

**Sermon Title: There's Something More Important Than Your Rights, Part 3**

**Sermon Text: 1 Peter 2:18-21a**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to demonstrate Christ-like submission in the employment environment.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 motivating practices of Christ-like submission in the employment environment.**

**Intro:** “Today postmodern culture seems to cling to only one basic moral obligation, the sacred duty to provide equal rights for everyone. No one any longer speaks of sacrifice or privilege – only rights, such as ethnic rights, reproductive rights, immigrant rights, homosexual rights, and workplace rights.

If people do not receive what they think personal freedom should give them, they express their grievances in the form of walkouts, strikes, boycotts, and political rebellions. Such protesters are usually motivated by the belief that everyone is equal in every way and entitled to exactly the same things as everyone else.

In the workplace, employees voice their grievances over a lack of ‘rights’ through work slowdowns, ‘sick-outs,’ protests or all-out strikes that prevent management from conducting business. Management sometimes responds with lockouts or even termination of the striking employees. Job actions on occasion do result in salary increases and improved benefits for employees, or perhaps a compromise agreement that benefits both sides in the long run.

However, the focus on ‘rights’ in the workplace, whatever the results, is incongruous with the Christian life. Believers are to be concerned instead with obedience and submission to God’s will. When they obey and submit to their superiors, as He commands, they prove that their real hope is in the world to come.

It is more important to God that those who are citizens of heaven display a faithful testimony, marked by spiritual integrity, than that they strive to attain all their perceived rights in this world. It is more important to God for believers to uphold the credibility of gospel power than to obtain a raise or promotion in their vocation. It is ultimately far more important to God that believers demonstrate their submission to His sovereignty in every area of life than that they protest against problems at their workplace.”

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1 Peter*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2004, pp. 155, 156, 162]

## **I. The mandate of submission on the job as a witnessing strategy. V.18**

### **A. The audience. V.18a**

The reason slaves are addressed in 1 Peter, is that in society at large, slaves were not full persons and thus did not have moral responsibility, but in the church slaves were to be considered full and equal persons, and addressed as persons of worth.

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

**1 Corinthians 12:13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

**Colossians 3:11** where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

### **B. The admonishment. V.18b**

### **C. The aim. V.18c**

Submit to those created human institutions and people who have earthly absolute ownership of and complete control.

**1 Timothy 6:1** Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. **2** And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

**Titus 2:9** Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back,

D. The attitude. V.18d

The Christian is to submit without bitterness or negatively, by doing this they reflect gracious honor. Their fear is directed to God, not to man or their master. Christians are not to fear man, but God, who can destroy both body and soul. Therefore, the Christians motive in fulfilling the mandate of submission and service is not first respect of their master, but their respect for God who receives their submissive service.

The Christian's submission is not controlled by the action of their master's. The submission extends "to the unjust" (a term that means "bent" from which English "scoliosis" the disease of a curvature of the spine) for God is served and honored in either case.

II. The **motive** of submission on the job as a witnessing strategy. V.19

A. The **commendation**. V.19a

This section refers to those who suffered the pain of unjust suffering, yet they do what is commendable literally, "this is grace" or "finds favor" in God's sight.

The goal and passion of the believers is that they maintain their testimony before the watching world of sinners [*Matt 5:15-16; Mark 4:21* Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? *Philippians 2:14* Do all things without complaining and disputing, **15** that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, **16** holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.] and in the workplace that occurs when believers labor with an awareness of God's glory. Such an awareness is the motivation not only for Godly behavior and submission on the job, but we also trust in the sovereignty of God in every situation.

B. The **concept**. V.19b

The conscience toward God, refers to an awareness of God's presence, power, personhood, providence, purpose, promises, and plan. (*Acts 17:28; Rom 8:28-30; Prov 19:21*) *Psalm 33:11* The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations. *Psalm 103:19* The LORD has established His throne in heaven, And His kingdom rules over all. *Proverbs 16:1* The preparations of the heart *belong* to man, But the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD.

*Proverbs 16:9* A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

*Isaiah 14:27* For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul *it*? His hand *is* stretched out, And who will turn it back?"

*Isaiah 46:9* Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me, **10** Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

The Christian endures up under and through the (sorrow/grief) with joy (*James 1:2-4*) the word grief/sorrow implies pain, that is either mental, physical, or both.

Aristotle once argued that injustice could never be done to a slave, for the slaves was mere property (Nic Eth 5.10.8). Such a view would have been impossible for Christian in light of *Philippians 2:7* but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.

III. The **message** of submission on the job as a witnessing strategy. V.20

A. The **negative** question approach. V.20a (*Heb 12:5-11*)

*Psalm 66:18* If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

*Jeremiah 5:25* Your iniquities have turned these *things* away, And your sins have withheld good from you.

*Daniel 9:8* "O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

B. The **positive** statement approach. V.20b (**1 Pet 3:14; 4:14, 16**)  
**Matthew 5:11** "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. **12** "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you  
**1 Corinthians 4:11** To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. **12** And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; **13** being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

**IV. The mission of submission on the job as a witnessing strategy. V.21a**

This refers to the effective salvation call. As soon as the Holy Spirit calls people from darkness to light, they become an enemy of the world (**John 15:18-19; 1 John 3:13**) and a target of unjust and unfair attack as they seek to obey Christ. (**Mark 10:30**)

**2 Timothy 3:12** Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

**John 15:20** "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

**John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."