

GOD'S GRACE- WHEN UNDER SUBMISSION

2:18-20

The Duty of submission in Household relations (2:18)

Since Peter singles out a class- “slaves” probably indicates that they made up a large part of the Christian community of which his readers were. Peter does not stress the rights of the slaves (culture had almost none), but the responsibility of a Christians in this position/calling.

Note: Peter doesn't discuss or attack the institution of slavery...instead gives comfort and guidance to believers within this social structure. Christianity doesn't advocate rebellion or violence on their part, knowing that where there is no inner freedom, outward freedom can lead to another kind of slavery (John 8:34; Rom.14:7-8; 2Cor.5:15). Paul's perspective on this subject gives another important view... if you can get out of it, do so. (1Corinthians 7:21-23).

Christians understood their fellowship together in Christ, as a family in which they put aside all their social distinctions to show their family identity in Christ. Imply that the church did not try to dictate this area among Christians but instead gave them instructions for the relationship out in the world.

VERSE-18

1. The servant or oiketai- house servant, not doulos- which stressed the servile relationship. But house servant (3 times in NT) stress the relationship within house that involves, men, women, and children's relation in the master's house.
2. “Submission” literally meant to arrange oneself under authority, and does not imply inequality. The word is not an imperative (command) but participle probably relating back to verse 13- submit yourselves and stressing the act of submitting.
 - a. It addresses the most common challenge Christian slave may have had...how to respond to their boss or master in light of how they were being treated.
 - i. Good and gentle ones
 - ii. The harsh and unreasonable ones
3. Their “Master” the Greek word here is where we get our word Despot- (secular sense) a house master who exercise authority and control absolutely and with unlimited control.
4. “With Respect” has the idea of fear from being punished, but these people were already told to fear God above all, which would release you from the fear of humans.

VERSE-19

1. Peter tells them that such submission in difficult situations...has God's approval
 - a. It is an attractive quality, “before God” the combination of...one is conscious of God, when bearing up under unjust treatment.

Principle: Importance of our spiritually aware of God under difficult treatment...

 - i. Consciousness of what? God's will and presence can stimulates and enable us to endure hardship. (Romans 5:3-4; 15:4, 13)
 - ii. Such enlightened conscious prompts one to accept this as his/her duty.

- b. But also Peter here acknowledges that such treatment was unjustly inflicted and morally undeserved.
- c. But what is “commendable”- find favor” is literally the word “grace” meaning there is the mark of grace here, that one goes beyond the ordinary course of what would be expected in the situation. Instead of burning resentment, we are to live under the law of Christ.
- d. Matt 5:39- This bring up a broader and needed subject. How does one resist evil under God’s rule?

Principle: Carry out our responsibility of responding properly is a way of resisting evil.

- 2. Also, we can assume, that doing what is right can bring harsh and unjust treatment by unreasonable masters. Why?

Principle: *The conduct of a Christian slave was not to be governed by the character of his/her master.*

VERSE-20

- 1. To endure punishment that you deserved is nothing extraordinary...no value in the eyes of those who observe.

Principle: We live in such a way that false opinions are refuted (2:12, 15)

- a. The present tense of verb for- “sin” describes a repeated offense not just an incidence.
- b. It describes a falling short of God’s will by a continual struggle of wrong responses.
- 2. However, it’s commendable (grace-charis) in the sight of God to do right/good and to endure suffering because of it.
 - a. The commendable thing here is not the suffering itself, but commitment to God’s will (good/right) allowing devotion to him to overrides personal comfort.
 - b. Some may think that punishment came because they were doing something wrong before God’s. Peter says it is extraordinary and valuable to God.

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