

## Enduring Covid-19 & Protests 1 Peter 2:18-25

### Housekeeping:

1 - Heritage fed the JC police department yesterday. We are already working on other ways to invest in our community.

2 - Rebecca McLaughlin next Wednesday night at 6:30 here in the sanctuary. This will be an important night for our congregation.

- Do all you can to be here and
- Help others to get here.

3 – Heritage prayer gathering this Friday at 7pm in the sanctuary.

### Introduction:

*Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

*<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

Subjection is a difficult subject for red-blooded Americans who grew up on John Wayne movies. Whether it is to parents, teachers, playground directors, traffic cops, someone telling us we are standing too close to them, authority makes the hair stand up on the back of our necks. It's a difficult subject because rebellion is the DNA of our Adamic nature. Every since A&E, we are prone to "wander" from God and do our own thing.

Proverbs 14:12 - *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death*

Judges 21:25 - In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Stress makes it all the more difficult to subiect ourselves to authority. We all want to go our own

stress makes it all the more difficult to subject ourselves to authority. We all want to go our own ways. Peter's readers, like us, are living in stressful times. They have fled the Roman persecution of Jerusalem only to find themselves living as a minority culture in a strange land.

It would be easy for them to reject their new authority structures for the 'old ways.' Or to outright rebel at the mistreatment levied on them by the Emperor or his representatives.

Peter calls submission to authority the will of God and a good thing (15a). By it, we "*put to silence the ignorance of foolish people*" (15b) who will use our disrespect of authority as a weapon against us.

V 16 – We should not use our freedom as a cover-up for 'evil,' which, in this case, is rebellion against authorities, but, live as servants of God; i.e.,

- a) We recognize human institutions are flawed
- b) Our trust is in God, not the people of these institutions
- c) Our hope is in God also
- d) We know we will give an account to him for the way we live

Instead of rebellion, Christians are called to:

- a) Honor everyone – "Honor" = "to value, to revere"

Everyone? "pas". = each, every, any, all, the whole, everyone

How to I honor the police and protestors?

- b) Love the brotherhood – how do I love Christians with different opinions?
- c) Fear God – God knows my heart; my motivations and sincere thoughts
- d) Honor the emperor – "Honor" = "to value, to revere"

Covid-19 and the Protests we are witnessing is providing the church with an opportunity to listen to our community, gain wisdom, search the Bible, practice the fruit of the Spirit with each other and seek ministry opportunities outside of the church.

It is a pivotal and can be powerful moment for all of us.

Out of the text's requirement that we **submit**, "*not only to the good and gentle but also the unjust*" (18), I have some thoughts on working through the Pandemic and Protests.

### **First: Jesus is the Main Thing**

Sometimes the hardest thing to do is keep the main thing, the main thing. It is easy to get sidetracked. It takes a real commitment and effort to keep the main thing, the main thing. Our main thing is Jesus.

- In his band, Jesus had Matthew and Simon. This caused internal conflict.
- He ministered to Jews, Gentiles and women. This caused conflict between he and the disciples.

John 6:66 - *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

- Judas betrayed him
- All of the disciples except John,
- Peter denied him
- Thomas doubted him

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in the Gospel of Mark, the disciples' response to Jesus is complicated and often conflicted. In contrast to the religious leaders, who are always portrayed as opposing, testing, accusing, and plotting against Jesus (2:6-8; 16, 18, 24; 3:2, 6, 22, 30; 8:11; see also Herod [6:14-16] and Jesus' family [3:21]), the disciples are committed followers. Yet the disciples' understanding of Jesus appears deficient compared to the response of many minor characters who demonstrate great faith (1:40; 2:4-5; 5:22-23, 25-28, 34, 36, 7:25-29).

If you were to compare the disciples' relationship to Jesus's parable of the various types of soil, they are eventually good soil but also demonstrate seed falling along the path and rocky ground.

Their understanding of Jesus and his mission is

a) typified in the progressive healing of a blind man -

Mark 8:23-25 - *And he took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village, and when he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?"* <sup>24</sup> *And he looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees, walking."* <sup>25</sup> *Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.*

b) Jesus's identity – Mark 8:27-16:8

Three times Jesus predicted his death and three times the disciples argued with him. They also argued with him about being the servant of all, greatness, the blessings of wealth, positions of power and life without suffering.

The disciples had to agree on Jesus and follow him, not themselves or their own preferences.

The way we discuss or disagree about an issue is not Christ-like. It's not the issue. It's me; my attitude. But in it all, God must be first:

Mark 12:30-31 – *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'* <sup>31</sup> *The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* *There is no other commandment greater than these.'*

- a) We must love God
- b) We must love our neighbor
- c) We don't love God if we don't love our neighbor
- d) We can't love our neighbor if we don't first love God – (Any solution to the world's problems that doesn't consider God, isn't really loving our neighbor). We must be Christ-centric people in all of our solutions.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3 - *Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." This "knowledge" puffs up, but love builds up.* <sup>2</sup> *If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.* <sup>3</sup> *But if anyone loves God, he is known by God.*

a) Knowledge puffs up

Puffs up = to be proud

b) Love builds up

1 Corinthians 4:1-6 - *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.* <sup>2</sup> *Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.* <sup>3</sup> *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.* <sup>4</sup> *For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby*

*acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.*<sup>5</sup> *Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*<sup>6</sup> *I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.*

## **Second: There is a Difference Between Revelation and Wisdom**

The Bible is explicitly clear about some issues –

- 1 - You shall have no other gods before me.
- 2 - You shall not make for yourself a carved image,
- 3 - You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,
- 4 - Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- 5 - Honor your father and your mother,
- 6 - You shall not murder.
- 7 - You shall not commit adultery.
- 8 - You shall not steal.
- 9 - You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 10 - You shall not covet

ILL – \* Paying taxes is a law issue but a flat tax or otherwise is a wisdom issue.  
• Intimacy outside of marriage is wrong. But how do we lower teen pregnancy rates?

In wisdom issues, there is freedom of conscience and we must leave room for disagreement.

**ILL** – Baptists, Conscience & Disestablishmentarianism. (With “anti” as a prefix, It used to be the longest word in the dictionary, but now ‘*pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis*’ is the longest word).

Anglican / Church of England: Maryland, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia

Puritan / Congregational Church: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire

No Official Church: Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island

The colonial governor of Virginia in 1617 declared it a crime not to go to church on Sundays and Holidays.

First charter of Virginia (1830) - *“Every Person should go to church, Sundays and Holidays, or lye Neck and Heels that Night, and be a Slave to the Colony the following Week; for the second Offence, he should be a Slave for a Month; and for the third, a Year and a Day.”*

Baptists came into existence in the 1630’s and suffered immense persecution, even after the 1689 Act of Toleration. We came to America to enjoy religious freedom but found that state-established religion was as bad as in England. Baptists then worked to disestablish state religions.

Maturity values competing truths in mind and heart.

Wisdom knows if, when and how to speak to an issue.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 - *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*  
<sup>2</sup> *a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;*  
<sup>3</sup> *a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*  
<sup>4</sup> *a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*  
<sup>5</sup> *a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*  
<sup>6</sup> *a time to seek and a time to leave; a time to hear, and a time to rest; a time to speak, and a time to be silent;*  
<sup>7</sup> *a time to love, and a time to hate; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*  
<sup>8</sup> *a time to seek and a time to leave; a time to hear, and a time to rest; a time to speak, and a time to be silent;*

*to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.*

Wisdom respects time.

### **Three: We Must Make Room for Christian Liberty**

What is happening now in America is not an “us” or “them” issue but a “we” issue. Many issues are like this. They are not one or the other but somewhere in between.

Romans 14:1-12 - *As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. <sup>2</sup> One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. <sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. <sup>8</sup> For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. <sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; <sup>11</sup> for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” <sup>12</sup> So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Our social media age refuses to recognize conscience’s obligation to God and Christian liberty.

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### **Fourth: We Should Defer to and Protect One Another**

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 - *For the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of*

smell? <sup>18</sup> But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup> If all were a single member, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, <sup>24</sup> which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup> If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

Romans 12:9-14 - Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. <sup>11</sup> Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. <sup>13</sup> Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. <sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup> Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup> Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." <sup>20</sup> To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### **Conclusion/Application:**

Let's look closely at the verbs and adjectives that can help us live godly lives in this present world. These will help us

- a) Live biblically with each other
- b) Present a godly witness to the world

18 – Be subject with all respect

19 – Endure sorrow while suffering unjustly

20 – Do good and suffer...endure, this is a gracious thing

21 – For to this you have been called

Finally, Peter points his readers to Jesus, the ultimate Peacemaker. His example is ours -

21 – Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps

22 – He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth

23a – When he was reviled, he did not revile in return

23b – When he suffered, he did not threaten

23c – But continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly