

## **Suffering Solutions, part 4**

1 Peter 3:1-7

(preached Pine Grove 10/27/19 Sun PM)

### **Introduction**

During my undergraduate studies, I had to take both art history and music appreciation.

Though I can see the glory of God in art and music that is done well, those were not the easiest classes for me.

But I survived both and learned some things in the process.

However, one thing that struck me about the art and music world is the number of artists and composers who are simply known by one name.

Beethoven, Picasso, Rembrandt, Mozart, Handel, Chopin, Monet, Renior...

And though I assume that all of them had multiple names, one name is all you need to identify them.

However, the same is true of Bible characters.

Moses, David, Paul..

Then there is the pop culture world where we know actors and singers and athletes by one name only.

Elvis, Sinatra, Jordan, Tiger, Bud..

Ok, well not really the last one.

But we understand that one word names are common.

In fact, a mononym is when a person's name consist of only one word.

Well, if we were forced to define excellent Christian behavior in one word, it would be the word submission.

In other words, Christians are those who submit to one another, to authorities, to government, in the workplace.

We are not to be known as people of rebellion but people of submission.

And this command to submit has the focus of the last few weeks in the book of 1 Peter.

Over and over again, God calls his people to submit through the pen of Peter in this letter to the church.

Two weeks, we looked at 1 Peter 2:13-17 which commands believers to every human institution of government over them.

Last week, we looked at God's command for servants to submit to their masters.

And we drew that principle out to the work place and really anywhere we find ourselves under the authority of a boss or authority figure.

But this section of Peter's letter is not done calling Christians to submission because tonight as we move to chapter 3, submission is still the subject at hand.

And this time, the command is submission in the family unit.

Wives to husbands and husbands to wives.

And why the call to submission?

Well, Peter is writing to 1st century Christians living in a hostile environment.

Nero is the Roman emperor and he has created a situation where Christians are being mistreated.

Some are targeted for injustice.

Some are physically persecuted.

And some are even being killed for the faith.

It is not a pretty picture to say the least.

Yet even in that setting, believers are not called to rebellion but submission.

And the point of that submission is simple.

Submissive people are an incredible witness for the Lord.

Look back at 1 Peter 2:11-12...

***11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may [n]because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of [o]visitation.***

You see, the believer has one mission in life.

Take as many people to heaven with him as he can.

Christianity is not just about you.

Certainly, there is immense personal benefit in the gospel, but once a person is saved, their job is grow in their faith and go into the world with the message of what happened to them.

Even 1st century Christians in a hostile environment were not exempt from the call to evangelize.

Verse 12 says that a believer's excellent behavior in less than excellent conditions gets the attention of the world.

Gentiles here simply refers to unbelieving Romans.

And the command to Peter's readers is to live with excellent behavior so that unbelievers observe it and come to faith in Christ as a result of it.

For the all evangelistic strategies that have been developed and proclaimed in churches, the best evangelism occurs when Christians demonstrate excellent behavior in front of unbelievers..

So what does that excellent behavior look like?

One word - submission.

Submission in all areas of the Christian life.

Submission to government.

Submission in the workplace.

Submission in the family.

And next week, submission in the church.

Now, submission is not a word that anyone likes to hear, especially in our culture.

People like the word rebellion.

They like the word opposition.

They like to get their won way and do their own thing, but they hate the idea of putting themselves under someone else.

It's the age old sin of pride that seeks to be on top.

That seeks to call the shots and make the decisions.

That seeks to control the situation and possess the power.

And believers are just as susceptible to pride as anyone.

But we are called to be proud.

We are called to submit to those that God has put over us.

To the king, to governor, to the boss, to the family member, to the church leader.

And the point is simple.

A submissive attitude and action is very attractive to the gospel.

So, let's keep moving through this section of Scripture by reading the first 7 verses of 1 Peter 3..

***1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and [a]respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right [b]without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with***

***[c]someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.***

Though the call to submission has not changed, the setting of the submission does change in this chapter.

And now it is a call to submission in the closest of relationships, and that is the husband and wife relationship.

You see, the call to excellent behavior through submission is narrowing down.

We started with our submission in society, then we narrowed that down to the workplace, and now we are called to submission in the home.

And the issue here is to keep our behavior excellent in our homes.

There has been damage done to the church and to the gospel because of the sinfulness of Christian husbands and wives.

As I have said to you on previous occasions, your Christian living shows up first and makes the biggest impact in your immediate family.

The fruit of the Spirit, - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control is meant to be seen in your home more than anywhere else.

Sadly, that is not often the case, but the call of verse 1-7 is the call to excellent behavior in our homes so that the world can observe it and be drawn to the gospel.

But there is also something more specific in consideration here as well..

And this is the issue of living in a marriage where one spouse is not saved.

In other words, our excellent behavior through submission makes an impact in the world but it also makes an impact on those closest to us as well.

In this case, excellent behavior through submission makes an incredible impact on an unbelieving spouse.

You see, it was quite common in the early days of the church to have one spouse get saved while the other stayed in unbelief.

It became less common with time because Scripture commands that believers are not to be unequally yoked.

In other words, if you are a believer, you are not to marry to an unbeliever.

***1 Corinthians 6:14***

***14 Do not be [j]bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?***

But there are times when unbelievers get married and one gets saved.

And that creates a difficult situation to say the least.

Here you have a spouse whose life is being changed from the inside out but the spouse of that person is not being changed at all..

So what is that believer to do?

Is he or she to seek a divorce?

Is he or she to abandon their family?

No.

In most cases, that believer is called to win their spouse to Christ.

This is what the love of Christ does to us.

It gives us a love for others, and certainly that would apply to a spouse.

And so the call is to stay and evangelize that home.

Now let me make a side note here.

There are times when spouses have no desire to stay with a Christian.

There are times when spouses will leave their newly saved spouse.

In those instances, the Bible is clear.

Let that spouse go to preserve the peace and pray for that deserting spouse the rest of your life.

However, in most cases, the unbelieving spouse will stay and the clear command of Scripture is to evangelize that spouse.

Now how does that happen?

Well, you drag that spouse to church kicking and screaming.

You invite the preacher over to talk to that spouse every day.

You take out your 5" inch thick family and you beat that spouse over the head.

No No No No No..

I am kidding, though some have tried that at times.

The way to win that spouse to Christ is to demonstrate excellent behavior to him or her by submission to them.

And that is really the subject of verses 1-7.

You see, this whole section of Paul's letter is about spreading the gospel through the excellent behavior of submission..

And verses 1-7 simply focus that in the home when one spouse believes and the other doesn't.

So, let' pull out some instruction for wives and husbands in this area..

The Lord is going to offer 3 instructions to the wife to win her unbelieving husband in verses 1-6..

We will call this..

## **I. A Wife's Submission (1-6)**

These will be real simple and straightforward, and Lord willing, very helpful if you are a wife seeking to win your husband to the Lord.

Let's begin in verse 1..

***In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,***

The first strategy for a believing wife seeking to win her husband to the Lord is to simply be submissive to Him..

We have talked about the Greek word for submit before, but it is the idea of putting yourself under the person over you.

Hupotasso was often used in Greek in terms of the military where soldiers would line up under their commanders.

It meant to arrange yourself under someone.

In terms of winning an unbelieving husband to the Lord, the believing wife is called to live under the authority of her husband.

This suggests the idea of letting a husband lead the family.

Now this can be hard since an unbelieving husband operates from a totally different worldview than a believing wife, but this is still God's way for the wife to win that husband to the Lord.

Now to be clear, submission would not required when a husband forces a wife to sin against the Lord.

But in other matters, a believing wife is called to put her under her husband.

And note what the end of verse 1 says..

***...they may be won without a word..***

This is not here by accident.

Though all struggle with their their words, it is very tempting to be submissive to authorities with everything except what we say.

And that can be extremely difficult in a home where communication happens all the times.

But the idea is not to submit with your actions only but to submit with your words as well..

A believing wife should tell her husband..

“I am gonna do this but I really don’t want to”

She shouldn’t say..

“Well, you are about to make a big mistake here, but I ain’t gonna say nothing since I am submitting to you.”

The call to submission, whether that is to government or your boss or your husband, includes outward action, inward action, and the words you say.

And all of you underhand this as parents.

When you raise your kids, you expect outward obedience, inward obedience, and obedience with their mouth.

Wives, you are called to win your unbelieving husbands with quiet submission rather than loud rebellion.

Let your behavior speak louder than your words.

And what behavior is expected?

Verse 2..

Your chaste and respectful behavior.

Not only should a believing wife submit with gentleness to her husband in an attempt to win him to the Lord, number 2..

A believing wife should also live with holiness as she attempts to win him to the Lord.

The Greek word for chaste is agnos, which speaks of the idea of purity and holiness.

In other words, a wife's behavior should be free from sin.

In other words, a wife should live with holiness in front of her husband.

She should be pure in character.

She isn't looking at other men in a lustful way.

She isn't slandering her husband.

She isn't slandering others in front of her husband.

She isn't greedy or impatient.

Ultimately, she isn't living in any sinful way.

And when she does sin, she is quick to confess to the Lord and to anyone she has offended, especially if that sin is in front of or against her husband.

There is also the idea of respect here as well.

The Greek word is actually phobos, where we get the word phobia from..

This is the idea of fear, but not in an abusive sense.

This is the same word that describes our fear of the Lord.

WE love God and are loved by God, yet we have a great respect for God.

If a believing wife seeks to win her husband to the Lord, she needs to respect him in the same sense that she respects the Lord..

So, believing wives should submit with gentleness and live with holiness in hopes of winning their unbelieving husbands to the Lord..

And then a final strategy is to focus on inwardness.

Look at verse 3..

***3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or***

***putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.***

The temptation for the believing wife living with the unbelieving husband is to focus on externals.

Maybe he will come to church if he loves me more, and maybe he will love me more if I work on how I look on the outside..

There is also the issue of focusing on externals in order to attract the attention of other men..

And that is clearly a temptation for a believing wife who goes to church with other believing men.

But God would tell a wife to take her focus off the outside and focus more on the inside if she desires to win her husband to the Lord.

Now this is not a command to never pay attention to the outside.

It is simply a reminder that inner beauty will go farther with a spouse than outer beauty.

A husband may notice an outer change quicker, but an inner change will make more of a lasting impact.

And besides that, inner change is a great opportunity for a wife to point to the power of God to change from the inside out.

So what inner change is in view here?

A gentle and quiet spirit.

The temptation for a believing wife is to be loud and boisterous.

She knows the truth and she believes the truth and she wants her husband to do the same.

And the temptation is to cram her faith down his throat.

But that does more harm than good.

So the call is not to get louder on the outside..

Don't draw attention with the loudness of immodest clothes or flashy jewelry or cosmetics.

And the call is not to get louder on the inside either with boisterous comments and demands.

The call is to be quiet and gentle with an unbelieving husband.

In other words, live with modesty on the outside and inside..

And the promise of God is that gentleness and quietness and modesty will make an impression on her unbelieving husband, while also being precious in God's sight as well.

Man what a promise is that.

And then in verse 5, Peter offers an OT example of that in the person of Sarah..

***5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right [b]without being frightened by any fear.***

If you dont know the story of Sarah and Abraham, you should read it in the book of Genesis..

But long story short, Sarah was a submissive wife.

She listened and followed Abraham, and the Lord rewarded that submission with a child of promise in her old age..

If you want to see an example of quiet submission, look to Sarah..

So that is how an believing wife can win her unbelieving husband to the Lord..

Submit with gentleness.

Live in holiness.

Focus on inwardness.

But what about the opposite?

How can a believing husband win an unbelieving wife?

Well, Peter gives us that answer in verse 7..

And the reason is doesn't get as much attention as the woman is simple.

Women are often in a more difficult situation when their husbands don't believe.

In the Roman Empire, wives were abused physically and mentally in just ordinary marriages, but now add in a wife with a different worldview, and it was a recipe for trouble.

So God was gracious and offered much instruction to the wives.

But Christian husbands living with unbelieving wives need help as well.

So God inspires Peter to offer that help in verse 7..

***7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with [c]someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.***

The first strategy for the believing husband to win his unbelieving wife is to live with understanding.

In other words, a husband doesn't submit to the leadership of his wife.

He doesn't submit to her authority because he is still the God-given authority in the home.

But he does submit to her needs.

The temptation for the believing husband is to overlook the needs of his unbelieving wife.

In his mind, her needs are not important since she is probably led by sinful desires..

But the call of God is for the husband to submit to the needs of his wife in an attempt to win her to the Lord.

If she isn't asking a husband to sin, he should meet her needs to show her that he cares for her and for her soul...

This requires him to seek to try and understand her needs..

What does she like?

What does she enjoy?

What is she feeling?

How can he support her?

A believing husband seeking to win his unbelieving wife to the Lord must study her needs and seek to fill those needs in her life..

He must live with understanding.

Second, the believing husband must treat her with honor..

The middle of verse 7 points on the difference in husband and wife..

The wife is weaker, physically and even emotionally, and this requires the man to be strong.

He must defend his wife.

He must protect his wife.

He must care for his wife.

That would include all sorts of actions on the part of the man.

Opening doors, laying your coat over a puddle,...

This is the age old custom of treating a woman as a queen..

Seeing her weakness not a reason to take advantage of her but as a reason to care for her..

You see, the temptation for the Christian husband is to put his unbelieving wife second..

But that does not win her to Christ, it drives her farther away.

Christ came to serve, not to be served, and unbelieving wives will be won to Christ when believing husbands understand and serve them..

One final strategy for the husband is this..

Live with understanding.

Treat with honor.

Third, pray with sincerity.

The final words of verse 7 as a warning but also an instruction..

The warning is simple.

If a Christian husband doesn't live with understanding and treat his unbelieving wife with honor, his prayers will be hindered.

The point is clear.

A husband better make sure his hands are clean before God in terms of his behavior toward an unbelieving wife before he folds those same hands before the Lord.

Now that's a warning but it is also a great reminder that a believing husband should be constantly praying for the salvation of his unbelieving wife.

As should a believing wife for her husband..

Now those are the instructions but let's end with a few notes..

## **Conclusion**

### ***#1 - Submission is not a bad word.***

The world hates the notion of authority and submission.

The Bible loves those words.

God loves those words.

To put yourself under authority whether that is government or a boss or a spouse is not a bad thing.

It is a God-honoring and God-blessed practice.

To submit to authority is to ultimately to submit to God.

### ***#2 - Submission is not a bad reflection.***

The fear of submitting is that we are acknowledging we are unequal to the one we are submitting to.

But nothing could be further from the truth.

Everyone is of equal worth to God because everyone is made in His image.

To submit is not to admit inequality.

To submit is to simply admit that God knows what He is talking about.

***#3 - Submission is not humanly possible.***

The only way to submit willingly is to be equipped by the Spirit to do it.

And the only way to be equipped by the Spirit is to first submit yourself to God.

We submit when we recognize the submission that Christ has made for us in laying down his life for our sin.

If he had refused to submit, we would have no hope.

Let me tell you something.

Every time I struggle with submission, I remind myself of Christ's submission for me.

He didn't demand his way.

Instead, he kept his mouth closed and entrusted Himself to the Father.

May God give us grace to do the same. Let's pray.