**Fear God and Honor the King**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 2:11-17**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 15, 2023**

**1 Peter 2:11-17**

11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

**11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,**

Saints, Peter warned the believers to remember their status as foreigners and aliens in the world. These words are also used together in Genesis 23:4 and Psalms39:12.

**Genesis 23:4**

"I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

**Psalm 39:12**

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, And give ear to my cry; Do not be silent at my tears; For I am a stranger with You, A sojourner, as all my fathers were”

Saints, the world is not the Christian’s true home; our real home is with Christ. We are passing through this world on the way to our home in heaven’s glory;

therefore, we ought to remain as untouched as possible by this world’s rampant sin, keeping away from evil desires. Because we will not escape our sinful surroundings until Christ returns,

and because we still have a sinful nature that wants us to act on its desires, we will not be able to remain completely free of sin and its effects. But we can keep away by controlling the desires right from the start.

**Galatians 5:19-22**

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**1 John 2:15-17**

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Saints, why must believers keep away from sinful desires? Because those desires fight against our very souls. Once we become believers, a battle has begun, for Satan is the enemy of Christ and his followers.

The word “souls” refers to the inner, spiritual part of a person. Desires come from deep within us; often our sinful desires never actually become sinful actions.

Peter wrote that while believers know that their lives and actions must be changed by Christ, they also must have their inner lives transformed.

Sinful desires may seem much less evil than sinful actions, but Peter explained that they too can hurt us as they war against our souls. Entertaining evil desires,

even if those desires are never acted upon, takes our focus off of Christ and turns our hearts from heavenly to earthly desires.

All evil actions begin with a single thought; therefore, Peter advised believers to kill sin right at its root.

**12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

Saints, this thought follows from 1 Peter 2:11 without a break in the Greek text—

the believers were to have their inner selves under control so that their outer lives would be honoring to God.

Believers are called to honor God by living honorably and morally upright in and in spite of an unholy world so that unbelieving neighbors will glorify God. Peter’s advice sounds like Jesus’ advice recorded in Matthew 5:16.

**Matthew 5:16**

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”

**Proverbs 19:1**

“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool”

**Proverbs 20:7**

“The righteous man walks in his integrity; His children are blessed after him”

Saints, if believers’ actions are honorable, even hostile people might end up praising God.

Peter’s readers were scattered among unbelieving Gentiles who were inclined to believe and spread vicious lies about Christians, accusing them of wrongdoing,

blaming them without cause. Attractive, gracious, and upright behavior on the part of Christians could show these rumors to be false and could even win some of the unsaved critics to the Lord’s side.

Peter urged the believers not to be surprised when persecution and false accusations arose, and to live above reproach so that the accusations would have to be dropped.

**13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.**

Saints, Peter commanded believers to accept all authority, meaning to submit. God is honored when we accept and respect those in authority over us.

We do this for the Lord’s sake, so that he is glorified by our orderly submission.

In telling his readers to accept the authority of the king, Peter was speaking of Emperor Nero, a notoriously cruel tyrant who ruled from A.D. 54–68.

The emperor was the supreme ruler over all Roman provinces—including the areas to which Peter addressed this letter.

The emperor Nero was considered the supreme authority by his subjects, even worshiped by them. The Christians should never worship the emperor, but they should obey his laws because he was an authority put in place by God.

**Romans 13:1-2**

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

Saints, Peter was not telling believers to compromise their Holy Spirit-directed consciences. Remember, Peter had told the high priest years before,

**Acts 5:29**

“We must obey God rather than human authority”

Saints, at other times, God had approved disobedience to human authorities.

**Exodus 1:17**

“But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive”

**Daniel 3:13-18**

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

**Acts 4:18-20**

18 And they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Saints, in those cases, the government had called upon God’s people to sin against God and God’s people had to submit to the higher power—God himself.

But in most aspects of daily life, it was desirable for Christians to live according to the law of their land, whether or not they agreed with the policies.

Christians were not to rebel against Rome—Roman law was the only restraint against lawlessness.

In addition, it wouldn’t take much for an imperial edict to fall on a group who had become known for causing unrest within the empire.

The Christians’ quiet submission might allow them to continue to spread the gospel freely. If they were to be persecuted, it should be for obeying God, and not for breaking moral or civil laws.

Saints, today, one-third of all Christians live in freedom while the other two-thirds live under repressive governments. Scripture does not recommend one form of government over another.

Rather, it simply asks Christians to accept the government under whose authority they find themselves and to cooperate with the rulers as far as the Holy Spirit—directed conscience will allow.

Believers must do this “for the Lord’s sake”—so that his Good News and his people will be respected.

**15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—**

Saints, Peter exhorted the believers to live good lives so that those who make foolish accusations against the believers would be silenced.

The word silence is more literally “to muzzle”—in other words, to shut them up. This repeats the idea of 2:12. These unbelievers should finally have to admit that they could hold nothing against Christians except their faith.

**16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.**

Saints, here Peter was outlining a paradox of the Christian life. Christians are free yet they are slaves. They can live as free people but must use their freedom to glorify God.

We glorify God when we serve him faithfully. Believers are not free to do whatever they want or to use their freedom as an excuse to do evil.

We cannot use freedom and forgiveness as a cloaking device for self-indulgence, adultery, or poor spending habits. Christ is our leader, and serving him provides our limits.

**17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**

Saints, these four short sentences summarize how believers can live peacefully in the world. First, show respect for everyone. The word “respect” means to honor, value, or esteem.

Believers should be especially conscious that God made all people in his image, whether or not they believe in Christ.

While believers are to “respect” everyone, they have an extra obligation to their Christian brothers and sisters. They are called to love them.

The word for “love” is agapao, referring to volitional, self-sacrificial love. The believers of Peter’s day needed to stand together as a unified force against coming persecution. They needed to maintain the bond of love.

To fear God means to show deep respect, reverence, and awe. While believers are to respect and love God as well, they are also to fear him. Proper fear leads to obedience.

They should show respect for the king, but they should “fear” God. When we honor the king, we should give the government its rights, what it owns, what it controls; but we may not give to the government those rights that belong to God alone.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**