

1 Peter #4 - Jesus, Authority, Justice, and Slavery

- We'll let God speak first today. 1 Peter chapter 2 beginning in verse 13, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor," that was their ruling political authority as supreme, "or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God." If you wanna know what the will of God is, here he says, "That by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people." And this was written before the Internet. So it's really important right now. Live as people who are what? You are free, free in Christ. "Not using your freedom as a coverup for evil, but living as servants of God." Honor who?

- [Congregants] Everyone.

- Everyone, we'll talk about them. "Love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor." I've had the honor of teaching God's Word pretty much every Sunday for about 25 years as a senior pastor. I'll be 50 this fall. So I've spent about half my life opening and teaching through books of the Bible. And in advance, I always pray, "God, what do you want me to teach? What book of the Bible would be best to serve the people that I have the honor of teaching?" And then I pray, and I feel like the Holy Spirit burdens me, and then I start teaching it. Well, I picked 1 Peter some months ago, and since choosing it, a few things have happened in the United States of America. A few things have happened. And we find ourselves in an incredibly complicated text of the New Testament in a season that is very emotionally charged. And so I'm honored to teach today and would just appreciate your prayers as I navigate through some deep water. But he starts here by telling us that our perfect God works through imperfect authority. That's what he's telling us. And some would ask when it comes to this issue of citizens and government, justice and injustice, "Why didn't the early church just declare war and overthrow the Roman Empire?" Well, because the Christians were a very small minority group. In addition, they didn't have the same legal rights oftentimes as the rest of the citizens of the Roman Empire. And the Roman Empire was the largest, the most powerful and most affluent nation in the history of the world. Literally, that culture that is receiving this letter, it was ruled like North Korea. If you're familiar with North Korea today, there is no separation of church and state, that you literally worship the emperor. They use the same language that is used here in 1 Peter. You worship the emperor as God. You are brainwashed from a young age to worship the emperor and to worship the state. And ultimately you have no rights. And what happens is if you do say no, the emperor is not lord, Jesus is Lord, they kill you. And then they do horrible things to your family, especially if you're married and a man, to your wife and to your kids. And so this is the context that he is writing into. They would have thought that the liberties that we enjoy were unthinkable, even the things that we tend to take for granted they would have been absolutely astonished by. But they were a minority group. In addition, they could not escape and they could not change the state. And they were undergoing persecution that was going to be rising. This would be like Christians today in China that are meeting underground. Christians in Sharia law, hardcore Muslim context, where it's illegal to worship Jesus and to be part of the church and to have a copy of the Bible.

That was more of the cultural context that they were in. And he says, nonetheless, to honor the emperor. Well, in their day, it was Claudius and a man was coming that his name would be Nero. And Nero would oversee some of the great persecution in the history of the church. The Bible here a little later in 1 Peter talks about fiery trials. Here's what Nero did. He would take Christians and he would affix ropes to our four limbs and then whip horses and send them in four directions dismembering us. To illuminate their state-sponsored dinners on his property, he would wrap Christians in pitch and resin, put us on a pole, and while we're still alive, set us on fire as the party torch. He took Christians and had us thrown to the animals in the gladiatorial games to be literally devoured publicly for sport. And so what we tend to think of is, "Well, you've never seen bad political leadership like we've got it." Actually, they had it worse. They had it worse. Nonetheless, he says to honor them in addition to the governors. In their day, that would have been Pilate who handed over Jesus, and another governor would be Felix, who abused Paul. When he talks about honoring, respecting the authority of every institution, he's talking here that children should honor and obey their mother and father, that citizens should have a modicum of respect for their political leaders. That in the church Christians should honor pastors and those who are in oversight and governance positions. It means at work, if you're a Christian and you're an employee, you should have some respect for your employer. And if you are a citizen, you should respect first responders and those who are seeking to uphold the rule of law. If you are in a nation that is protected by military, that you should have some degree of honor and respect and appreciation for those who secure your freedom and rights. You just feel it in the room, can't you? For those of you that are joining us, this is not an old book, this is an eternal book. It's timeless so it's always timely. And every generation needs to open and learn it afresh. My question to you would be this, whose authority are you under? Whose authority are you under? And how are you in responding to and respecting that authority. Number two, who are you in authority over? Would they say that you are loving, honorable, gracious, the character of Christ, which makes it easier to respect? What tends to happen is because we're hypocrites when we're in authority we want people to respect authority. When we're under authority, we find lots of excuses and reasons that we don't have to respect authority. And this is part of the human condition since sin has entered the world. In addition, he gives us some very specific commands, seven in particular. Number one, do good to silence ignorant and foolish people. Question: Are there still ignorant and foolish people? Yes. Are they loud? Yes. You can say it quietly. It doesn't mean you're one of them. Yes, okay. So what he's saying is that ignorant and foolish people tend to be the most loud. And if you argue or fight with them, do they tend to get quieter? No, they just make you more foolish and ignorant. It just multiplies the problem. By having good conduct and character, you can silence the ignorant and foolish. What he's talking about here is something that we would call civil disobedience. He's talking about nonviolent resistance. He's talking about when everyone is behaving inappropriately, conduct yourself in such a way to set a godly alternative example. Set a godly alternative example. He goes on to say that you should live free, but don't you use your freedom as a coverup for evil. And what we tend to do is when circumstances happen, we use them as cover fire or a coverup for evil. Evil happened, therefore I get to do evil. They did something bad, therefore we get to do something bad. They said something wrong, therefore we get to say something wrong. And what that is that is not justice, that is injustice. And it just multiplies evil. It exacerbates and escalates the

problem. I'll give you one example. Something wrong was done, an innocent man's life was taken. And then ultimately people decide, "Well, we get to go riot and loot and destroy businesses." That's using that circumstance, which is tragic and wrong as a coverup for evil. A lot of those business owners that I've spoken to around the country, they told me that insurance tends not to come with domestic terrorism, civil disobedience, or riot coverage. It's an additional. So a lot of those businesses and small businesses that didn't have anything to do with the actual event, they are now bankrupt and they have to close their doors forever. And that would be using evil as a coverup for more evil. And what he says is don't do that. Don't do that. He says, in fact, instead we should use our energies to serve God. In the middle of it all, people wanna serve their own interests. This is where everything gets politicized. This is why every event that happens it gets pulled to the right or gets pulled to the left. For the Christian, we need to pull it up. "Okay, God, what do you think? What do you say, what do you want? What's your agenda? How do I help people meet the Lord Jesus through all of this?" Don't lose your mission, don't lose your message. He says, "Serve God." Don't just serve your interests. Don't just serve your kind. Don't just serve your party. Don't just serve your agenda. Find a way in the middle of it to serve God. He says to honor who? He says to honor everyone. What about the people that we know are wrong? What about the people that we don't like? What about the people that are very offensive or very unkind or agitators and instigators? Do we honor them too? Honor doesn't mean you agree with them. If you're married, you know this. You need to honor your spouse. It doesn't mean you always agree with them. What it means if you're gonna have a relationship, there needs to be some mutual respect. It doesn't mean you agree with everyone. It doesn't mean that you support everyone. It doesn't mean that you endorse everyone. It doesn't mean that you bless everyone. It doesn't mean that you fund everyone. It means that in your disagreement, you honor the relationship by treating them in an honorable way. Because as Christians, our goal is not to win an argument, but to win a person. If you don't honor someone, you might win the argument, but you will not win the person. And our goal is not to just win arguments for Jesus, but to win people to Jesus. And that requires honor, so that there can be a context of relationship. He then says, number five, "To love the brotherhood." This is the Christian's priority. It says a little later in the New Testament that we should do good for all, especially those who are in the household of faith. So as you look at all the needs, and you're like, "I wanna meet human needs and love and serve and be generous and bless." Start with those people that are part of the household of faith. Those that are in your household and your church family. So your family or church family. And that our first responsibility is to those people who are brothers and sisters in Christ, brothers and sisters in Christ. And what this does, this realigns our priorities. Our priorities are no longer around our political party or our race or our agenda or our nation or our state or our ideology. It's around I love Jesus, you love Jesus, we're family. This relationship is for me now priority. He goes on to say, "Fear God." And what he's talking about here is acknowledging that over all authority is the ultimate authority of God. So as Christians, we believe that there is a lawgiver named God, and that there are universal laws that are binding over all peoples, times and places. People who are crying and calling for justice but don't believe in God are hypocrites, because you cannot appeal to a law that you say does not exist. And you cannot appeal to a lawgiver that you deny exists. Only those who believe that there is a God who is a lawgiver have the right to appeal to higher authority. So here's the way it

works. When there is injustice rather than denying all authority, we appeal to higher authority to correct the erroneous authority. So for example, let's say on a minuscule case study, let's say a woman came into the church and said, "We've got kids and my husband is a very bad father, raises his voice, intimidates. The kids are scared of him, not generous. He's just not a good dad." I wouldn't say, "Well, since there's injustice, we should eradicate fatherhood. What we need to do is get rid of fathers because now we found one who's doing a bad job." Instead, I would say, "He is not an ultimate authority. His authority is derivative authority. His authority comes from God and is to be exercised in the way that God intends." Therefore I would instruct that man on what the Bible says on loving his children. I would appeal to higher authority. I would say, "Sir, you are not God. You're just dad. And over dad is God. And God has a right to tell dad how to treat his kids, their kids." So I would appeal to higher authority. That's what it means to fear God. It means when there is wrong use of authority, it is not a denial of authority, but it's an appeal to highest authority to correct erroneous authority. That's what it means to fear God. And then he says to honor the emperor. And again, this was a man who wanted to be worshiped as God, had total and complete power. There was no rule of law. It was might makes right. It was total evolution. I am the strongest, you are the weakest. I will win, you will lose, worship me. That's how their entire system was architected and put together. And what he doesn't say is worship the emperor, 'cause you can't worship the emperor. When he doesn't say is vote for the emperor, 'cause they didn't get to vote. What he didn't say was agree with the emperor, 'cause the emperor is often wrong. Instead, what he says is honor the emperor. Again, what that means is even if you disrespect someone in authority, express that in a respectful way. If you don't honor what they are doing, honor the fact that they're made in the image and likeness of God, and appeal to their respect and honor to cause them to aspire to better. Now in saying this, in every culture there is a default toward rebellion or respect. You go to some cultures and it is a default toward respect. They're almost blindly following authority without appealing to higher authority. In some cultures, the default is toward rebellion, not toward respect. In the United States of America, do we default toward respect or rebellion? Rebellion. I'll give you some reasons why. I'll give you some reasons why. Number one, we are children of Adam. We are sinners by nature and choice. The essence of sin is rooted in two things: autonomy and pride. Autonomy is I don't need to be under authority. This is where Adam and Eve got us all in trouble. They weren't obeying God's authority. And then pride; I'm smarter, I know what's right. I should be in charge, I could do a better job. Everyone thinks this. Everyone thinks this. Add to that, number two, we are in a Protestant church. In Christianity, there's Eastern Orthodox, Catholicism and Protestantism. The root word for Protestant is what? Protest, protest. So we have a seed of Adamic rebellion and our entire religious convictions are a protest. Now, I am Protestant because I believe that they were trying to get back to the Bible and appealing to higher authority. But there is something in us that has this root of protest. We also are in what country? America, which was the result of another protest. And on the 4th of July, we celebrate our independence. We blow things up. That's what we do, we blow things up, 'cause for us freedom means we're free to blow stuff up. That's what we do. And I'm not saying that we should all be British at all. But I am saying that all of these factors really push us in a particular direction. Then in the 1960s and '70s, for those who lived through it, it was the what? It was the counterculture; sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Now it's the majority culture. It's no

longer a counterculture. As a result, we have, next point, an expectation for generational rebellion. The expectation is that you will dishonor, disregard, disobey your mother and father. That there will be a generational rebellion. We even have an entire clothing store called the Gap that basically says between every generation there's a gap. And that generation needs to express itself by rebelling against the previous generation. You add to that everyone and everything and all of our organizations and institutions are affected by this sin problem. What that means is not only is there not a perfect person, there is no system, institution or organization that we build that is perfect. The question is, well, what do we do about that? Do we dismantle those institutions or do we seek to improve those institutions? I'll talk about that a little later in the sermon. But I'll give you an example. And what I'm gonna say today I hope is just instructive and clarifying in a very complicated time. I would submit to you that police officers and teachers, speaking of human institutions and being subject to every human institution, we're still rooted in the principles of 1 Peter 2, that for the most part, most people who decide to be a teacher or a police officer or first responder, they're seeking to love, to protect, to bless. They're underpaid, they're overworked, they're underappreciated. And every once in a while, there's a bad cop that makes the news. And every once in a while, there's a bad teacher that makes the news. Bad cop, excessive use of force. Bad teacher, groomed a student for molestation, sexual relationship. As a result, what I think is that we should constantly be working on improving human institutions by appealing to higher authority, not saying we need to get rid of education or law. That Paul, Peter rather, told us early on to be sober-minded. What he's saying is when everyone's emotional and no one is rational, that you can be mentally drunk, meaning you're very passionate and very loud, but not very wise or very helpful. So he informs God's people in chapter 1 to be sober-minded. Well, as a result of human sin, rebellion and institutional flaws and failures, what comes along is something that I will call Cultural Marxism. So let me just address the issue that really is the underlying issue I think for a lot of the conflict in America today. Marxism is posited on this assumption that money and power needs to be transferred. It needs to go from these people to these people. Underlying the emotional appeal of Marxism, and I'll talk about Cultural Marxism, is a concept of utopia. Ecclesiastes says that God has set eternity in the hearts of men. That we just want heaven, and we look at the earth, and we're like, "Something's wrong." So we have this utopian concept of how life could or should be. And then we have this sense of the fall that something has gone terribly wrong. And the world is broken and things are not the way that they're supposed to be. And human flourishing is being limited as a result. So they start with these biblical categories, but Marxism tends to be atheistic. It tends to deny personal sin and blame everything on the institution. So if something bad happens, you're a victim and it's not your fault. That's Cultural Marxism. In addition, it doesn't believe in Jesus or the Bible. It doesn't believe you have a soul. It doesn't believe there really is a heaven. So what that means is we don't have God, it's just us. We don't have heaven, we need to make heaven now. And that the problem is not individual in my personal repentance. The problem is systemic, it is institutional. Therefore, it leads to something called critical theory. Critical theory is a social Marxist construct that dominates academia. The critical theory is in critical race theory, critical gender theory, critical political theory, critical police theory. I mean, it exists across all different disciplines. And those who are younger have been educated in a Cultural Marxist framework. And it has been on steroids in the university system.

And what happens then is in critical theory it is Cultural Marxism that says that every institution was built by people who had privilege, and they built it in such a way to disadvantage or take advantage of those who did not have privilege. And then they use biblical language. Therefore justice is tearing down all of these institutions and then handing the money and power to those who are underprivileged and letting them seek to define and rebuild those systems in the way that they feel would be best. This explains the language of what is going on in our culture. And again, I'm still rooted in 1 Peter, be subject to all the institutions, honor, but fear and serve God. In addition to critical theory and Cultural Marxism, I know I'm at the deep end of the pool, but here's why. In a day of hashtags and photos and 144 character count, some things are so important that they don't quite fit those limitations. And if we're gonna love the Lord, our God, with all of our minds, sometimes we've got to sit down and think about it. Under Cultural Marxism is this concept of intersectionality. And that is the more systems that you are a part of that are defined as oppressive, the more oppressed you are, therefore when there is the dismantling of those institutions, you should be the first person that has the right to build a new one. So let's say you're an ethnic minority and you're female and you're transgender. Intersectionality would say, "You're the most oppressed," because now you can check multiple boxes. So if you ask, "Why does Pastor Mark tell me all of this?" Well, in Christian theology it's called liberation theology. It's been around for a while. And the problem is it diagnosis some problems that are accurate, but the solutions are not helpful. Many of you have not had the opportunity to travel the world. I have, I've preached in dozens of countries around the world. I have seen the Marxist experiment up close, and it does not lead to human flourishing. It does not, because it denies personal sin, a soul and a need for repentance of sin and the character of Christ through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. And so it's almost like Jesus said, "If you cast the demon out and you don't replace it with the Holy Spirit, what do you get?" Seven more demons. If you get rid of something, but you don't replace it with what God intends, all you get is sevenfold problems. The one demon is bad and seven demons is not better. Now that being said, the reason I tell you all of this is because he's talking here in 1 Peter 2 about slaves and masters. How many of you are really glad right now you don't have my job? How many of you read ahead? And you're like, "Oh, I wanted be in ministry, not today, maybe next week, I'll start next week." I'm teaching through a book of the Bible and I picked it before everything happened, and I have two choices. I could teach it or ignore it, and I will not ignore it. But let me set up the context through which we are reading this 2000-year-old sacred text through cultural conflicts that are currently happening. And the reason I addressed to you Cultural Marxism and intersectionality is because that is being offered as the primary cultural solution. I'm gonna do something now that will be controversial, but I'll just read something. From the Black Lives Matter co-founders, we are trained what?

- [Congregant] Marxists.

- Here's what I know. A lot of people have said things about me. There's whole websites written against me. People have devoted their lives to attacking and criticizing me. The best way to know what someone believes is just let them tell you. We, so this is telling you who they are say. My name is Mark and I believe in the Bible and I trust Jesus. That's me, that's who I am. "We

are trained Marxists. We actually do have an ideological frame." What is that? It's Cultural Marxism. The founders, I didn't name them, in particular are trained organizers. We are trained what? Marxists. "We are super versed in ideological theories. Our goal is to get Trump out." 1 Peter, honor the emperor. It doesn't mean you agree with him. It doesn't mean you can't run against him. It doesn't mean you can't try to remove them from office. You just do so in a way that's honorable. So what happens here is there are two very dominant political ideologies that have become hashtags. My goal now is to make everyone uncomfortable, because I believe in equality. Black Lives Matter, Make America Great Again. As messages would you agree they're both pretty good? So you know what, that's good and that's good. I mean, I do believe especially if I'm seeing abuse and the taking of innocent human life, that those lives matter and America kind of sucks right now. Could we make it better? Amen, I mean, could we all vote for that? Like, can we love these people and fix this broken country? The messages are fine, but behind them are entire movements. And as soon as you state the message, you've connected yourself to the movement. Which is why if I was wearing either of those hats, we would need turnbuckles in the auditorium and this would turn into WWE SmackDown. That's what would happen. Let me read the next one. If you wanna know what I believe, if you go to, well, let's say our church, the TheTrinityChurch.com. And you click on About or Belief, there is a doctrinal statement that I wrote that tells you exactly what I believe. If you go to this website and click on About, they have their mission statement, their doctrinal statement. They tell you what they're about. And this is important, because again, I've been lied about a lot. So let me just put out what I believe. Let me allow others to have that same right. I'm not gonna get some out-of-context statement that doesn't apply and then construct another context and then misappropriate it. I'll just click on your site and read it. "We make space for transgender brothers and sisters." Cultural Marxism applied to gender. Brothers and sisters, that's Bible language. "We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead." Dismantle, transfer power. "We do the work required to dismantle cisgender." If you don't know what that is, that's male and female. God gave you a gender. If you don't feel like you are that gender, then God, the Creator made a mistake, and you have the right to recreate yourself in the gender of your own choosing. "And uplift black trans folks." Well, why that? Because of intersectionality, more categories. Also, one of the co-founders is married to a black trans woman. "Especially black trans women. We build a space, that's an institution, that is free from sexism, misogyny, and environments in which men are centered." Men loving, leading, like Christ their families. We dismantle, I told you that Cultural Marxism was about what? Dismantling institutions. "We dismantle the patriarchal practice." That means men leading their families. "That requires mothers to work double shifts, so they can mother in private even as they participate in public justice work." What it's saying is there's a lot of kids that don't have a dad. Therefore, the government needs to be the dad and provide more for mom, so she has time for social justice work. My answer would be how about we fix the debts?

- [Congregants] Amen.

- How about we fix the debt? Because here's what I can tell you. Every sociological study will tell you that the best environment for a child is with their biological mother and father going to

church, reading the Bible and praying. Bradford Wilcox, the leading sociologist on marriage and family in America, he's at the University of Virginia. He has proven with the largest data analysis and survey in the history of our country, that the best environment is the one that God created. A man and a woman get married, have a baby, worship God and raise the baby. It's not perfect. My parents were not perfect. I'm not a perfect parent. But it's the best. It's the best. And what happens is God gives certain responsibilities to men. And if we transfer those to government, we hurt women and children. Furthermore, we go bankrupt because if you keep enlarging the government to replace the man and the man is disincentivized to work to meet the needs of his family, because he's not responsible for his family, eventually you run out of people to tax. We disrupt the Western-prescribed what? What's it say? Nuclear family. Our mission statement is not to have mothers and fathers and families. "We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative, that's male-female thinking, or rather the belief that in all the world are heterosexual unless, and you can't use gender pronouns, so we do that, she, he or they disclose otherwise." So here's where we find ourselves. We have to ask this question. Is there a problem? Could we do better in issues of race and gender? And is Cultural Marxism the best solution? And what you are left with is some people see these as being presented as connected issues. So if you say there's a problem, you have to accept the solution. Therefore, some people will feel pressured to deny that there is a problem, 'cause they don't like the solution. Other people who will accept that there is a problem will then also accept the solution. So basically, the options right now, and many of you are feeling this, let me put language to it. You got two choices, are you a racist or a Marxist? And as a Christian, how many of you go? I don't like those options. I don't want to be a racist. I can't be a Marxist. I don't like my options. Is there a way forward that the Bible gives us, particularly Peter? Let me give you God's path to equality, and then I'll come back around to 1 Peter. There is another way to address problems and it actually is the best way to love and serve people and to multiply human flourishing. It's the Bible. All people are created by God as full-image bearers. That's what the Bible says. There is no evolutionary theory, part human-part animal, none of that. Male, female equally bearing the image and likeness of God. End of story. Number two, there is one race made up of all nations and cultures descended from Adam and Eve. According to the Bible, if we all did our genealogical study, eventually we'd find out we all have the same mom and dad. We're all part of the same bloodline. Number three, every person is a sinner and every system is affected by human sin. So no one is perfect and nothing is perfect. What that means that people and the systems we build need to be humble and repentant and constantly learning how we can improve. When Jesus says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," that is a direction, not a destination. Number four, God establishes laws to provide equality for all people. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the books of the law. They have 613 laws because our God is a lawgiver and his laws are for all peoples, times, places and cultures. Most cultures and countries historically do not have the rule of law. They have the rule of force. God establishes laws, so there can be equality for all people under law. Our entire Western concept of law has been borrowed or hijacked from the Bible. Number five, God's kingdom is the pattern for justice and social order for those in authority and under authority. If you wanna know what the utopian society looks like, look at the kingdom of God. We just did a whole series on heaven. We're to live thy kingdom come, thy will be done on

earth as it is in heaven. We're to believe that there is an unseen invisible realm, that there is a God who has an eternal plan. And our hope, prayer and goal is that our world would increasingly look like his kingdom. That his is the blueprint for our building of a good, just society. And that being said, God speaks to those in authority and under authority, and this is very unusual, particularly in ancient moral codes. So the Bible doesn't just say, "Children, obey and honor your mother and father." It says, "And, dads, don't exasperate and frustrate your kids. And husbands don't be harsh with your wives." We'll get there next week. So it speaks to those both under authority and in authority because everyone is under God's authority. Number six: God's people, the church, are a new family called the chosen race. That's what Peter told us earlier in his book and also a new man, which is the language of the Apostle Paul. That in Christ we're family. We have the same father. We're filled with the same Spirit. Number seven: Leadership in the church is based upon character and not social factors. That's why in the New Testament there's a book called Philemon. It's regarding a leader in the early church named Onesimus who was a slave. And Paul says, "Don't treat him as a slave. Treat him as a brother. If he has some debt outstanding, bill it to my account. I'll make it good." And then if you read, I think it's in Colossians chapter 4, another book of the New Testament, he talks about Onesimus. And he was working with Paul as a leader. And Paul handed him the Book of Colossians, and said, "I need you to deliver it." So in the culture Onesimus was at the lowest. In the church Onesimus was the highest. In the church he was the pastor over the master, because he had character. Number eight: Christianity has the most diversity of any movement in history. Missionaries have gone around the world. Bible translation and language creation has gone around the world. Billions of people today worship and follow Jesus from all the languages and cultures and tribes of the nations. That Christianity is the largest, longest-standing and most diverse movement of any kind in the history of the world. And it's not perfect. But if you compare that to Cultural Marxism, the majority of people who were murdered in the 20th century were murdered under Marxist regimes. That the taking of human life is the end result of social Cultural Marxism. This is why fascism always starts on the left. I wrote down some additional examples. Well, St. Patrick, he was a slave. And then he was the one who fought against slavery by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Renowned historian Rodney Stark says that European slavery ended "Only because the church extended its sacraments to all slaves, and then managed to impose a ban on the enslavement of all Christians and Jews." It was William Wilberforce who opposed slavery in great Britain. He was there. Abraham Lincoln and he loved Jesus, and he was driven by biblical principles. I interviewed Wayne Grudem, who's a scholar here in the Valley, and he told me that 2/3 of the leaders of the American Abolitionist Movement were Christians. Abraham Lincoln was a Christian. Rosa Parks was a Christian. Jackie Robinson was a Christian. Martin Luther King Jr. was a Christian. There was a problem. There still are problems. And God's people were part of the solution. Let's pick up Peter again. Christians will suffer like Christ suffered, especially if you believe my sermon. Amen?

- [Congregants] Amen.

- Because if it is are you a racist or a Marxist, I'm a Christian, you might get shot by the racists and the Marxists. 1 Peter 2:18-21, servants, we're gonna talk about that. Be subject to who?

Your masters, we'll talk about that. With all respect, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering what? The Bible acknowledges that some things are unjust. "For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it, you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God." For to this you have been?

- [Congregants] Called.

- Part of your ministry as a Christian is to suffer. Any pastor that does not prepare their people for suffering is not helpful to their people. We're not in heaven yet. You guys are gonna have some hard days. You're gonna need Jesus on the bad days just as much as the good days. It's not that God always gets us around the valley of the shadow of death. It's that sometimes Jesus leads us through it. "For this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps." So here's what Peter is saying. There are forces culturally, politically beyond your control. As a result, you're not living in the culture or nation that fully represents your values according to the Word of God. As a result of living out your faith, there will be certain things you cannot believe. There are certain ways you cannot behave. And as a result, there'll be a lot of pressure put on you publicly, maybe even legally, maybe even physically and personally, or economically to get you to conform. And as a result, you will suffer unjustly. It'll be wrong what's said about you, what's done to you. And what he says is this is a gracious thing, meaning God has hidden in it a means of grace. And it's all about Jesus. I would submit to you three things. Unjust suffering, number one, makes us grateful for Jesus. What he says is Christ suffered and left an example for you in suffering. How many of you, when you're suffering, you have a deeper appreciation of Jesus' suffering? God is in heaven, no suffering, comes down to what, suffer. Why, because he loves you. That gives us a deeper appreciation for Jesus Christ. Our whole goal is to leave this world and get away from the suffering. Jesus' whole goal was to leave that world and enter into the suffering. Number two, what unjust suffering does it allows us to be comforted by Jesus. The Bible says we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with us. Jesus says, "Man, I know what it's like when they say things that are not true. I know what it's like when a public mob just ultimately wrecks your reputation. I know what it's like when a friend betrays you. I know what it's like when legally you are harassed. I know what it's like when they're trying to control you through fear, intimidation and punishment. I know what it's like when you do what is right in the sight of God, and are judged in the sight of everyone else." We have a deeper appreciation through unjust suffering, number one, that Jesus suffered for us. And number two, that Jesus is the only God who can comfort us. I'm so glad that in a world with suffering we do not worship a God who is immune to it, but has entered into it and experienced it and comes to be with us in our suffering. Peter is gonna talk about this a little bit later in the book, but he says that when we suffer more God gives more grace. What that means is that the glory of God rests on you to the degree that you're suffering. That means the more that you suffer, the more of God's presence you have, because the more of God's grace you need. And number three, suffering makes us like Jesus. When you are suffering, the question is, how can I respond like Jesus respond? When you sense there is injustice how can you respond like Jesus responded? And the

question in the middle of it all is to learn more about Jesus, so you can become more like Jesus, so you can respond more like Jesus. And here's why? You are God's servant. You are God's servant. And he has commissioned you on mission in this world to serve his kingdom by carrying forth the character of his Son. The whole context of 1 Peter 2 is servants. So this raises a whole host of questions. I'm sure you've got them. Some translations will say servants, some bondservants, some slaves. We hear that language. We immediately understandably go to American history. Let me answer a few questions regarding that. What does the Bible mean by servants? We're in a book of the Bible. We're not gonna skip anything. It keeps using this word servant. Now, by way of preface, before I jump into the three types, in the days of the Roman Empire that Peter is writing, listen to this, 50% of the Roman Empire were slaves or servants or bondservants, they're in this category, 50%. By comparison, at the time of the Civil War about 10% roughly of Americans were slaves. 50%. So you're looking at the largest nation, the most powerful and affluent nation on the earth, and they grew by overtaking different people groups oftentimes through war, so that half of their citizens were in this category of servant, bondservant or slave. It was a very diverse, very complicated, large category. And in my study, I think the Bible uses this word for three different categories or kinds of social roles. Number one, slave trading. When we think of slavery in America, the language in the Bible is slave trading. 1 Timothy 1:9-11, the law. Whose law? God's law over all people, times, places, nations, and cultures. "The law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious." And then he gives a list. "For those who kill their fathers or mothers." Today, our problem is that mothers and fathers kill their children. "For murderers, for the sexually immoral." What is that? That's living together before you're married, that's sex outside of marriage. That's dating, relating and fornicating. That's Saturday night in Old Town. "For those who practice homosexuality." For what? Slave traders. See, right up until now, this list in America was a virtue list. See, every culture has virtues that they call vices and vices that they call virtues. That's why the Bible says, "Woe to anyone who calls good evil, evil good." Slave traders and liars and perjurers and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine. The word there is healthy. Can't be healthy if you do these things. "That conforms to the Gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God." He's talking here about the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus. How many of you don't see equal emotional outrage at all of these activities? Have you seen the We're Against Fornication Parade? Everyone is wearing two belts just to make a statement. God says, "My law says that all of these things are wrong." This is why I have concern for those who are preachers of God's Word, who would hand over their message to those who are Cultural Marxists and not Christian ministries. That ultimately they're saying, "This is a virtue and this is a vice." God says they're both vices. And if you're endorsing one and you have to endorse the other, now we've lost the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ, hear me in this, it's about repentance of sin. Our culture is about tolerance of sin. There's nothing wrong with you. You don't need to change. You should be proud of who you are. The Bible says, "There is a problem, you are a sinner. God needs to change who you are." If you don't preach repentance of sin, you cannot preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And they would say we want to love people, so do I. Well, we want to alleviate their suffering. So do I, which is why I preach the gospel because eternal suffering is the worst suffering of all. It's the worst suffering of all. So let me talk briefly about slave trading. And if you haven't picked up on

this, this may be a long sermon. This may take a while. Slave trading is slavery as was practiced in America. It was almost entirely racial. Almost all cultures have practiced slavery. And in the Roman Empire all races were slaves. Here in America it was almost entirely racial. It was essentially a lifetime status that you were the property of the master. You were not considered a full human being. You didn't have full legal rights. Those who were born to slave parents were also considered property and not full human beings. And they were passed on along with the estate, like the livestock. That's slave trading. The Bible says, "It's sin." It's not just unfair, it's actually ungodly. It not actually is wrong for the person, it offends God, who made that person and loves that person. This would include, for example, a guy in the Old Testament named Joseph. A few years ago, we looked at the last dozen or so chapters of Genesis and his life. His brothers sold him into slavery. He was property. Later on the rest of his family moved to Egypt. 400 years later, the whole nation were slaves held against their will. They had no legal rights. They were treated as property and they were used and abused. There are biblical examples of slave trading, and some of them are very godly people like Joseph who were suffering unjustly. So let's just say that slave trading in these three categories of what constitutes a servant is sinful and wrong. Let me say this as well, for those of you who are younger. I think it is absolutely reasonable to say more needs to be done. And I think you could say that about every human institution, because all have some sin. Some need more dire, urgent need than others, but that is a fair statement. The statement that everyone was a racist, that no one cared and no one did anything. That sort of emotional sentiment, it really dishonors those who have died to secure freedom. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected president of the United States of America. He ran on an anti-slavery abolitionist platform. He was a born-again Christian, who was very clear about his faith. And then later on, he was murdered by an opponent. So we had a president give his life for this issue. 1861, 11 states determined that they will secede from the Union and become the Confederate States of America. This is the beginning of Civil War. The Civil War lasted four years. At that time, the population of the United States of America was around 32 million. During those four years 620,000 men died. And I'm talking bloodied hand-to-hand combat. This is not a drone, send a bomb. This is one man killing another man. In addition to those 620,000 men who died, many who were injured, they didn't have the medical ability that they do today. So they were just literally amputated. So now you've got a whole generation of men that are gone or they are crippled. Compare that to today. Today, the population of America is about 10 times higher. If we had a civil war today, the body count would be 6.2 million, almost the entire population of the state of Arizona. I'm gonna get real political just for a second. So we have something called COVID-19, the coronavirus. I don't know if you've heard about it. I feel like it might get picked up on in the news soon. So I'm just giving you a little warning. It might becoming. The statistics are those who die with COVID, and this is important, not those who die of COVID. That's an important distinction. But what they tell us is that that number is 130,000. If we had the same population percentages, that would be 130,000 people would have died every month from the Civil War for four years. Emotionally feel that. Therefore, for some to say, "No one cared and no one did anything." I would say, let's not dishonor those who did give everything, 'cause no greater love does anyone have than this than to lay down their life. So I would say more can be done, but we need to acknowledge that some did something. We need to be honest with the facts. We need to be honest about the truth. More

can be done but something was done. Slave trading, number two, second category of servant, prisoners of war. We just looked at the Book of Daniel. For those of you here, we took 12 weeks. How many of you, your mind blew in Daniel? We started Daniel and I didn't know in the middle we'd start living in Daniel. I didn't know that's how it was gonna work itself out. But Daniel, his nation of Israel was overtaken by Babylon, and he was taken 700 miles away from home as a prisoner of war, along with his friends. So the Book of Daniel would serve as prisoner of war. Historically, the majority of people who have been in this category of slave, they were prisoners of war. Our nation wars against your nation. And it's a winner take all. We get your houses, your livestock, your gold, and you work for us. That's the way war tended to be historically. Third category, bondservant. A bondservant was a category that was much broader. And I'll explain it to you in a moment. But Paul refers to this in 1 Corinthians 7:20-23. "Each one should remain in the condition he was when he was called." So if you're married and you become a Christian, love your spouse. If you become a Christian and you got kids, raise those kids. Were you a bondservant? And that language of bond indicates there's some sort of financial connection. "Were you a bondservant when called? Don't be concerned about it. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself to the opportunity." What does he say? If you're a bondservant when you get saved, don't worry about it. But if you can get free, what? Get free. I mean, don't stay in that situation. Get as much freedom as you can. "For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freeman in the Lord." And he's talking there about spiritual freedom. There are people that have physical freedom, but they don't have spiritual freedom. They're addicted. They're enslaved to sex, pornography, alcohol, pride, anger, narcissism. Just because you have freedom, doesn't mean you're free. That's a choice that you need to make. "Likewise, he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men." This category of bondservant, it was not mainly racial. It was not generally a lifetime. Most people were free by 30. And oftentimes it was a business agreement that you entered into because you felt it was beneficial. I'll give you some examples. Economy collapses. You don't have a means to provide for your family. So you sign an agreement, well, you'll live on their land and eat their food, and you'll work for this company or this family. And as a result, they're going to take care of your family. Sometimes this would be in exchange for a business opportunity. I'll go work for you for x number of years, almost like an intern for a trade, and I will volunteer my services and then I will leave. And I will launch my own company or maybe even a branch of yours. At times, this was in exchange for educational opportunity. How many of you used the GI Bill? You went through the military and then they paid for college. In the ancient world, that would be called a bondservant agreement. How many of you were teachers, and the agreement was you go teach, and if you teach for x number of years, we will pay off your student debt in exchange for your teaching? In the ancient world, that would have been considered a bondservant category. And so what we see in all of this is that this category of servant it includes slave trading, which is evil, sinful. It includes prisoners of war. It also includes some legal contracts. And some would ask, well, what? Because what critics of the Bible will do, they'll say, "See, it's a racist book. It's a bigoted book, it's a privileged book. It's an abusive book." Now, 50% of the Roman Empire were in this overarching category that has three sub-categories. And the Bible is saying, "Slave trading is evil." But just because you met Jesus doesn't mean you don't have to pay back your student loan. Write that down, college student. It

doesn't matter who you vote for, you should still pay back your student loan. And so the reason that the Bible is nuanced is because the culture to which it was speaking was nuanced. The reason why we miss some of the nuance is slavery as was practiced in America was not nuanced like this. It was that first category of slave trading. That being said, some of you then will ask this question. What about civil disobedience? What about unjust authority? What about ungodly authority? Because if all we do is we read Peter, it seems to indicate that if you're under abusive authority, that you should do nothing about that and say nothing regarding that. This is the category of civil disobedience. And here's how I would summarize it. We are to submit to authority unless it, number one, forbids us from doing what God commands, or number two, commands us to do what God forbids. So in China, if you're a Christian family and you get pregnant, and they say, "Sorry, we got population controls. You need to kill your kid." The answer is no. You're telling me to do something that God forbids. If in that day it was worship the emperor, the Christian would say, "I cannot because you're commanding me to do something that God forbids." In some countries where the Bible is outlawed and illegal, Christians smuggle it in, because the government is forbidding them from doing something that God commands. And that is to study the Word of God. There are examples in the Bible of civil disobedience. I'll give you a couple. But let me preface by saying that the kingdom of God is one of order, and Satan is one of disorder. That God's culture is one of harmony, and Satan's kingdom is one of anarchy. The solution for bad governance is not no governance, but appealing to God's governance to fix the broken governance. And civil disobedience is the opposite of anarchy. Anarchy is trying to destroy and eradicate the rule of law. Civil disobedience is appealing to God's law. So what it is, civil disobedience rightly done actually honors and appeals to law. Whereas, anarchy opposes and destroys law. That being said, in the Old Testament, I'll give you a couple of cases of disobedience. There were midwives in the book of Exodus, and they were told as soon as a Jewish lady gives birth, kill that kid. They said, "Not gonna do it. That's infanticide and racism." They won't do it. Again, in the Book of Daniel, for those of you who were with us, did Daniel ever practice civil disobedience? Yeah, he did. Eat the king's food, which is literally participate in the counterfeit communion meal to Marduk instead of Jesus. He said, "We won't eat the food." That was civil disobedience. Later on, his buddies were told, "There's this big statue of Nebuchadnezzar." It's emperor worship just like North Korea, just like Rome. Everybody bow down. Hundreds of thousands bow down. Daniel's buddies don't. They're literally sticking out like a sore thumb. That's civil disobedience. We can honor the emperor, but we cannot worship the emperor. Later on, Daniel is told for a certain number of days, you're not allowed to pray to your God. What does Daniel do? He opens the windows in his house. He's like, "Actually, I'm doing it." And this is not just my personal relationship. This is a public issue. My God tells me to pray to him and I will pray to him. And even if the government wants to arrest me, they can arrest me while I'm praying to him. And God delivered him. How about the New Testament? Well, the Apostle Paul, he wrote Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon from where? Jail. Jail, because he practiced civil disobedience. God's laws are above other laws. And I was thinking about it. Peter, I'm not straying from my text, we're all the way back to 1 Peter, the author is Peter. Did Peter ever practice civil disobedience? He did. I was praying this week and the Holy Spirit just brought two things to mind. One time Peter practiced ungodly civil disobedience. Another time he practiced godly civil disobedience. Ergo not all civil disobedience

is godly. First case, they're arresting Jesus. Peter practices civil disobedience. Do you remember what he did? He grabbed a sword and he chops the dude's ear off, which means he's a bad aim 'cause nobody ever went for the ear. He's like, "I pulled my gun and shot him in the foot." It probably wasn't what you were shooting for. He missed. Did Jesus say, "Well done, good and faithful servant"? He rebuked him. And he said, "Put that sword back in its sheath." And he picked up the man's ear and like Mr. Potato Head he stuck it back on. Because in that moment, true or false, Peter was practicing civil disobedience. He was, but it was ungodly. And what happens is sometimes people get very emotional, very upset, very angry. And they're like, "I'm practicing civil disobedience. I'm doing what the Bible says." Not necessarily. You may just be chopping somebody's ear off. Was there another occasion where Peter practiced civil disobedience in a godly way? Yes, it's in Acts chapter 5. The government made a decree. The rulership made a decree. No one is allowed to preach about Jesus Christ, new law. Peter and the other disciples, what did they say? "We have to obey God, not you." That's literally what they say. God says to preach Jesus. You say not to preach Jesus. We honor your authority, but we ultimately honor his authority. Therefore we will be preaching about Jesus. So they had them arrested and what? Beaten. And then they were released and they were told no preaching Jesus. And what did they do? They kept preaching Jesus. And it says this that they rejoiced and we're glad to be associated with Jesus. They walked out not going, "My rights have been violated." They walked out going, "They got me with Jesus." Awesome, that's my team. I'm for Jesus. So I'm gonna talk about Jesus. And if they're gonna punish me for talking about Jesus, and if they're saying that the problem is I'm like Jesus, that's not a problem. That's actually my goal. So praise be to God, 'cause my goal is not to live a comfortable life, but to live a life like Christ. And that's the American Christian's problem. We are trying to live a comfortable life, not a life like Christ. Last section of Scripture. Jesus is the victim of your sinful injustice. Here's what happens. We feel like, "You know what? I've been mistreated. I deserve better. I should have more." As soon as we do that, we are essentially taking the storyline of the Bible and making ourselves Jesus. I'm righteous and a victim. What Peter does here is he shifts focus. Here's why he does it. The Word of God before it is to be a binoculars that I look at everything that you did wrong, it is to be a mirror where I see what I've done wrong. 1 Peter 2:22-25, he's gonna talk about Jesus. "He committed no sin." You know what that means? Jesus Christ is the greatest victim in the history of the world. Now, he doesn't live as a victim, he lives as a victor, but what was done to him was evil and wrong. All of us, all of us are guilty of sin. And sometimes even a bit of what we suffer is because of what we've done, even a bit. Jesus, perfect life, everything he endured, completely unjust. "Neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled." People said horrible things about him. He did not what? Jump on social media, flamethrow, curse, attack, find the Comment section of the blog, start a hater website. "He did not revile in return. When he suffered he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly." He dealt with unjust authority by appealing to ultimate authority. He bore whose sins? This just got real personal. The injustice that Jesus endured is because you abused God. You mistreated God. You harmed God. You attacked God. He didn't do anything and you abused him. See, to be a Christian means we need to not just consider what others have done to us, but we need to consider what we have done to Jesus. And then we need to see how Jesus responded to us, and then we need to respond to others the way Jesus responded to us.

This is the unique opportunity of the believer. And no one in the culture knows this and they don't know Jesus and they don't have the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you this, non-Christians can diagnose problems, but Jesus is the only solution. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, cursed, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." You're different now. You don't need to act like everybody else. "For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." The way it works between the sheep and the shepherd. And let me just say this, we're all sheep. We follow whatever news channel we prefer. We follow whatever social media influencers we prefer. We follow whatever political leanings we prefer. We're all sheep. And Jesus is the Good Shepherd. And the way that a Good Shepherd would keep his sheep from harm, 'cause there's wolves everywhere, is he would keep the sheep near him. Through it all, and I just will tell you that things are gonna get crazier before the election. It's not like Americans are gonna go, "Well, there's an election. Let's just all take a break." You're gonna need to stay really close to your Shepherd. You're gonna need to listen to the voice of your Shepherd. You're gonna need to follow the example of your Shepherd, because this world is broken and Jesus is the answer. And if we allow the brokenness to break the church, then the world has no answer. Close with a few things. We need to focus on what we have done to Jesus, not just what others have done to us. We need to focus more on Jesus' response to injustice than others' responses to us. We need to remember Jesus' example that ungodly action requires godly reaction. We need to remember that our goal as Christians is not to win arguments but to win people. We need to remember that a non-Christian can diagnose a problem, but Jesus is the only solution. And that ultimately, when we think of those who have been mistreated, we have to start with Jesus. And we need to acknowledge that we are the ones who have mistreated him. Father God, I thank you for an opportunity to preach a really long sermon on a really hard day and really difficult circumstances. And, Lord, I thank you that the Word of God is living and active. And, God, it's timeless so it's timely. And, Jesus, we acknowledge that this world is broken and there is much that should be done to continue to improve love and flourishing for all humanity. But, Lord God, if we're not sober-minded, if we're not following our Chief Shepherd, if we're not honoring those we disagree with, if we're not appealing to higher authority, then all we will do is cast out a demon and invite seven more in. So we pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. We confess that our war is not against flesh and blood, but powers, principalities and spirits. And, Lord God, I thank you for the Scriptures. And I thank you for the tremendous honor of teaching the Word of God to dear people who I love with a father's heart. And, God, I thank you for their willingness to be sober-minded and to sit through an incredibly long sermon because, Lord, people matter and things matter. And sometimes to apply the Word of God to important people and things takes a little time. So I thank you for the grace that these people have given me to teach your Word in Jesus' good name. Amen. Love you.