have they have they risen up together and made banners and marched on the Capitol with ARs and hand grenades and whatever else willing to die as one man no not even close well why does Rome hate these people so much think of this people actually approved of Christians being removed from society for and I quote their hatred of the human race I'll say that again Gentiles Romans the general populace hated Christianity and wanted to see it wiped off the face of the planet because of

[ 36 : 42 ] Christians hatred of the human race how did that happen how did society come to view Christians as haters of people and as a threat to humanity the extant literature that we have the different extant histories from this time Josephus Tacitus all of those histories I consulted there were about four had this particular phrase as part of the reason for what Rome's doing to the Christians at this time they all agreed that Rome had come to hate Christians because Christians hated society the main reason rests in Roman culture itself now just listen to this it was vile and full of vice society was about self but the

New Testament admonished Christians to put off the old self with its lusts of deceit that's what it calls on for us don't return to your former manner of living walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called imitate the love of the Lord Jesus even as he loved you so much of Gentile society was bound up in practices that were forbidden for Christians Roman society was consumed with pursuing personal pleasure in any form or at any measure is this sounding vaguely familiar to you is it kind of scary as Christians followed the Lord Jesus did you hear that as Christians followed the Lord Jesus and abstained from involving themselves in these sinful expressions their faithfulness to Christ was costing them their lives these people these brothers and sisters were dying because they followed

Jesus they didn't pick it they didn't riot they didn't do anything they just followed the Lord and tried to be faithful naming the name of Jesus was enough I want to it's too too much for me to quote otherwise let me quote from F.F.

Bruce in his history the spreading flame listen to this we must remember the general unpopularity of the Christians quote he's quoting from the history now from the ancient time they are a class of men loathed for their vices according to Tacitus they are a novel and baneful people and superstitious people Suetonius calls their religion superstition they were obviously atheists since they worshipped no visible God they didn't build statues and bow down to them they didn't paint pictures of Jesus and bow down to him so they're atheists they were unsociable and they were haters of the human race because they abstained so largely from the ordinary forms of social practice the interest which

the imperial police began to take in their meetings from

AD 64 onward made them gather in secret this in turn was interpreted in the worst sense they would not meet in secret it was argued unless they had something shameful to hide stories began to circulate about the Christians in their ritual cannibalism and ceremonial incest which were believed to go on at their meetings where would they get the idea that we were cannibals such a crowd of wretches were plainly worthy of extermination and any repressive measures that were taken against them by authority could be sure of popular approval that's how we all became enemies of the state because we chose to be faithful to Jesus Christ that's it that's all it took right about this time in the summer of

[ 42 : 07 ] AD 64 Nero was thought to be the instigator of a great fire that consumed the whole of Rome I don't remember how many districts it was but most of the districts in Rome burned many of them were completely wiped out I mean completely wiped out many more thousands of people were made homeless many of them died and most of the citizenry of Rome lost everything they had well Nero had to do something as the rumor was spreading that he started the fire so that he could rebuild Rome in his image so he hatched a plan to throw suspicion off himself and this is how he did it therefore to scotch the rumor that Nero had started the fire Nero substituted his culprits and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty a class of men loathed for their vices whom the crowd styled

Christians Christus from whom they got their name had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time only to break out afresh not only in Judea the home of the plague but in Rome itself where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home first then those who confessed themselves Christians were arrested next on their disclosures a vast multitude were then convicted not so much on the charge of arson as for hatred of the human race and their death was made a matter of sport they were covered in wild beast skins and torn to pieces by wild dogs they were fastened to crosses and set on fire in order to serve as torches by night when the daylight failed for Nero's parties

Nero had offered his gardens for the spectacle and gave an exhibition in the circus mingling with the crowd in the guise of a charioteer or mounted on his chariot as a conqueror hence in spite of a guilt which had earned the most exemplary punishment being haters of the human race there arose a feeling of pity for them because it was felt that they were being slaughtered and sacrificed not for the common good but to gratify the savagery of one man submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether to a king as the one in authority or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right for such is the will of God and so Christians found themselves increasingly marginalized and persecuted just for being Christians just for suffering for the name of Jesus I'll point you to 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 16 let's start in 15 make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer or thief or evildoer or a troublesome meddler but if anyone suffers as a Christian there it is if you suffer for the name if you suffer as a Christian you are not to be ashamed you are to glorify God in this name so most of the histories recount that a Christian phrase arose at this time suffering for the name suffering for the name now folks if we bring all of this together we begin to better understand what it is that

Peter is after the world these people lived in expected Christians to rebel they expected Christians as haters of society to make some kind of play against society and so Peter writes to them and says the best way that we can express the love and gentleness and kindness of Jesus Christ is to submit ourselves next he's going to go to the area of submitting themselves to the point of following the example of Jesus and laying down their lives the reason that I'm preaching this and bringing this out and trying to help us grasp this is because we want to understand what we're being called to as Christians we are not being called as Christians to have as our first intention to knee jerk against authority but to find a way to arrange ourselves under authority now Greg and

[ 47 : 20 ] I are designing the next three Tuesday night studies over the next three months to help us sit down as a church family and talk through the principles of civil disobedience as we're seeing it portrayed for us not here in first Peter but other places of scripture holding in our hearts the reality that what God is first and foremost calling us to is a submissive spirit if you miss the submissive spirit part you're going to rebel in ways that will become sinful that's my knee jerk I've admitted it to you in earlier time we want to be people who submit people who show the example of Jesus by bearing under the weight and so Peter says to them bear up under this persecution because in our

time these people need to see us suffer well for Christ for the Lord's sake we need to put him on display now would these people come to the place where they would say no if they were required to sin by the government that's exactly what they will do and they'll be killed for it they will not bow to Caesar they'll pray for Caesar but they won't pray to him that's coming you heard of the emperor Domitian worse is coming worse is coming and Peter says submit yourselves it's challenging and we won't do it apart from the grace of Christ so let's start there then we can walk over here and begin to look back and say alright now given that spirit of submissiveness when is it right for us to say no that's what Tuesday nights are going to be around I can't preach that out of Peter it's not there so I got to create another venue and that's what we're doing isn't it brother because we want to help you with this we understand our time we understand what we're up against and we want to help you with it the next three that I'll deal with and then I'm closing the will of submission to authority the warning and the wisdom that's where we're going and God willing we'll see how far we get next time to our visitors thank you for being here thank you for jumping in in the middle of everything I hope you were blessed and that it made sense to you as we brought it from the scriptures let's pray together father even as we have rehearsed before you the spirit and Christ Jesus what we know to be the history of this time written by men of the time we pray father that you will help us to use this information that we might better understand what the situation was for these people and why it is that Peter is making such a bold statement of submission given the cultural situation they were in Lord please help us to discern help us to be careful students of the word of God help us to be people who take seriously our great privilege and responsibility to have our minds renewed by the word of truth that is the scripture we thank you so much

God for what you're doing in our church family in our life we thank you for the spirit of unity and love and kindness and gentleness that we're all experiencing together we thank you so very much God for the way that we are serving one another and reaching out to one another and being involved of ourselves and more and more come to the place where we humble ourselves before you and each other and allow people in so that we can minister in your name we pray that you will help us carry the name of Jesus carefully prayerfully gently and that we will be salt and light to the people around us who are increasingly looking in on Christianity with suspicion increasingly looking in with doubt misunderstanding so that even as they malign us as Peter said we will give ourselves to Christ Jesus and we will set our hearts to serve you so that in the thing that they malign us in they will come to be convicted and see the love of Christ at work we thank you that we have the opportunity to display you in all of your goodness and glory to us as sinners saved by grace thank you for this in Jesus precious name amen