Living to Display God's Grace

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[0:00] That he is faithful and that he's given us all that we've needed. I think it's harder to think about that and live in that reality when things aren't going peachy fine keen in your life.

Right. You get sick or something happens in a relationship and you find yourself struggling to believe that God is good and does good all the time.
But he does, doesn't he? And he is faithful and I love singing that song of his faithfulness to us.
Well, it's been, if you can believe it now, about four Sundays since we were in First Peter, I think.
Is that right? Because I was in Mark laying some groundwork for us for a couple of Sundays. And then Greg preached the last two Sundays. So with that in mind, I wanted to take some time and do what I'm going to call an overview.
So the title of my message today will probably be the title for next time. This will be kind of a part two or next time living to display God's grace, which is, I think, the main point that Peter wants to get at as we deal with this particular section of Scripture from his letter.
[1:22] Living to display God's grace. And it's going to be this morning kind of an overview to get you familiar again with the major themes that Peter is hitting on and then drive us into what will be his main point.

Now, to do that, let me rehearse some truths with you to get us ready. You'll remember when I was with you last a few weeks ago, preaching from the book of Mark to set more of the stage for this section in First Peter.
I talked to you about Jesus living as a rebel. That he was, in many ways, a countercultural Christian, if you will.
Right. He was the quintessential person who stood against the injustice and the evil of his day. But he did that as a man full of love and grace because he was primarily and supremely concerned with the glory of Almighty God.
He wanted above all things to honor his father, whatever personal cost that meant for him. So Jesus was not a rebel for rebel's sake.
[2:33] Jesus didn't attempt to just turn over the conventions of his day because he wanted to make a name for himself, as it were. Jesus did what he did out of supreme love for God, the father and to see the father's will done.

He was willing to suffer being tortured to death on a cross in order to accomplish his father's will for his life. Even Jesus remarked while he was in his public ministry and went on record saying, I don't speak the things that I want to speak.
I speak the things that my father has given me to say. I don't do the things that I want to do. I do the things the father has given me to do. That's all throughout the four gospels, particularly in the gospel of John.
Now, in rehearsing this idea and trying to come to an understanding biblically of this idea of of being a rebel, I want to say a number of things about this from scripture.
The Bible makes crystal clear, and I want to emphasize that it makes crystal clear a truth about all human beings.
[3:46] We are all, each one of us, rebels at heart. We're born that way. Nobody has to train or teach us how to rebel.

It comes natural to us as human beings. As soon as we draw our first breath in this world, we are on a course of rebellion.
Now, this is how scripture lays this out for us. The dictionary defines a rebel this way. A person who refuses allegiance to, resists, or rises in arms against the government or ruler of his or her country.

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It is a person who resists any authority, control, or tradition. All right? But what does the Bible mean by telling us that each one of us is a rebel at heart?
In other words, we rebel against authority because it's who we are. That comes from our nature. This is what the Bible teaches.
[5:05] This is the emphasis of scripture. And, of course, this emphasis primarily deals with this scriptural rebellion, this spiritual rebellion against Almighty God.

What does the Bible then mean by telling us that each one of us is a rebel at heart? If we pay our taxes, if we are generally obeying the laws of our land, if we're not seeking to overthrow our government or subvert the police or the authorities in our land, what does the Bible then mean by calling us rebels at heart?
How do we understand that? Here are a couple of examples of what the Bible actually says. Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them, that being the rest of us, are given fully to do evil.
That's from Ecclesiastes 8, verse 11. In the context here, the author, Solomon, is dealing with the reality that God is very merciful and very patient.
And so God does not bring his judgment on sinners in an immediate way. And when he doesn't do that, you would think that God giving sinners that mercy, God giving mercy to you before you became a Christian, living in sin and in rebellion in your heart against God, that God would then just judge you in those moments of iniquity and sin and rebellion against him, and then you would have lived in a devil's hell forever.
[6:55] But God didn't do that. God spared you his judgment until the moment that he saved you in Christ Jesus, right? But before he saved you, did you deserve a devil's hell?

Did you deserve the judgment of God? Yes, absolutely. From the rebellion and sin nature that you hold within you. But God didn't do that. He saved you.
He was kind to you. He was merciful. Now, you would think that because God was merciful to you like that, that that might win your heart over, that you might come to realize that on your own or in some way recognize that God is being no, you just kept sinning until God did open your eyes and flood your heart with his grace and draw you to himself, a work that God did in your heart.
This is the context of Ecclesiastes, as Solomon says, not only does the mercy of God being with him withholding his judgment from sinners, not only does that not awaken them to the reality of God's grace in their life, that he's he's not judging them.
It actually serves to drive them deeper into sin and evil. The fact that he withholds his justice is a way that sinners take advantage of that and just continue to sin and grow deeper and deeper.
[8:20] That is the nature of sin. Beloved, don't don't be mistaken about the nature of sin. Sin, as you live in it, doesn't leave you in some kind of a neutral position in the eyes of God.

And it doesn't leave you in a neutral position in terms of your battle against wrong. Sin will always pull you down. It will always seek to be more and more progressive in its corrosive, corrupting power in your life.
You understand that? There is no neutrality in this equation. There is sin and the ongoing decay and corruption of sin, or there is grace and life and you growing in that grace.
So in this context that we see in Ecclesiastes chapter 8, the fact is because the sentence that God withholds against evil, the evil deeds, is not executed quickly because God is showing mercy, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them and among the rest of us are given fully, fully to do evil.
That's our nature. That's the nature of a rebellious heart. Let's go a little further. The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.
[9:47] Do you see that? Throughout their lives. Now this all started with the first two human beings to live on planet Earth.

And it's interesting to me that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God when they sinned for the first time. Think about that.
They became afraid and they were actually ashamed of their sin. They were actually ashamed of their rebellion. So they hid from God.
Now that's in Genesis chapter 3. But listen to this. As people populated the earth, this spirit of rebellion against God and each other began to grow and spread quickly and universally.

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Wherever people went, they took the spirit of rebellion against God with them. So that just three chapters later, after Genesis chapter 3, in Genesis chapter 6, a time span of about 1500 years, the Bible tells us this.
[11:00] Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

That is God's measure of what's going on in the earth in the time of Noah. This is where we're facing the flood issue.
Now just a few verses later, in Genesis chapter 6, we have this. Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God and the earth was filled with violence.
God looked on the earth and behold, it was corrupt for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.
I want to draw your attention, first of all, in this little passage here, Genesis 6, 11 and 12. Notice that in the sight of God, the earth was corrupt in the sight of God.
[12:09] Go a little further. God looked on the earth. This is God's perspective. This is the holy perspective on the issue of mankind.

Both men and women across the globe at this time. It's also interesting to me that three times he used corrupt or corrupted in these two verses.
Now the earth was corrupt. It was filled with violence. It was corrupt. All flesh had corrupted. What do you think might be the point or theme of these two verses?
Corruption. Corruption in humankind. It's just not hard to figure that out. In Hebrew, the word corrupt actually begins the sentence.
And it does that for emphasis. Corrupt was the world. That's what the author wants to stress. Corrupt means destruction or to go to ruin.
[13:17] Destruction or to go to ruin. That's the idea that we're dealing with as God looks on the earth and sees that all man has gone to ruin.

That's his assessment. He actually goes on to say that the earth was filled with this ruin. Was filled with, has the idea of to contain as much or as many as is possible.
That makes sense to us. We understand that. So the earth was completely corrupt. It was completely filled with as much as it could be filled with this state of ruin and destruction.
It was filled with, he says, and he uses this word, violence. Violence is the Hebrew word Hamas. Word that's probably familiar to you. It carries the idea of destruction, especially acts of aggression involving physical contact.
[14:27] So these are people who are destroying each other. They are turning on one another and doing great harm and evil and wickedness to each other.

So you just imagine the different kinds of evils that we can perpetuate on each other and that's the kind of thing that was going on in the world and God said the earth was full of this.
There was no place that you could go where people were that this was not the case. And God saw it all. Now taken together, folks, this is a terrifying to me.
This is a terrifying picture of sin run amok. Of the entire human race living in great evil in God's sight.
People express this ungodly rebellion then by filling the earth with vile, vile acts of selfishness, greed, pride, and wanton destruction.
[15:37] It's the way that judges described it. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes as they lived from the nature of revolt against God.

I want you to understand scripturally that's the point that the Bible makes about this rebellion. First and foremost, it is the evil that it is because it is rebellion against Almighty God as their creator. God did not make these people to be this way. This is what sin has done to them. The greatest evil of all of this isn't the sin that they do toward one another, it's the sin that they do toward God as they sin against one another.
In a very, very short time then, people went from being afraid and ashamed of their rebellion like Adam and Eve were when they first sinned to then wearing it as a kind of badge of honor and independence.
Does that sound familiar? And so it is today, isn't it? People wear their prideful rebellion against God and His ways as badges of honor so that perversion in our land is heralded as coming out and being brave.

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[16:58] We call it pride marches just for one example. That's great. I think they should keep that title. I think they should write it in giant banners as they do it because it absolutely displays of human pride and rebellion against Almighty God.

Those are the people, folks, that we need to pray for. Those are the people that we need to share the love of Christ with. These are the people that are headed to a devil's hell while they wave their banners and their rainbow stuff and while they stand up and espouse all of their wickedness about the independence and joy that they have in being the person they want to be.
All the while they're headed to a devil's hell. Rebellion against God brings on God's judgment and as Ecclesiastes told us, as God shows mercy to these people and doesn't destroy them in the moment of them doing these things but allows them time to repent.
All it does is harden their hearts and leads them into greater and greater depths of depravity and sin and expressions of that depravity. You would think that it would turn the human heart but apart from this miracle working power of the spiritual transformation of God, there is no hope for us.
We need God's spiritual power to enlighten our hearts, change our hearts, and lead us to God. That's what we need.
[18:33] That's what they need. So as we rehearse this, it's terrible news. It's hard for us to read these things in scripture and realize this is true about us.

This is how God sees the rebellion of our hearts. What we are in honor about, God hates. God's pronouncement on all of this is that it's evil.
Friends, we need this biblical view of how God sees rebellion and how he speaks about it in scripture.
God hates rebellion like this. He hates this spiritual rebellion in our hearts. What we need to own is that in God's eyes, all evil is sin.
And God defines sin this way. Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness. Here's the definition of sin from scripture.
[19:35] Sin is lawlessness. That's where you get the idea from scripture of being a criminal against God. To be lawless is to be a criminal.

And in the sight of God, we are all criminals before Christ. We are all rebellious, anti-law people by nature.
And this anti-authority nature incurs the wrath of God because God sees it as sin. This isn't popular. Obviously, to preach like this and to talk about these realities isn't popular.
It's not PC. But it is biblical. Biblical. And it honors JC. Jesus Christ. And so that's what we're going to preach and that's where we're going to camp out because we know, we know that the only way for these people to be delivered from this bad news is through the love of God in Jesus Christ alone.
And so we want to hold before them the hope of Jesus, the love of Christ, the goodness of God and sending Jesus to pay for those sins that they've committed in their rebellious hearts.
[20:52] Jesus said, God said, while we were helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. Thank the Lord. That's our hope.

To be lawless at heart is to want and to do what God forbids. Do you hear that? To be lawless at heart is to desire and to do what God forbids.
That is the essence of all sin. It is first and foremost and highest sin against God. So what scripture tells us is that we are not, get this now, we are not neutral when it comes to the matter of authority. We are born in an attitude of anti-authority. We are born into an attitude of rebellion. That seems natural to us.
That seems to us to be the regular course of things. And it's reinforced in that way to us as we look around and see so many other people with the same attitude.
[22:09] Doing similar things to express that rebellion. All that seems to do is give us greater credence for what we want to do anyway, which is rebel.

Now are you with me? We are rebellious creatures at heart and by nature. We are not neutral. Folks, when unbelievers write stuff that they say is science like evolution, evolutionary theory and pass it off as science, I want you to understand that people who are writing these things are not neutral toward the things of God.
They are writing out of a heart of rebellion against God whether they realize it or admit it or not. That is the case from scripture. You understand that? So these people who are writing these things that

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speak against the truth of God's word are speaking out of rebellious anti-God anti-authority nature. They are not neutral. They cannot be neutral. They cannot be unbiased. Look, I'm a Christian. I'm a gospel preacher.
Do you know the hardest work that I do every week when I get ready and prepare to stand up here and do this? Do you know what it is? It's not parsing Greek verbs. Do you know what it is? It's getting me out of it.
[23:33] That's the hardest work I do every week to come and preach the gospel to you is to get Jeff out of it so that what you hear is Jesus Christ and him crucified.

That you hear the truth of the word of God. I'll share opinions with you from time to time. They don't matter. What matters is what God. That's why I pointed out to you from scripture in God's sight. What God looked on and sees. These are God's views. God's perceptions. That's what we need. This is what I'm preaching to you now. This is what God says about us by nature.
Our deceitful bent by our sin nature is to be anti-God and consequently to be anti-authority. Now we're all born in that reality and we carry that forward with us.
I want to show you a few other scriptures just to put a finer point on this before we move on. Let me show you these three passages from scripture. Will you turn there with me to get you busy now?
[24:38] Let's go to Romans first. Now there are lots and lots of places we could go. I just wanted to give you these three. Romans 8. Romans 8. I try to limit myself because Romans 8 is just great.

We'll start in verse 6. For the mind set on the flesh is death. See that's the issue. That means spiritual death. The mind that is set on the flesh is the unbelieving mind.
It's the unbelieving mind that is based in and nature to this world. defined by carried by influenced by this world.
So it's an unbelieving mind. That's death. The result of that is death. But the mind contrasts now but the mind set on the Holy Spirit is life and peace.
That's a mind controlled by the Lord. That's a mind defined by truth and love for God and a desire to please the Lord because the Holy Spirit lives within you.
[25:43] So now you are given the mind of Christ. Look what it says in verse 7. Because the mind set on the flesh that is the unbelieving mind the mind set on the flesh is what?

Hostile toward God. You see that? Do you understand that the Bible does not say that the unbelieving mind is neutral toward the Lord. It says that the unbelieving mind is hostile toward God for it does not subject itself.
It does not submit itself to the law of God for it is not even able to do so. That's inability. We're not able to do that.
And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Now that's a terrible terrible place to be. It's a terrible place to be where you live your life and you cannot please God.
No matter how hard you try and try they do. There are all kinds of religions and cults and ideas in the world where people are trying to earn their way into the favor of God and they cannot do it.
[26:56] The unbelieving mind is the mind that is set on death and it cannot please God. It is not even able to do so. The unbelieving mind is hostile toward God.

It is not neutral. Colossians chapter 1. Will you go there with me? Colossians chapter 1. Now I'm just trying to pull these out for you real quickly and show you just a little bit of the context that we're looking at around it.
Colossians 121. Paul says and although you speaking to these Christians in the city of Colossae the church at Colossae and although you were formally alienated and notice hostile in mind engaged in evil deeds.
Now this was their former manner of life. This was their former spiritual condition and the way that they lived out that condition before the Lord.
They were formally hostile in mind engaged in evil deeds. Then notice the next verse. Verse 22. Yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.
[28:19] Folks, that's the interesting and wonderful reality of the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We were formally these things separated from life with God and now by his death and resurrection we have been made blameless, spotless, in God's sight.

Again, that's what matters. How does God see you? What does God know about you? That's what matters. And then in James chapter 4, would you look there with me?

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Right before the book of 1 Peter where we've been doing our work, James chapter 4, James is speaking contextually here about the reason that these Christians quarrel and fight and argue and fuss and get at each other and he tells them the reason is their heart.
They have these desires in their heart that serve as idols and these idols in their hearts drive them to do the things that they do.
It's what they want most. They want something more than they want God and that leads them into these quarrels and fights as they try to get what they want. He says in verse 2, you lust and you do not have so you murder.
[29:43] You're envious and you can't obtain so you fight and you quarrel. See, that's all coming from their heart. What they desire most. You don't have because you don't ask.

You ask and don't receive because when you ask, you ask with wrong motives. So that you may spend it on your own desires. See, he's saying to them in these first few verses, you're consumed by these desires that become these idols in your life and drive your life forward.
You want these things more than you want God and more than you want to honor God. So you give yourselves to these things and that creates these relational conflicts with each other because there's no humility.
There's no submission. There's no prayerfulness toward each other where you're praying for yourself and you're dealing with the log in your own eye before you go to your brother to deal with the speck in his.
You're not dealing with your own sin. So you carry that sin into your relationships and then your relationships begin to look like you are in sin. That's what's happening.
[30:53] So he comes to this place then and goes to the verse that I want to read to you now. Verse 4. You adulteresses. Now that's strong language folks.

You adulteresses. He means that spiritually. Do you not know that and here it is friendship with the world is hostility toward God.
You cannot hold out friendship with the things of the world with the ideas and the doctrines and the traditions and the precepts and the teachings of men and remain faithful to almighty God.
You can't do that. It's oil and water Christian. And so James is rebuking these people and he's telling them that they need to repent of this very anti-authority idle desired driven heart and turn to the Lord.
That's what he's dealing with. Folks, the point is this. There is no spiritual neutrality in God's eyes as he looks on the people of the earth.
[32:07] It's the Hatfield and McCoys. You're either for me or again me. That's what it is in the eyes of the Lord. We are not neutral when it comes to the matter of authority.

God's authority or human authority or any authority. We are anti-authority people and we need help. We need to get over that. Let me ask you something. We have marrieds in our congregation and I'm willing to say if you've been married longer than six months, you understand something about what I'm talking about right now.
And it goes both ways. The reasons that husbands sin against their wives is because they're anti-authority. Against whom?
God. You wouldn't sin against your wife if God was preeminent in your mind in those moments. You'd submit to him and you wouldn't sin against your wife because you'd want to do what was most pleasing to God.
[33:20] You think it pleases the Lord for you to sin against your wife guys? Of course not. So in those moments you're living in your anti-authority mindset. You're going to do what you want to do, not what God wants you to do.

No matter what it costs. Ladies, your sin against your husband is the sin of anti-authority in the same way that your husband sins against you as he sins against the Lord, right?
It's about authority. Who are you submitting to? I want what I want. I want it when I want it. This is James. So we sin against each other.
We sin against each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. We hold grudges. We want vengeance. We do evil. We talk snippy.
We undermine each other. We undercut each other. These are the ways that we express this. I'm just saying, folks, that this is a reality in our lives. And I've spent time on this because when we get further into 1 Peter, I want you to be very prepared for your hearts to receive the teaching.

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[34:29] I'm doing all that I can to help lay the groundwork for that. Now, let's transition just for a second here. Now, you might say, you might say, yes, I know all of that, but now I'm a Christian.

All right. Great. Now, for you marrieds, have you sinned against each other in your marriage since you've been a Christian? Oh, goodness. You mean that anti-authority thing is still sticking around? What in the world is that all about? Right. And you all know as parents, you don't have to train your children to rebel against your authority. You don't have to train them to be sassy.
You don't have to train them to be snippy in their remarks. You don't have to give them, let's send you to school and teach you how to be a little whatever brat. You don't have to teach people that. We know how to do that really, really well. Yeah, but I'm a Christian. Well, listen, before I move on and you think that that's not a big deal, that's good. Praise the Lord.
[35:32] That's what we want. That's good. We need to understand what being a Christian is. Well, I'm a Christian because I was born in America. I'm a Christian because I love my mama.

I'm a Christian because I love apple pie and I love the flag. Those are all great things. I love my mama and I love apple pie. I love our flag. Appreciate our country.
Especially when I travel out of it like when I go to L.A. I hope nobody hears from L.A.
We love the L.A. people too. But I can only take it in doses. It took me almost an hour to go from where we stayed to get to the airport.
I got to the airport and it took me as long in the airport to park the car as it did for me to get to the airport. And I said, I don't want to do this ever again in my life.
[36:39] All right. To be a Christian is to be in Christ. To be a Christian is to be in Christ.

It is to be made into a new person. Hallelujah. By spiritual regeneration. What is that? Spiritual regeneration is a work of God to give you spiritual life.
Whereas you were once were walking in the walking dead, spiritual death, spiritual regeneration is God's work of spiritual life by his grace through his gift of faith.
Where you trust in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins. When you come, it is when you come to see yourself through God's eyes for the first time so that you see your unforgiven sins as the barrier between you and God.
You come to the place where, as you knew before that, this is wrong and I don't want to get caught. You move from knowing that something is wrong and you do because God's written his law on the tablet of your heart.
[38:03] You do know right from wrong before you come to Christ. So you do wrong and you feel like, well, that's wrong but, and you can rationalize and justify, but mainly you just don't want to get caught.

So you learn how to cope. You learn how to wear masks. You learn how to do all kinds of things to carry you through life dealing with the fact that you know you do wrong. But you want everybody to think that you're all this or all that.
that's the life that you live. When God begins to open your spiritual eyes to the reality of who you really are and the sin in your life separating you from God, then it becomes you and a God issue. Not just you and getting caught. You're now caught. You're exposed. And now God is showing you something of the nature of your heart.
And what God does in that is he draws you to himself and makes you where you want to come to him to deal with that tragic, awful reality that you are separated from him by your sin.
[39:10] So in other words, your sin becomes an issue in your life because you recognize that sin is what is standing between you and your God. And you want that barrier dealt with.

Before that, you didn't deal with sin like that. You didn't think about it that way. That's a work of God. That's the grace of the Lord working in your life.
What is separating you from God becomes your issue. So when you come to see Jesus Christ as God's only provision for your sins to then be forgiven and for you to be able to draw near to God so that your faith in Jesus Christ is God's work to take you from being anti-God to adoring God to loving God to your spiritual renewal as a God worshiper.
So in the moment that you come to trust Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sins as God's gift to you, his life, his death, his righteousness, goodness as you receive Jesus Christ in the goodness of his person into your life by faith, by trusting him in that very moment God takes you from being that anti-God hater to that God worshiper and adorer.

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And then God now is going to use the rest of your life to grow you in that adoration and understanding of who he is and what he is. The marvelous work that he's done for you in his son.
[40:54] So far from being anti-God, you gain a new desire. You grow in a new desire to please God.

Something that never mattered to you before. Now all that matters to you as it were is I want to please the Lord. And so you begin to do away with things in your life that you know don't please the Lord.
You see this in people's lives as they come to know Christ. What I used to be, what I used to do, what used to do it for me doesn't do it for me anymore because that's Jesus now. That's what Paul said.
All this that I used to have in my life is just dung. All that matters to me now is to know Christ. To live for Christ. That's Philippians 3.
To be in Christ. To gain Christ. Now people who aren't, they don't talk like that. People who aren't saved. There was a time in my life I couldn't have cared less.
[41:54] I heard stuff like that and I went yeah, yeah, yeah, whatever. Good grief, I hope I'm never like that. How obnoxious. When's he gonna stop with all that?

Man, I'm hungry. I never thought in a million years I'd be standing up in front of people doing what I'm doing today. That's the grace of almighty God.
So what I'm saying is this, you come to the place in your life where God has transformed you and made you into a new person through Christ. So you are this new spiritual entity in the sight of God now.
Whereas once you were covered in sin and completely, completely full of sin so that every part of you was corrupted by sin, now you are a new creature in Christ, clean in the sight of God, spotless and blameless.
You've been given a new life. Now listen, then you begin to live out of that new life. So here's what happens as God changes that desire. You read the Bible.
[42:57] The Bible becomes precious to you. You start going to church. You start gathering with other people who share this same love for Jesus because you want to stand shoulder to shoulder with them and sing to the praises of all.

You want to rehearse your heavenly role, your eternal role. That's what you'll do for the rest of eternity. So you're drawn to that.
You look for and want to join with other people who gather on the Lord's day because you want to please the Lord. God's changed what you want most in your life.
So do these different things. You mature in your faith. You read the Bible. You attend these services with these people.
You give your resources and your life to serving these people, to sharing with other people. Even when people ridicule you and make fun of you and ostracize you, you just continue to share the truth and the love of Christ with these people.
[44:06] You do all of that because you now have come to love God for all that He gives so lovingly to you in His Son. You have an entirely new motive for life.

And that motive is to serve the Son that has served you with His very life. He gave His blood for you.
So there's a debt that you owe. You can't pay it. This is the life that we live before the Lord.
You obey then from an adoring, growing love for the Lord. You don't obey because you're trying to earn your way to heaven.
You obey because you've come to love the Lord and you know that God loves you and has already made a place for you in heaven. That's why you obey.
[45:09] And that's the difference between trying to earn your way to heaven and knowing that God has already made a place for you in heaven in Christ and that the power of the Holy Spirit working in your life is proof and evidence and the guarantee and seal that God is holding a place for you in heaven.

What other explanation is there for your life on this earth in the Spirit? Then the Holy Spirit lives in you and God has saved you and given you hope. Now I got to give you a but.
But even as Christians we continue to struggle against sin and against this spirit of rebellion and independence that lingers in us.

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And it's because we're all controllers. We all chafe at authority. Some more than others. But each of us battle against a spirit of prideful rebellion even as Christians.
Alright? How do we know that to be true? How do I know for sure that the Bible does teach that even after I become a Christian I have to battle against this anti-authority rebellious nature in my heart?
[46:21] Where's the proof? The Bible reveals to us this spiritual reality about ourselves. Throughout the New Testament we see this over and over and over again.

If you go back into the Old Testament you see God doing these marvelous works of grace in the life of Israel, his people, pouring out his blessing upon blessing upon blessing only to find Israel becoming stiff necked and turning away and then God judges them and then they come.
You see that pattern back and forth, right? And then in the New Testament. But now look, we also see this spiritual reality about ourselves in Peter's instruction to us in the letter that we're looking at verse by verse.
Peter calls his Christian readers and he calls us to unqualified submission. Now Peter is speaking to that very issue from chapter 2 verse 13 to chapter 3 verse 12.
In that section in particular, Peter is speaking to the issue of this unqualified submission to authority.
[47:34] He ties God's authority to various relationships we have with each other while living as heavenly pilgrims in this world.

He uses some general categories from our everyday lives. Now I want to show you this real quickly. So look with me at 1 Peter 2 beginning in verse 13.
Everything I've been saying to you up to this point is just setting the biblical example of our need for God to teach us about submission.
What it means biblically to submit to authority. What it looks like. Why it's important. This is what Peter is going to be writing about. So in 2.13 through 17 I'll just give you this very generally to start with.
We have submission to governmental authorities. That's 2.13 through 17. We'll come back in just a minute and look just a little bit more. We're not going to do a deep dive so don't worry.
[48:37] I'm drawing to a close here. Next week God willing we'll deep dive into this section. This I just want to remind you and kind of give you an overview. So governmental authorities.

In other words how does God command us to relate to unbelievers he has ordained to govern over us. Alright you with me.
Then in chapter 2 18 through 20 Peter teaches us about submission in the workplace what we would refer to as the workplace.
How does God want us to relate to unbelievers who govern us in our jobs and in our business dealings. If you ever worked for an unbelieving boss you ever been persecuted in your workplace. You ever been maligned in your workplace. What do you do when you're up against that kind of thing. Then next in 2 21 through 25 we have Christ example of submission kind of sandwiched between these these examples he gives us from our life.
[49:46] Jesus Christ is our example for godly submission while suffering in a world of unbelievers. Look since God is sovereign in these affairs of our lives.

Submission to these people and in these matters really concerns our submission to God. Because God has sovereignly appointed these details in our life.
We don't want to find ourselves rebelling against or chafing against what God has ordained in these details. You see that's the issue here.
We don't want to suffer for unrighteousness Peter says. We want to suffer doing the will of God and for God's glory. And this is just as Jesus submitted to God.
Even as he submitted to the authorities in his life, those same authorities who persecuted him and eventually murdered him.
[50:49] Peter tells us that it is our privilege to emulate and to suffer for Christ. Then in chapter 3 verses 1 through 7, you have the general over category of submission in marriage.

where both the wife with more verses and then the husband in verse 7 are dealt with. What does godly submission look like in our relationships to husbands who are not believers?
And what is godly submission for believing husbands in their relationship toward their wives?
Interestingly, the emphasis here with the husbands is on the conduct of the believing husband regardless of whether his wife is a believer or not.

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It's not specified like it is earlier. When he deals with the wife, he deals with a wife who is married to an unbelieving husband. When he comes to deal with the husbands, he says, likewise, giving us the idea it might be that when you're a believing husband married to an unbelieving wife, but he doesn't specify it.
It's very interesting to me. We'll see what we do with that when we get there. And then finally, in 3, 8 through 12, you have submission to each other as believers.
[52:11] It's also about how we relate to a world of people who are not neutral towards God, but are hostile toward the Lord. How do we behave in a spirit of submission towards God each day in a world hostile to God, where people who have authority of us hate God and hate his ways?

Now, please recall what I've mentioned to you from verse 12. Look back up into 1 Peter 2, verse 12. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds as they observe them do what?
Think you're all that? Talk about how wonderful you are? Think that you're just so great? What a wonderful person? No, so that they will glorify God in the day of visitation.
Now, we've covered all of that in a previous message. Just be reminded, this is the theme of what Peter will emphasize through pretty much the remainder of this letter.
[53:21] So if I pull all of these categories together under the theme of submission and suffering for Jesus' sake, we can then kind of get the feel for Peter's main concern.

So I'm going to read the greater context of this passage before we end today. And as I read, I want you to ask yourself two questions. Again, this is just to kind of help you get a better grip on the overall idea that Peter's trying to accomplish here, okay?
And then we'll be set to sit down together next week and do a deep dive into this first part about governmental authorities. two questions. Who is at the center of Peter's instruction?
When I read this to you and you follow along, ask yourself, who is repeatedly at the center of all of this instruction? Who is this about? Secondly, why is Peter calling us to submit and suffer?
The answer is in the answer to number one. All right? So let's read this together. Start back up into verse 13 with me of chapter 2.
[54:28] Now just follow along thinking about these two questions as we move toward a close. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake. You getting your answer already?

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution. Except this one or that one or the other one. Nope, it ain't there. Not even between the white spaces.
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. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.
Act as free men. Do not use your freedom then as a covering for evil. Use it as slaves of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect.
[55:35] This is the workplace. Not only to those who are good and gentle but also to those who are harsh or unreasonable for this finds favor if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated you endure it with patience but if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it this finds favor with God.
For you here's the example for you have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps have you ever thought about your suffering under these conditions as suffering for Christ who committed no sin nor was any deceit found in his mouth and while being reviled he did not revile in return while suffering he uttered no threats but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness for by his wounds you were healed for you were continually straying like sheep but now now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls in the same way you wives be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior your adornment must not be merely external braiding the hair wearing jewelry putting on dresses let it be the hidden person of your heart with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of

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God for in this way in former times the holy women also who hoped in God they used to adorn themselves being submissive to their own husbands just as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear ah you husbands yet with gentleness and reverence and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered those who revile your good behavior in
Christ will be put to shame for it is better if God should will it so that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong for Christ also died for sins once for all the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God having been put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit in which he also went and made proclamation in the spirits now in prison folks this just goes on and on and on and you see as he comes to that place in scripture here that I just read to you you see that he says just as Christ suffered to bring you to God that becomes the main idea of your suffering under injustice and harsh treatment in the hope that your behavior to those people will become the catalyst that God uses to draw them to God they will say what other explanation is there that this person is not returning vileness for the vileness
[60:54] I'm dishing out what other explanation is there that they heap on me blessings the more I abuse them the kinder they get that God would use that to draw them to Jesus what price are you willing to pay to see someone brought to Christ because of your life before them how far will you go before you draw the line and say go to hell I don't care anymore isn't that sobering well that's where we are and so now Peter's going to come to you and say obey the government and here's what you're going to want to do but and here's what I'm going to do just keep reading the scripture there's no but now don't please don't run off and join another church because I realize there are times when people are called on to stand against evil

I understand that our church long ago decided that even if the county came and told us we couldn't meet anymore that we would be here to meet that was not a decision that we made lightly and that certainly was not a decision that we made because we wanted to tout our rebellious heart and show them we made it with great humility fear and trembling before the Lord but we made it because we were convinced that it would please God for us to continue to meet because we're essential to this community and we can't allow people to tell us or to dictate to us instruction or laws that cause us to sin against God that's where we draw the line I'm just saying to you don't be too quick to draw the line your bent is to draw the line quickly and then to justify be very careful God hates rebellion and we don't want to be rebels for rebels sake we need to be willing to suffer injustice for the cause and sake of
Jesus Christ and that is not natural to us that is a work of the spirit of God so we need to pray for each other and we need to carefully cultivate that spirit together this isn't going to be a series of sermons that helps you decide when to obey and when not to obey the government this is going to be a series of sermons that cause you to submission and careful discernment whenever you feel challenged to go against authority okay that goes from the government to your workplace to your marriage and to how you deal with each other in this congregation that's what Peter's going to do next week my hope is to give you an extended introduction on some of the history behind this so that you understand what these people were facing and then you can compare it to where we are today and I think it's going to be sobering for you I hope you'll pray for each other through the week I hope you'll be faithful to lift one another in prayer hold each other before the throne of grace and we'll turn next time to deal with what
I know to be there's things we don't understand about it but we need to heed what Peter says all right let's pray together father we are dependent on you and we desire in our heart of hearts to do what is right according to scripture and so while I pray for my precious friends that we would not be just cows who get in line and moo and do what we are told without being discerning without being careful without weighing whether or not this would cause us to violate the truth of the word of God or to go against the nature of Jesus I pray that you would help us to be a discerning people a gentle people a reverent people a kind hearted people a people who are willing to humbly suffer even under injustice in the hope that our behavior in that injustice would be a catalyst for you to use for the cause of Jesus
Christ to glorify him and to show the world that we are truly pilgrims here we have a heavenly home we have a new heart we have a new reason to get up every day and his name is Jesus we want the world to see the love of Christ in us we want us we want our own ability to demonstrate your grace to be unhindered by anything in our lives God that is selfish and impure and greedy and prideful

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and so please forgive us for the times that we have rebelled against each other and against you because we're sinful people and help us to turn to the Lord help us to count it as a wonderful privilege to suffer for Jesus sake and help us to be a people who carefully walk the walk of loving Christ and giving our lives over to you we thank you for the truth of your word Lord and we pray that you would burn it deep into our hearts in Jesus name amen

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