

May 12, 2019

Strangers in this World

"To God's elect, strangers in the world..."

I Peter 1:1

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

I Peter 2:9

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men...Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil...live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God; honor the king...submit yourselves to your masters with all respect..."

I Peter 2:13-18



As disciples, we who would follow after Jesus must live so that those who do not believe ***"...may see (our) good deeds, and glorify God..."*** As God's chosen people, as royal priests serving in his kingdom; we must live up to the standard set by our Lord so that the world may see him living in us.

In this letter, Peter will give us a number of examples of the kind of lives that we should live before the world. He commands, ***"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men..."*** He in no way suggests here that we can set this command aside because we disagree with those in authority or the laws that govern our land wherever we live.

Submission here is, as it always is, our choice. We choose to submit to authority because of who we are, not necessarily because of who they are. In the same way the Apostle will tell us to, ***"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil..."*** In a nation where we are blessed with great freedoms we, as disciples, must constantly be on guard not to let those freedoms lead us to do or say or think evil.

The key in all of these things is self-control. As we noted a few weeks ago, God has given us the power to choose our behaviors. As believers we must choose to ***"...show proper respect to everyone..."*** Our chosen behaviors must always reflect those we are.

Individually then, we must decide to follow Jesus; to become his disciple, or not. In doing so, Peter would argue, we must in turn, choose to live like he did. That choice can be hard, even almost impossible, when there are so many pressures to choose to live by the world's standards, but we are strangers and alien to this world.



Submit to God
1Peter 2:21

So, at work we choose to submit ourselves to our masters, not only to those that are considerate, but also to those that are harsh. In our marriages, wives choose to submit to their husbands, even when those husbands don't deserve it. Husbands choose to treat their wives with respect; to love their wives as ***"...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."*** (Ephesians 5:22-26)

In every relationship and in every situation, those of us who have chosen to follow Jesus must choose. In our obedient choice to submit to his will we reflect his Lordship in our lives. There is no time and no place and no circumstance where it is alright to set aside what our Lord teaches. Make no mistake, the battle to choose obedience is not ever easy.

Peter concludes, ***"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with***

insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called..." (I Peter 3:8-9) There is perhaps, no more obvious reflection of our faith, than there is in the way we treat others.

Ultimately, Christianity is a belief system designed to function in relationships. How I treat others; how sympathetic and compassionate I am in my relationships, is the loudest testimony to my own personal faith. I am called to live by the standards that my Lord set. I cannot also live by the standard that the world demands. I must choose, and choose over and over again, to live as a follower of my Lord Jesus Christ or to live like the rest of the world. I cannot choose both.