

ST ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

## COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION

ON

**PETER** AND **THE FIRST EPISTLE** THAT BEARS HIS NAME

**CONVERSATION STUDY PLAN #8 for Thursday –December 18, 2014**

**TODAY'S TEXTUAL MATERIAL: 1 Peter 2: 13- 3:7**

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### OPENING PASTORAL PRAYER

### THE MUTUAL SHARING OF PEACE BY GOD'S PEOPLE

### A LOOK AT OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION:

- To explore more of the *"Imperatives"* of the Christian faith described by Peter:
  - *to live as a free governed people*
  - *to be a dutiful "Servant" in society*
  - *to live in a proper relationship as wives and husbands.*

### PETER'S CALL TO LIVE AS A FREE GOVERNED PEOPLE (2:13-17)

(Common English Bible) <sup>13</sup> For the sake of the Lord submit to every human institution. Do this whether it means submitting to the emperor as supreme ruler, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent by the emperor. They are sent to punish those doing evil and to praise those doing good. <sup>15</sup> Submit to them because it's God's will that by doing good you will silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Do this as God's slaves, and yet also as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Have respectful fear of God. Honor the emperor.

### compare biblical translations above and below!

(Translation: The Message) <sup>13-17</sup> Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.

## HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE INFORM OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?

- A) As citizens of heaven, no earthly power, person, or institution has authority and ultimate power over a Christian; but, this does not mean that a Christian refuses to cooperate or submit to anyone.
- B) What it does mean is that we answer to God, not to human authority, and God has set us free in Christ. Christian freedom is always conditioned by responsibility.
- C) There are hints in the N.T. that Christian freedom/liberty was frequently perverted. As an example see GALATIANS 5:13 *“You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don’t let this freedom be an opportunity to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love.”*
- D) Even today, the problem is that many ‘Christians’ take the message of freedom as a personal license to do whatever they want.
- E) Central to this discussion is a truth already considered – Christianity is experienced in community; a Christian is not an isolated unit, he/she is a member of a community – which carries with it the obligation to serve.
- F) The only reliable guard against the misuse of “freedom” is to stay in step with the Holy Spirit; then, the commands of vs. 17 can be fulfilled!
  - i) Respect all men
  - ii) Love the brotherhood
  - iii) Fear God
  - iv) Honor the king

## FOR FURTHER CONVERSATION:

1. In our ears, the admonition *“respect all men”* may sound like something that hardly needs to be said; what were the differences, if any, in society between then/now?
2. How do we in 2014/15 (*sometimes unwittingly*) fail to show respect for others?
3. As you read Peter’s words, what is the dominant requirement within the church?
4. In his epistle, Peter seems convinced that the actions of governmental leaders could best be condemned by moral excellence rather than verbal denunciation. Does it surprise you that Peter writes *“honor the king,”* when for him, that ruler was Nero? Does this statement provide any further insights and/or dilemmas about how we think/speak/act regarding many of our contemporary political leaders?

## **A CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AS SERVANT IN SOCIETY (2:18-25)**

(AMP VERSION) <sup>18</sup> [YOU WHO ARE] **household servants, be submissive to your masters with all [PROPER] respect, not only to those who are kind and considerate *and* reasonable, but also to those who are surly (OVERBEARING, UNJUST, AND CROOKED).** <sup>19</sup> **For one is regarded favorably (IS APPROVED, ACCEPTABLE, AND THANKWORTHY) if, as in the sight of God, he endures the pain of unjust suffering.**

<sup>20</sup> [AFTER ALL] **what kind of glory [IS THERE IN IT] if, when you do wrong and are punished for it, you take it patiently? But if you bear patiently with suffering [WHICH RESULTS] when you do right *and* that is undeserved, it is acceptable *and* pleasing to God.** <sup>21</sup> **For even to this were you called [IT IS INSEPARABLE FROM YOUR VOCATION]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [HIS PERSONAL] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps.** <sup>22</sup> **He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (GUILE) ever found on His lips.**

<sup>23</sup> **When He was reviled *and* insulted, He did not revile *or* offer insult in return; [WHEN] He was abused *and* suffered, He made no threats [OF VENGEANCE]; but he trusted [HIMSELF AND EVERYTHING] to Him Who judges fairly.** <sup>24</sup> **He personally bore our sins in His [OWN] body on the tree [AS ON AN ALTAR AND OFFERED HIMSELF ON IT], that we might die (CEASE TO EXIST) to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed.** <sup>25</sup> **For you were going astray like [SO MANY] sheep, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian (THE BISHOP) of your souls.**

### **HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE FURTHER INFORM OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?**

- A) The Greek word that Peter uses for “servants” is not **DOULOI**, (which is the most common and widest used term) but **OIKETAI**. The **OIKETAI** were mainly the household and domestic slaves.
- B) Understand that in the Roman Empire there have been estimated to have been 60,000,000 slaves! They were not all relegated to menial tasks. Many were highly educated professionals. (*By this time, the Roman attitude was that there was no point in being master of the world and doing one's own work!*)
- C) Slavery could be a life-long situation, or it could sometimes be a temporary time-span served as punishment for a crime.
- D) However, the dominant fact in the life of a slave was that he/she remained “*a thing*” not a person! There were no rights; there was no justice for slaves.
- E) Both freemen and slaves were known to be members of the early Christian Church, which meant that dilemmas in interpersonal relationships frequently arose.

F) Christianity introduced three **(3) new principles into attitudes about servants and workmen.**

- i. a new relationship of brotherhood between the Master and the worker (Philemon 1:16 **Not as a slave any longer but as [SOMETHING] more than a slave, as a brother [CHRISTIAN], especially dear to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh [AS A SERVANT] and in the Lord [AS A FELLOW BELIEVER].**)
- ii. a new attitude toward work – it is the conviction of the N.T. that all work must be done for Jesus Christ. Work is not done to make so much money; not done for personal prestige; work is done for God; the conviction that work must be done well enough to make it and to show it to God without shame! (Reference Colossians 3:17 **And whatever you do [NO MATTER WHAT IT IS] in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus and in [DEPENDENCE UPON] His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him.**)
- iii. In being “*Suffering Servant*,” Jesus is used as a familiar metaphor to address those who are mistreated in their work situations. Peter uses a vivid Greek word **HUPOGRAMMOS** (translated as “*example*”) to make his theological point. Children in the ancient world were taught to write by using an outline sketch, called a **HUPOGRAMMOS**. The learner used this pattern or educational tool to master the subject matter.

G) Peter’s point is that just as people respected how Jesus behaved, is how people ought to respect our behavior. Being a Christian is all about faith. However, faith dictates behavior. A great part of that behavior is how we react during difficult situations.

**FOR FURTHER CONVERSATION:**

1. In today’s western world, society no longer tolerates slavery. The worst we have are abusive bosses, intolerable working conditions, co-workers who insult and bully us. In such situations should we stay or go?
2. What is fundamentally different about today’s social situation, and the society that Peter addresses in the first century?
3. Does Peter’s teaching provide any guidance in today’s business scenario for relations between labor and management?
4. One of the main themes of Peter’s letter is that if God is calling you to “*stand there and take it*” you possess a secret strength to deal with that pain. What is that secret?

5. Are you willing to share any present-day situations where God is calling you “to stand there and take it” rather than to go elsewhere?

### **THE RELATIONSHIP OF WIVES and HUSBANDS (3:1-7)**

(AMP VERSION) **In like manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands** [SUBORDINATE YOURSELVES AS BEING SECONDARY TO AND DEPENDENT ON THEM, AND ADAPT YOURSELVES TO THEM], **so that even if any do not obey the Word** [OF GOD], **they may be won over not by discussion but by the** [GODLY] **lives of their wives,** <sup>2</sup> **When they observe the pure *and* modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence** [FOR YOUR HUSBAND; YOU ARE TO FEEL FOR HIM ALL THAT REVERENCE INCLUDES: TO RESPECT, DEFER TO, REVERE HIM—TO HONOR, ESTEEM, APPRECIATE, PRIZE, AND, IN THE HUMAN SENSE, TO ADORE HIM, THAT IS, TO ADMIRE, PRAISE, BE DEVOTED TO, DEEPLY LOVE, AND ENJOY YOUR HUSBAND]. <sup>3</sup> **Let not yours be the** [MERELY] **external adorning with** [ELABORATE] **interweaving *and* knotting of the hair, the wearing of jewelry, or changes of clothes;** <sup>4</sup> **But let it be the inward adorning *and* beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *and* unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which** [IS NOT ANXIOUS OR WROUGHT UP, BUT] **is very precious in the sight of God.** <sup>5</sup> **For it was thus that the pious women of old who hoped in God were** [ACCUSTOMED] **to beautify themselves and were submissive to their husbands** [ADAPTING THEMSELVES TO THEM AS THEMSELVES SECONDARY AND DEPENDENT UPON THEM]. <sup>6</sup> **It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham** [FOLLOWING HIS GUIDANCE AND ACKNOWLEDGING HIS HEADSHIP OVER HER BY] **calling him lord** (MASTER, LEADER, AUTHORITY). **And you are now her true daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you** [NOT GIVING WAY TO HYSTERICAL FEARS OR LETTING ANXIETIES UNNERVE YOU].

<sup>7</sup> **In the same way you married men should live considerately with** [YOUR WIVES], **with an** [c] **intelligent recognition** [OF THE MARRIAGE RELATION], **honoring the woman as** [PHYSICALLY] **the weaker, but** [REALIZING THAT YOU] **are joint heirs of the grace** (GOD’S UNMERITED FAVOR) **of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered *and* cut off.** [OTHERWISE YOU CANNOT PRAY EFFECTIVELY.]

#### **compare biblical translations above and below!**

(Translation: The Message) **The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty. What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition.** <sup>4-6</sup> **Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in. The holy women of old were beautiful before God that way, and were good, loyal wives to their husbands. Sarah, for instance, taking care of Abraham, would address him as “my dear husband.” You’ll be true daughters of Sarah if you do the same, unanxious and unintimidated.**

<sup>7</sup> **The same goes for you husbands: Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them. As women they lack some of your advantages. But**

**in the new life of God's grace, you're equals. Treat your wives, then, as equals so your prayers don't run aground.**

#### HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE FURTHER INFORM OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH?

- A) By way of introduction to this section, remember as we consider this passage, that Peter is still dealing with the topic of Christians and suffering. His teaching is that **submissiveness is a pattern** for believers. At this point we are simply moving from the "external" to the "internal."
- B) As all married couples know, where marriage exists, there can sometimes be suffering; Peter chooses first to address this portion of his letter to Christian women.
- C) The fact that Peter uses **verses 1-6** to address women and only verse 7 to address men **doesn't mean that women need more help**; if anything it may, show Peter's maturity and wisdom in knowing that women are willing to listen to more details; and, they are more honest and open to discussing relationships, than most men!
- D) It is to be understood that Peter, in this passage, was thinking about the relationship of **Christian wives with unbelieving husbands**. So, he presents a strategy that he hopes will aid those women in helping their husbands come to faith in Christ.
- E) The first strategy is to be **submissive** (*same word used here as to describe a proper response to government*). There is no implication here that the wife should abandon her Christian faith or pattern of worship.
- F) The product of submission is **purity and reverence**. Purity of life will naturally include sexual purity, but (*as discussed in an earlier session*) goes beyond that to include the whole range of Christian behavior and attitudes. Thus the motivation of the wife is obedience to God!
- G) In **verses 3-6**, Peter addresses the issue of **outward adornment**; 3 specific kinds were obviously a problem in the churches to which he was writing: **braided hair, gold jewelry, and fine clothes**. (*Important note: historical research unearths similar critiques made during this time period by other Jewish and pagan writers*) Peter is not alone! Peter's ideal goal for a Christian wife is the adornment of the "inner person"; he calls for turning attention from outward symbols of success to the heart issues of obedience.
- H) Women who commit themselves to such **inward beauty** will not be pioneers or loners. Verse 5 points out that **holy women of the past (Sarah)** made themselves beautiful by trusting and hoping in God.

- I) Peter's conclusion is that women who follow in Sarah's footsteps are those who do what is right and do not give way to fear. **A Christian wife who is married to an unbelieving husband will make that husband more open to the message of the Gospel.** Nothing Peter has said about submission was intended to authorize a Christian husband to do anything that would create fear in his wife's relationship with him. Domineering behavior destroys trust and creates fear. It is the opposite of what God wants for wives.
- J) **Verse 7** shifts to address **Christian husbands** whose wives are also believers, urging them to create and maintain the kind of marriage that God wills.
- K) The final motivation for constructing a mutually satisfying marriage is **so that nothing will hinder your prayers.** Relationship with God is always impaired when human relationships are out of order. The closer and more intimate the human relationship, the more potential it has to disrupt the relationship with God. A marriage in conflict, even if only one partner is actively pursuing conflict, cripples spiritual vitality and the opportunity to enjoy full intimacy with God.

#### **FOR FURTHER CONVERSATION:**

1. Compare Peter's writing with Paul's words here in **Ephesians 5:21-33**: <sup>21</sup> ***and submit to each other out of respect for Christ.*** <sup>22</sup> ***For example, wives should submit to their husbands as if to the Lord.*** <sup>23</sup> ***A husband is the head of his wife like Christ is head of the church, that is, the savior of the body.*** <sup>24</sup> ***So wives submit to their husbands in everything like the church submits to Christ.*** <sup>25</sup> ***As for husbands, love your wives just like Christ loved the church and gave himself for her.*** <sup>26</sup> ***He did this to make her holy by washing her in a bath of water with the word.*** <sup>27</sup> ***He did this to present himself with a splendid church, one without any sort of stain or wrinkle on her clothes, but rather one that is holy and blameless.*** <sup>28</sup> ***That's how husbands ought to love their wives—in the same way as they do their own bodies. Anyone who loves his wife loves himself.*** <sup>29</sup> ***No one ever hates his own body, but feeds it and takes care of it just like Christ does for the church*** <sup>30</sup> ***because we are parts of his body.*** <sup>31</sup> ***This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two of them will be one body.*** <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>32</sup> ***Marriage is a significant allegory,*** <sup>[b]</sup> ***and I'm applying it to Christ and the church.*** <sup>33</sup> ***In any case, as for you individually, each one of you should love his wife as himself, and wives should respect*** <sup>[c]</sup> ***their***

**husbands.”** {CEB} What are the differences in emphasis between the words of Peter and the passage in Ephesians? What additional insights does the Ephesians passage add to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter?

2. What is the purpose of Peter’s instruction for wives to submit to their husbands? How does the apostle see that purpose being accomplished?
3. Paraphrase in your own words Peter’s understanding of beauty in vss. 3-4. How do you discover this kind of beauty in a woman’s life? How can such beauty be encouraged in present day society?
4. What does Peter describe as the characteristics that would make a woman a “*true daughter of Sarah?*” What can be done to help women be victorious over fear?
5. **Verse 7** has the words “likewise” or “in the same way.” What teachings in vss. 1-6 can be applied “*in the same way*” to husbands?
6. What is necessary in any husband-wife relationship so that a couple’s prayer life is not hindered? How much do you think the quality of a marriage relationship would affect one’s prayer life?

#### **A CLOSING PRAYER**

#### **DISMISSAL**

**NEXT CONVERSATION: “HARMONY IN ALL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS”**  
**THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2015 – suggested reading 1 PETER 3:1-12**