1Peter - Lesson 2C

Chapter 2:18 - 3:7

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

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- Peter continues on his theme of living in the world as a foreigner
  - We started with honoring authority, which is the proper thing to do when you are a stranger
    - We honor government first because it's God Who places men in authority, so we submit to government because we obey God Himself
    - Secondly, obedience to authority makes it more likely we will lead tranquil and peaceful lives
    - Finally, when we obey authority we possess a better witness for Christ
  - Well, these three ideas continue into today's lesson
    - Only now Peter is going to make application to three walks of life we can all relate to
      - Servants – workers
      - Wives
      - Husbands
    - But the principles we've been studying remain the same
      - We are foreigners, and we should act as one who represents heaven
      - We keep to the rules of our homeland, not the rules that drive this foreign world

1Pet. 2:18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.
1Pet. 2:19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.
1Pet. 2:20 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.

- When Peter says servants, he uses the word *oiketes* – house servant
  - This is a person who served in the household of a master
    - This person often faced considerable difficulty in their society
      - They had few rights and few protections and their master had almost unchecked authority over them
    - These people usually had significant restrictions placed on their personal liberty
      - Most of them placed themselves in this position of service, though once they were there they had few opportunities to leave the position
      - You could legitimately call them slaves, though the position of slave in Greek culture was more akin to indentured servant
  - Today, the closest parallel we might have is to our employer or boss
    - Or in the military, it would be our commanders and NCOs
- Peter says the right behavior for a Christian servant was to be submissive and

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obedient

- Not only to the good and gentle Masters
  - But also to those who are unreasonable (*skolios* – crooked) or perverse or cruel
- This is an important Biblical principle that runs 180 degrees from the worldly perspective
  - What is the worldly rule for good behavior?
    - We are nice to those who are nice to us
    - We are opposed to those who oppose us
  - But what is the Biblical rule?

Matt. 5:43 **"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'**
Matt. 5:44 **"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,**
Matt. 5:45 **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**
Matt. 5:46 **"For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?**
Matt. 5:47 **"If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?**
Matt. 5:48 **"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

- Look again at Peter's comments in verse 20
  - Peter repeats the same lesson as Christ Himself taught
  - We submit to our bosses or to our employer not only when they are doing what we want or when they are treating us well
    - We submit to them even when they treat us harshly
  - We're not talking about obeying to the point of carrying out sinful acts
    - If a master says go rob from that person or go murder someone, this is not an order we can obey because it violates God's law
  - But when we are told to work long hours in difficult conditions or with inadequate compensation or under harsh treatment, we have no right to oppose that authority
  - As I search for a good example of this model, I think of Cinderella
    - The servant girl who did her best to serve her stepmother and showed her respect regardless of how she herself was treated

Col. 3:22 **Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of**

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heart, fearing the Lord.
Col. 3:23 **Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,**

- But if we expect God to give us some kind of heavenly credit for our suffering
  - We must be sure that our suffering is unjust
    - Peter says in verse 19 that if for the sake of conscience towards God we suffer unjustly, this finds favor with God
    - God credits our account in heaven when we represent Him well in the face of injustice
  - But in verse 20, Peter gives the other side of the coin
    - If we suffer due to our own sin, then we get no credit
  - So the appropriate witness for an ambassador or foreigner who is working under harsh conditions is to be a model obedient servant
    - Think about it
    - If you want to stand out for Christ in the world as a foreigner or a stranger in your place of employment, how could you do it?
      - Here's how
      - When the world rebels against authority and shows no respect for their rule
      - You serve as if serving Christ Himself
        - That's a radical witness
- Because when the world is confronted with authority, it decides how to respond based on what's in it for them
  - But when a Christian faces authority, we decide how to respond by remembering what God expects of us
    - And because we are His representative in this world
      - We are His ambassador
  - We remember we are acting in His place and on His behalf
    - And how would Jesus act under harsh and unfair circumstances
    - Well, Peter describes how in the next verses…

1Pet. 2:21 **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,**
1Pet. 2:22 **WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;**
1Pet. 2:23 **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;**
1Pet. 2:24 **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.**

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1Pet. 2:25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

- What a powerful example
  - The world's standard is to be respectful when we are respected
  - The Biblical standard is to respect authority especially when they mistreat us
    - Because we are acting in the place of Christ as His ambassador
    - He is our shepherd and Guardian of our souls
- And now Peter turns to the second example found within the common Christian experience – that of wives

1Pet. 3:1 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,
1Pet. 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

- Peter begins by saying likewise, in the same way
  - So before we even look at the specifics of how he instructs wives to respect authority
    - We already know that the principle remains the same
    - The basis for submission and the value of submission is exactly the same as it was for servants
  - And in fact, look ahead at verse 7 where we study husbands
    - The same Greek word *homoios* (likewise) is used again
    - So for husbands the principle is yet again the same
    - We submit to authority so that we can honor God, serving as his representative and drawing men to Him
- For the wife, the Biblical command is to be submissive to her husband
  - The term submission in Greek is a military term (*hupatasso*)
    - To be under authority
  - I think it's helpful to review briefly the Biblical basis for this command for submission and its real meaning
    - The basis for a man's headship within the family was established in the garden as God pronounced a curse on the earth and on the enemy
      - And He changed the relationship between man and woman
  - He gave the man responsibility for spiritual leadership in the family
    - The man was to lead the family in its battle with Satan
      - A battle that had begun in the garden but was now going to rage throughout millennia of human history
    - Since Adam had been AWOL in the garden when the Enemy was at work

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deceiving woman

- Now he was to be on the front lines taking the role of defender and taking leadership over the family in all matters so that he had the authority to battle effectively

- In contrast, the woman was given a charge to desire her husband and support him from the protection of the rear ranks
  - Since she had been the one to try and defend the family in the first skirmish with Satan, and had fallen prey to deception
    - Now she was taken off the hot seat and the man was firmly placed in the line of fire on her behalf
  - And in this position, her duty is to be a loyal and obedient soldier

- Are we saying that a woman is in an inferior position in the Christian experience?
  - Well, I want you to consider what Paul said in Galatians 3

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Spiritually, God does not see gender within the Body of Christ
  - He sees only His children
  - There are no second class citizens in the church
    - We all have equal access to the Father
    - A woman has no need to approach Christ or the Father through a man
    - She is no less a part of the Body of Christ
  - But physically, we still must exist in a specific form for a time
    - And within that existence certain obligations and expectations attach
    - For a wife, the expectation is that she submit to her husband's authority
- Consider Christ Himself
  - He said in John 10:30 that I and the Father are One
    - They are co-equal and co-eternal
    - The Son is no less God than the Father
  - Yet, we also know that the He submitted to the Father in obedience
    - He did the Father's will
    - He was obedient even to death on a cross
  - So though we know that within the Trinity, Christ is equal to the Father
    - Yet in function, He took a place of submission to the Father for the sake of creation
- In the same way, the woman and the man are co-equal spiritually within the church
  - One is no more or less a part of the Body of Christ
  - But in the way God has designed the family and marriage, He asks the woman to

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take a place of submission

1Cor. 11:3 **But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.**

- And now look at the benefit that Peter says will be derived from a wife's obedience
  - As your husband is disobedient to God's word, then the wife may have opportunity to win him over by her godly behavior
    - Notice not won over by a word, but by a deed
    - Remember the servant example earlier
      - Did we submit only when our employer did the right thing?
        - No, but rather even when they did the wrong thing
      - And what was the result of suffering under unjust treatment?
        - That we might find favor, both with God and men
- Similarly, when does a wife submit to her husband?
  - When he does the right thing?
    - No, but at all times
  - And in fact, it's when he's doing the wrong thing that it's especially important that the wife submits so that she might influence him by *her* obedience

1Pet. 3:3 **Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;**
1Pet. 3:4 **but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.**

- Sometimes these verses are misused to emphasize the need for women to not adorn themselves
  - But consider the context
  - Peter isn't saying don't be externally beautiful
  - He's saying that external beauty can't be the mere extent of a woman's beauty
    - True wifely beauty is found in her behavior
    - And specifically, in godliness, gentleness, and a quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of the Lord
- The contrast here is between a woman who is outwardly the picture of wifely beauty, but inside she harbors resentment and rebellion and strife within her marriage
  - And by contrast, the truly beautiful woman may or may not adorn herself outwardly
  - But it won't matter what she does outwardly, because she will recognize that her true beauty before God and her husband is found inwardly
    - In a quiet, peaceful, submitted spirit supporting her husband as he struggles

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daily to lead his family in the right way according to God's word

- And when he fails, she helps bring him back not by chastisement nor by condemnation
  - But rather by submission to his headship in the family

- If you want an example to follow, look at the one Peter uses:

1Pet. 3:5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;
1Pet. 3:6 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.

- You may remember the story of Sarah and Abram from Genesis 12
  - A famine drove Abram to flee to Egypt, which was the wrong thing to do

Gen. 12:10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.
Gen. 12:11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman;
Gen. 12:12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live.
Gen. 12:13 "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."
Gen. 12:14 It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful.
Gen. 12:15 Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.
Gen. 12:16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.
Gen. 12:17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.
Gen. 12:18 Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?
Gen. 12:19 "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go."
Gen. 12:20 Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.
Gen. 13:1 So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.
Gen. 13:2 Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.

- Abraham did the wrong thing, repeatedly
  - Sarah didn't object, she did what she was told

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    - And she did so not because she trusted Abram
    - But she obeyed because she trusted that if she did the right thing, then God would be faithful to protect her against her husband's mistakes
    - And as a result, she and Abram received riches, which became her adornment in a way
        - In the end, she was adorned by her faithful submission to her husband trusting in God
- So like servants, the wife is called
    - To obey God in submitting to authority
    - To create harmony in the marriage
    - To honor God by being a witness to God's word within the marriage
        - If a woman wants to make a radical statement in the world for Christ, there is no more radical thing that a woman can do than declare that she views her proper role is to be submitted to her husband's authority
- Then finally to the husband

1Pet. 3:7 **You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.**

- Now it may seem odd that men only receive a single line
    - In our culture, we are quick to interpret this as a sign that men have less reason to submit in comparison to slaves and women
        - But you aren't thinking with an eastern cultural point of view
        - If you were, then you would be stunned to find men coming at the end of the list and being given only one line of instruction
    - The truly remarkable thing about Peter's section on submission is that men come last on the list and only receive a bare mention
        - This diminishes men in comparison to the other groups
            - It reflects the Biblical teaching that husbands place their wives ahead of themselves
- The phrase in verse 7 is a bit awkward to translate properly
    - The most literal translation would be "Husbands likewise dwell with them according to knowledge"
        - My translation then interprets that to mean live with your wives with understanding
    - That's not the best fit, I think
        - I think Peter is assuming that the man has got the picture by this point
            - He's saying live with your wife according to the knowledge you now have
                - Your knowledge of God's expectations how a servant submits even

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when the master is a dishonorable person

- How a wife submits to an husband even when he's an abusive man or careless absentee leader

- Knowing these groups will be obedient in submission
  - Now you live according to this knowledge
  - And without ignorance about what's expected of you as the master and husband
- Remember Peter's comments to the church in Chapter 1

1Pet. 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

- They were conforming to the lusts of the flesh in an earlier day when they were ignorant of Christ and His expectations
  - Now they were no longer ignorant
    - They must act according to the knowledge they had
  - And in the concluding words of verse 7, Peter says to live with her as with a weaker vessel
    - The term for weaker is a common Greek word *poieo* – the verb to do, or to establish or to keep
      - This is the only time it's translated weaker
    - Considering how the verse ends, I tend to think the better way to read Peter's statement is that men are to live in understanding with their wife
      - To keep her, establish her, to honor her due to her vulnerable position in the relationship
    - And Peter says that position of honor is due her since she is a fellow heir in Christ
      - Here's that equality again
    - For the husband who might decide to abuse his authority and take advantage of his wife's submissiveness
      - Remember, that one day we will all inhabit eternity in equality without distinction
      - And we will be rewarded according to our obedience
- And to the man who isn't honoring to his wife, his prayers will be hindered
  - Clearly disharmony in the marriage can impede a man's prayer life
    - But to really understand this verse, a man would have to be familiar with the practice of a husband and wife praying together
      - In a healthy marriage, prayer should be a corporate activity
        - Personal private prayer would take place as well
        - But the marriage couple would also have a commitment to praying together and for one another

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        - But when the couple is living in conflict due to an abusive or inconsiderate husband
            - Then these prayers are the first to be set aside
            - And a man's prayer life is most severely hindered
    - Men, let's step up and rise to the Biblical expectation to lead our families in prayer, especially in our relationship with our wife

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