

“SUBMISSION: RIGHTEOUS LIVING REVEALED”

**HOLINESS
DR. BRUCE BICKEL
1 PETER 2:13-20
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Sig: It’s all yours.

Bruce: Before you go, Sig, hey, listen. We harass Sig quite a bit. He has the gift of embarrassment. (*Laughter.*) And, Sig, you know, we really appreciate your humor, the way you set us up, and we’re really grateful. You and Don have really set a great stage for us. So brothers, let’s just express our gratitude to Sig and Don. (*Applause.*)

Sig: You know, I spoke to Bruce, and he mentioned that to me earlier, about the gift of embarrassment, and I said, as one of my priests said to me, in the Anglican church, he said, “We have something to offend everybody.” (*Laughter.*) So now, it’s your turn.

Bruce: And I did it well.

Participant: Is that in 3 Corinthians? (*Laughter.*)

Bruce: No. I think it’s Hesitations 6:4. (*Laughter.*) Let’s come before the Lord, and know that He is God. Don? (*Music.*)

Have mercy on me, the sinner. Father, cleanse me from all unrighteousness, and in spite of myself, make me a vessel worthy to proclaim Your truth. May Your Holy Spirit be amongst us. May He fulfill His job description and guide us into all truth, and may it be so, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Bruce: Continuing our study in holiness, in the book of 1 Peter, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 2. In the verses before the ones we’re going to look at today, which are verses 13-20 of 1 Peter chapter 2, the apostle Peter was skilled last week, and taught us reasons for righteous living. Now the word *righteous* means right wisdom. It means making right decisions.

In the passage that we read, in the first twelve verses of 1 Peter chapter 2, Peter instructed us and gave us two significant reasons why you and I need to make wise choices in how we make our decisions. And we call that “reasons for righteous living.”

Now he gives us two major reasons. The first one is this. It’s our heavenly citizenship. We need to realize, brothers, that our citizenship is not in this world. It’s in the heavenlies. And so one of the reasons that we ought to make different decisions is because we recognize where our true allegiance is, where our true submission is, and that is that we are citizens of the Kingdom, and we’re sort of extraterrestrials. Our citizenship is in heaven, not on this earth, and yet we reside here with everybody else. It’s what I would call being “other worldly.” We are of the other world.

Remember when Jesus calmed the storm and the sea. The disciples say, “What kind of Man is this?” In the Greek text, that literally means, “This man is out of this world.” He’s another worldling. You and I are extraterrestrials, because our citizenship is in heaven. That’s the first reason for us to make different decisions than other people do, our heavenly citizenship.

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And then secondly, he talked about our heavenly conduct, our heavenly behavior. You and I have different behavior patterns because we are other worldly, because we are citizens of heaven. And so the choices that you and I make conduct wise express our righteous living.

Peter now takes us to a passage in which he gets very particular, and says that here are how your righteous living decisions are observable. They're recognizable.

First of all, the nice thing about Scripture, when you preach it and teach it expositively, verse by verse, not only does it tell you what to say. It tells you how to say it and when to say it. It keeps things in the right context.

So Peter first of all says, in effect, “Let me give you the big picture.” The big picture is that you've got two reasons to make decisions differently than people of this world. And the first one is that your citizenship is in heaven, and secondly, your heavenly conduct. Your conduct reflects your citizenship. The conduct of American citizens reflects that they are citizens of the U.S.A. Our conduct, and the choices we make—righteous living—reflect where we have our allegiance, and that is that our citizenship is in heaven.

So now he becomes very specific. In effect, he says, “Let's take this down to grass roots level, and let's demonstrate ways in which your righteous living is going to be observable.” People will recognize you as an other worldly, as an extraterrestrial, when you understand how you live this out in your righteous living decisions. And so let's pick it up now at 1 Peter chapter 2, beginning at verse 13.

“Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor, 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, that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters, with all respect, not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing when, mindful of God, one endures sorrow while suffering unjustly. 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.” May God be pleased to open our eyes, that we might behold Him more clearly.

One of the basic strategies of human warfare is the occupation of hostile territory. In the great battle of spiritual warfare, our omnipotent and all sovereign God, our all wise God, has solved this dilemma by occupying the enemy's territory. You and I are the ones who occupy the enemy territory. He accomplishes this by disguising His servants by placing His Spirit within us who walk and live in hostile territory, and do it differently because of the decisions that we make. We reflect the fact that our citizenship is in heaven. He has placed the treasure of the earthen vessel of His life in us. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels to show that the all surpassing power comes from God.” 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 7.

He shares His life with us. If you want a good definition of the Christian life, it is a shared life experience. We have this treasure, the life of God, in our earthen vessels to

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show that the all surpassing power comes from God and not from us. In other words, brothers, you and I are living in hostile territory. The system of this world is anti-Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: And you and I live as citizens of the Kingdom in a hostile territory, and that is by design. You and I look like everybody else, and the only way that they distinguish us as other worldlings, as extraterrestrials, as followers of Christ, is by the decisions that you and I make. It's not so much by the words of our lips as it's going to be the conduct of our hearts. Yes, Don?

Don: Yes, Bruce. I don't know, Maybe I'm speaking for myself here. But why is it that so often we forget that we are citizens of another kingdom? Why do we find ourselves, or at least why do I find myself so comfortable at times being a citizen of this country?

Bruce: That's a great question. Let's answer the question. Let's throw it out to the group. Why is it that you sometimes don't remember, or don't think well enough, or often enough, that you're a citizen of another country, a citizen of heaven? What are the hindrances to that? What hinders our thinking about our citizenship in heaven? Be honest.

Participant: Sin.

Bruce: Our sin, certainly. What?

Participant: We're in a corrupt body.

Bruce: We're in a corrupt body, certainly.

Participant: I can see the things around me, but I can't see heaven with my eyes.

Bruce: Okay, you can't see heaven with your eyes, but you can see the things around you. That's why the Scripture says that we live by what?

Participant: Faith.

Bruce: Faith, not by sight. That's tough to do. That is really hard to do, especially in enemy territory. You can see what is going on around you in enemy territory, but you don't know what's going on in heaven. And so you have to live by faith. Karl?

Karl: Yes. I was going to say, Bruce, that too often we in Rome want to do what the Romans do. So we seek our acceptance from this world, rather than recognizing that we're from another world.

Bruce: Acceptance from this world. Is there really such a thing as peer pressure?

Participant: Oh, yes.

Bruce: I don't think it's peer pressure. I think it's peer acceptance.

Participant: Mm-hmm.

Bruce: Who do I want to be accepted by? That's the peer pressure I'm under. I want to be accepted by the world. That's the pressure I'm under. I don't have pressure from my peers. I have pressure from myself. Because I want acceptance, I want to be accepted by the world. I think Don also mentioned in his question the comfortableness that we have, that we feel too comfortable in our skin, that in America right now we take things for granted. Anyone else? What hinders you from thinking of your citizenship in heaven? Yes?

Participant: Distractions.

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Bruce: Distractions. Absolutely. All sorts of distractions. Yes?

Participant: We have more luxuries than anybody in the history of mankind.

Bruce: Our luxuries make us feel comfortable. We get complacent, don't we?

Participant: mm-hmm.

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Bruce, verse 15. “For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. I don’t think our goals are lined up. You know, we’re goal oriented people. And I don’t think our goals are lined up. We aren’t setting our goals to do God’s will, that we are to be doing good. We should silence the ignorant, because that’s God’s will for them.

Bruce: Amen.

Participant: We have to find out His will. We’re missing the goal.

Bruce: Well, let’s explore this, because Don’s question is a great lead-in to our study today in these verses, 13-20, because this is the way. The key is this: submission.

Participant: Yes, it is.

Bruce: Now we’re going to talk about submission, because that’s a misunderstood concept in our Christian life. We think it means second-rate citizenship, and it doesn’t. It means power, strength and glory, and we’ll get to that in a moment.

Let’s take a look at what Peter is teaching us. How do you live your righteous life observably, so people will understand it? So we are disguised to look like everybody else. But, in reality, you and I are extraterrestrials. We are citizens of another kingdom. And the grand design of God’s strategy is that no one will recognize us as other worldlings, unless they see our righteous decisions, unless they see our heavenly conduct.

A citizen of this hostile environment may be standing in line just like you at any other store, and may not know the difference, unless he sees your badge, which is your ID, in the uniform of heavenly graces. In other words, your heavenly graces are your conduct. You’re standing in line, and you look like everybody else, so you’re disguised like everybody else. And they will never know that you’re an other worldling, another citizen of the Kingdom, until they see your heavenly graces—not your words, but your graces.

You may attempt to tell him that you are one of the other worldlings, that you are a Christian. But he is likely to say, “Yeah, sure thing, buddy. Somebody else told me that, but he was no different from me.” You see, we’re not going to convince people with our lips. We’re going to convince them with our conduct, with the choices that we make with our heavenly graces. That’s what gives you the opportunity to explain why you’re making the decisions that you are. You have a reason for the hope that is within you when you make those decisions.

Now last week we learned about our heavenly citizenship and heavenly conduct. And today we want to be very, very specific.

Notice verse 12 of chapter 2. “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable.” And that’s the overriding \$100,000 statement. “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

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So you and I have been set apart to look like everybody else, and the only reason that they are going to recognize that we are followers of the kingdom of God is by the choices we make, the decisions that we make in righteous living. So we want to explore that today.

Submission in the life of the believer is the way in which he emphasizes how we make visible the fact that we're Kingdom citizens. The reason that submission is the way we reveal our heavenly citizenship is because submission confronts head-on Satan's offer to our first parents. And that was to have this: freedom without authority. That was the first thing that Satan offered Adam and Eve. "Let me give you freedom without authority." And they, and all other people after them, of this hostile environment, lost both their freedom, and they lost their authority.

Submission has to do with freedom and authority. Submission does not mean secondary living, or subjugation, or second class citizenship. Submission has to do with authority. Submission is recognizing God's authority in our lives as heavenly kingdom citizens.

God wants us to exercise authority. But before we can exercise authority, we need to be under authority. You'll never exercise authority until you know how to be under authority. And that is what Peter is teaching us now about visible conduct of righteousness, with our understanding of what it means to be under authority.

The world rejects authority for personal fulfillment. The believer submits to authority for personal responsibility. Now let me give you again that little summary statement of that whole passage. The world rejects authority for personal fulfillment. That's exactly what Adam and Eve did at the Fall. The believer, the follower of Christ, submits to authority for personal responsibility,

The word *responsibility* means "response able." You and I, because of the Holy Spirit, are response able. We're able to respond to situations differently than the people of this world, who are not heavenly citizens, because you and I have the grace of God the Holy Spirit within us.

Responsibility is defined as this: knowing and doing what is expected of you. You and I exchange the fulfillment of this world for responsibilities. That means that you and I are response able.

Why is it that somebody is listed as irresponsible? It's because they don't finish what they were given to do. The word *responsibility* is made up of two words. The words are what? *Response* and *ability*. You are response able. You are able to respond. And you and I are able to respond because of the implantation of the Holy Spirit within us at our regeneration. And so you and I have been given what we need to be responsible people.

One of the great leadership principles in all of Scripture is in John 17, where Jesus said, "I have brought You glory on earth by finishing what You gave me to do." Now Jesus is not in heaven wringing His hands, saying, "Oh, I wish I had one more day! Just think. If I had one more day, I could have fed five thousand more people. If I had another day, I could heal somebody. If I had another day, I could have preached something else, preached to the masses, taught the public community."

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He’s not in heaven, doing that. He said this: “I brought You glory on earth by finishing what You gave Me to do.” Now He didn’t do everything He may have wanted to do. But the things He did do are what? The things that God gave Him to do. That’s what it means to be responsible. You and I have been put in a responsible position to be response able because of the grace of God. Yes, please?

Participant: Can you give that summary statement again when you said that the world rejects?

Bruce: Certainly. The world rejects authority for personal fulfillment. The believer submits to authority for personal responsibility. We exchange personal fulfillment for personal responsibility. That’s because we’re citizens of the Kingdom.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Can you go back to that statement where you said to have freedom under authority? Can you give an example of that?

Bruce: All right. Stick with me. That’s what we’re going to cover next. We’re moving right along. Thank you for your question. You’re a good in man. (*Laughter.*)

Now notice. Peter teaches us that we demonstrate noble, excellent, fine lives by being submissive in four areas: first of all as citizens, (that’s in verses 13-17), then as workers, in verses 18-20, then as marriage partners, in chapter 3, verses 1-7, and then as church members in chapter 3, verses 8-12. In other words, he is talking about submission as a characteristic of your entire life—as a citizen, as a coworker, as a supervisor, as a married partner, as a churchgoer.

Submission is one of the characteristics of our righteous living. It’s our freedom under authority.

So let’s talk about our submission as citizens in chapter 2, verses 13-17. Notice what he says, first of all, in verses 13-17. “Be subject for the Lord’s sake.” In other words, submit for the Lord’s sake.

The Greek term *submission* is a military term. And it literally means to arrange in a military fashion under the command of a leader for your protection. Literally, that’s what it means. The word *submission* means to come under the protection of.

If I had a chalk board here, I would demonstrate something. If you had a bunch of troops just scattered all over the area, and they went into battle, they wouldn’t do too well. It’s when they line up in combat order, under the authority of a leader, that they have the possibility of doing their jobs well. In other words, they come under the protection of the authority.

That’s what submission is. It is not second-rate living. It’s not subjugation. It is not second class citizenship. It is coming under the protection of. It’s a military term that basically tells us to arrange in a military fashion under the command of a leader, for your own protection.

Who is it that we’re submitting to? We’re submitting to the Lord’s direction in our lives. We do that for what purpose? For our own protection! We protect ourselves when we submit, because we’re exchanging personal fulfillment for personal responsibility.

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Literally, it means to put yourselves in the attitude of submission, for your own protection.

How about authority? It means human institutions. He’s talking about human institutions. It refers to the human institutions that make up and reinforce laws individually.

So that means that you and I, in our nation, have certain laws. You and I submit to them. Now I know you’re going to say, “Well, what about those times?” We’re not talking about the exceptions. We’re talking about the rule. The rule is this: submit to the authorities. There are times when you have to trust God, and submit to God and not the institution. But those are going to be the exceptions in your life.

How many times have you honestly been in that situation yet? If you’re going to be honest with yourself, you’ve probably never been there. That may come, and then you’ll have the courage to do that, but you don’t learn how to do that until you learn to be submissive to the authorities which you have right now. You’re doing this for the sake of coming under the protection of God, because you are other worldly. And this is the way in which we demonstrate the fact that we have heavenly citizenship.

Participant: Hey, Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Was part of the problem with Adam and Eve that Adam didn’t kick out Satan, but he entertained his thoughts, or Eve, and they listened to him, and they thought, “Oh, that’s not such a bad idea,” as opposed to kicking him out and protecting the garden?

Bruce: That’s a great question. You can ask him when you see him. (*Laughter.*)

Participant: Okay.

Bruce: Basically, it’s this. It’s that they forgot who they were. In general terms, they forgot who they were. They forgot that they were citizens of heaven, because they had walked in the cool of the garden with the Father. They knew Him. They exchanged their responsibilities for personal fulfillment. They reversed the situation. What we do is, we exchange our personal fulfillment for personal responsibilities. We reverse the Fall because of God’s grace.

Now Paul says in Romans 13 that all government, whatever it’s form, is of divine origin. Go to Romans chapter 13. All authority is God-given.

Peter is not talking about the source here, but he is talking about the human form, which indeed is a human creation. So there are certain things which you and I are designed to be submissive to, human authority. Now again, I’m not talking about those exceptions, which will be very rare, when you and I need to obey God, and not the institution. We’re not talking about that. We’re talking about a general term in your life. This is the general expression of your life.

And this is where we need each other. We need grace. We need prayer. We need to be very thoughtful and study the Word to understand how we can be responsible citizens, and be response able, and complete what God has given us to do.

You see, the government has no right to control the pulpit. And they have no right to control our doctrine. But it does have the right and responsibility to control matters of

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safety and operation. When we are submissive to the government, we come under their protection.

That doesn't mean that it's the perfect government. We need to understand this. Go to Romans chapter 13.

Now do I understand this completely? Not at all. But I do understand that God is sovereign. In Romans 13, does somebody want to read the first couple of verses for us?

Participant: 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. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment to themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.”

Bruce: That's great. Now look at this. Peter is saying the same thing that Paul is saying in Romans 13. What is our conduct in an environment when you and I are submissive? We are to do what?

Participant: Do good.

Bruce: Do good. That's where we demonstrate our submissiveness. It's not in our recognizing the authority as a perfect authority. It's that we're doing good in the midst of that authority's rule, because we understand that God is sovereign. God has a right to rule. And you and I are concentrating not on who they are and what they are not doing and what they are doing. We are concentrating on what we are doing, and that is doing good deeds, good works, in the midst of our submission to somebody who is our authority. That's what demonstrates our conduct as righteous lovers. Our citizenship is in heaven. It's a demonstration of our earthly conduct. It's our submissiveness.

It's this.; I have the freedom to trust Christ, because I'm coming under the authority of His will. I'm going to do good in the midst of this situation, as a citizen, and trust that God will be pleased, and I'm going to trust Him for the results, and that's how I protect myself. I come under His protection when I do that. We come under the protection of the sovereignty of God. You see how that works?

Now, if you're not in Christ, this is different. You're not going to understand what I'm talking about. That's why this is a sign of righteous living. Submission is a sign of righteous living. We exchange personal fulfillment for personal responsibilities. And we do that with grace.

Participant: You know, Bruce, that doesn't mean everything is going to work out fine in this world for you.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Participant: We end up with some pretty bad experiences physically or mentally.

Bruce: Remember, we're exchanging fulfillment for responsibility, not for comfort. And what is our responsibility in all of this? To be doing good things to call our attention to the good works of our heavenly Father.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Now I believe that it is possible to submit to human authority, and disobey a specific law that violates God's word. You can do both at the same time. You can submit

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to a human institution an disobey a specific law of that institution that violates God’s word. You can do both.

Let me give you an example. Go to Daniel chapter 1. One of the best descriptions of somebody who had a non-compromising spirit was Daniel. Daniel refused to obey the king’s dietary laws. Let’s go to Daniel chapter 1. We’ve talked about this before.

Daniel chapter 1. Notice verse 8. Now here is where he violated a law of the institution with a non-compromising spirit. But I want you to see how he did it. He was able to submit to the human institution, and not violate God’s law at the same time.

“But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king’s food, or the wine that he drank.”

There were three things they wanted to do. They wanted to change his name. They wanted to change his heritage. They wanted to change his culture. They wanted to change his name, they wanted to change his culture, and they wanted to change the way he ate. He said, in effect, “Yes, you can change my name. You can change the other things of my life. But I’m not going to eat the king’s food because that was something God gave me to do.”

Why is it that he refused to do that? Because that was the law of God. Before they ate the king’s food, they offered it to false idols. As a Hebrew and a follower of God, he could not do that, because that would violate his conscience, and he would have a compromising spirit. You’ll notice here that Daniel has a non-compromising spirit, but he’s submissive. That’s the combination that we see.

It was the way that he did it. He wasn’t a rebel. He didn’t embarrass the official in charge, and get him in trouble. Yet he stood his ground.

Notice Daniel chapter 1, verses 8-15. Let’s read on. “Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.” He came up with a creative alternative. Rather than saying, “I’m a Christian; I can’t do that. I’m a follower of God; I can’t do that. I’m a Hebrew,” he just says, “This is simply something I cannot do with a clear conscience. May I give you a creative alternative of how we can manage this?”

And notice what he says. “And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.”

His submissiveness was his what? Protection! His submissiveness to his authority was his protection, and he still did not violate God’s law. You can not violate God’s law and violate the human institution, but do it in the right way, if you have a non-compromising spirit, and you are being submissive at the same time. You see that in Daniel’s life.

You’ll notice a non-compromising spirit, but there is also a submissive spirit. You and I can have both of those. Submission to earthly authorities reveals our submission to our heavenly authority.

And Peter is an example of that. Take a look at Acts chapter 4, verse 19. I’ll give you another example.

In Acts chapter 4 verse 19, and in Acts chapter 5, verse 29, the Jewish council commanded the apostles to stop preaching in the name of Christ. But they refused, because that was not something they could violate and have a clear conscience. They

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showed respect for the position, even though the people in position were opposed to the gospel.

Notice the motive that we have in 1 Peter. “For the Lord’s sake.” Our submissiveness to them reveals our allegiance to Him.

Let’s go to 1 Peter again. I want to show you something that is really critical about this. Now I read you down to verse 20. Let’s pick up with verse 21.

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you might follow in His steps.” Now here is the example. “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.”

Now there is a difference, there is a key word right there, brothers, and that word is “entrusted.” He entrusted Himself to God, but He submitted Himself to men.

Nowhere in the scripture are you and I ever called to entrust ourselves to men. We submit ourselves to men, and to institutions, but we take that act of submission, and we take that and we entrust that very act to God, for our own protection. That’s what Jesus did. We see that He is very submissive to men, to the institution. But He did not entrust Himself to that institution. He entrusted Himself to the sovereignty of God. Do you see the difference? The key word for us, in being submissive, and not violating God’s law, is that we are entrusting that act of submission to our heavenly Father, for our own protection. We are coming under the protection of God. Do you see the difference between the words *submit* and *entrust*? You entrust to God, but you submit to people. Yes?

Participant: And at the same time, getting back to Daniel, with all his trust in God, he did not dishonor the eunuch.

Bruce: Exactly.

Participant: He said, “Hey, at the end of ten days, let me know. I’ll do what you think, based on the results.”

Bruce: He was willing to live with the consequences of his choices. You see, he had a non-compromising spirit, but the way he did it was that he entrusted himself, as Jesus is our model, he entrusted himself. You take that act and submit it to God. Entrust that to God, for your own protection.

Now let me just give you a practical illustration. Several years ago, I was invited to be the prayer breakfast speaker in the city of Chicago. And I was here in Pittsburgh at the time, and they called me and asked if I would come and speak at their prayer breakfast in Chicago. As I was listening to the gentleman, and he was a very nice fellow, very gracious, very kind. He gave me the outline of the program, and he said, “Because there will be people of many faiths, you can’t mention the word Jesus Christ.”

Now, right away, that eliminated me in my mind. That’s a no brainer. I can’t do that. I can’t violate my conscience. I’m just like Peter. When they said, “You can’t preach in Jesus’ name,” they did it anyway. I had a choice. What I tried to do was submit to him, and entrust that act of submission to God.

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So I said, “I appreciate the fact that you’re giving me that information. I’m not the person to do that. I cannot violate my own conscience, but I submit to your wanting somebody who can. May I make some recommendations of people who might do that, because I can’t?”

Now that was being submissive to them. It wasn’t “I’m going to go preach in Jesus’ name anyway, just because it’s commanded of God.” You see, that’s not the spirit. You can submit to the authority, and entrust it to God

You see what I mean? I’m glad, Mike, that you guys in Pittsburgh have said that I don’t have to do that. (*Laughter.*) Because I will mention Jesus at the prayer breakfast.

But do you understand what I’m saying? Daniel is a good example? Yes, bill?

Bill: The problem, Bruce, is that, although we hear this right now, man is by definition a very rationally minded animal, and in our sinful nature, we have been able to rationalize our decisions as being men of conscience, many times giving us license not to be submissive, and it’s a Herculean task trying to figure out at which point you’re asked, like Peter, to preach, and at which point you do what you suggested there. I’ve seen them both. I’ve seen them in my life, and it’s a struggle of attitudes, obviously evident in the history of Christianity. The goal from the beginning was to see the church where we see plans for unity, and we see plans to be submissive only to Jesus Christ, and it’s not the current situation at all. (*Unclear.*)

Bruce: No, you’re absolutely right, Bill. This is not an easy thing to do. Yes, please?

Participant: When Daniel entrusted himself to God, and you entrusted yourself to God in those two examples, to come up with a solution was not of your own—

Bruce: Correct.

Participant: That has to be from the Holy Spirit.

Bruce: Absolutely. Absolutely. And those are some of the graces that God gives you. In other words, you and I are response able. We’re able to respond to a situation uniquely because of the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

As this man was describing the program, and he said, “You can’t mention the name of Jesus Christ,” I immediately started saying, “Lord, help me be submissive to what he wants, but give me a creative alternative.” And Dan, I just had to think through that as I was listening, because I knew what I had to do. My decision was already clear cut. I cannot go do that. I will not do that. But I need to be respectful to him, and entrust that act to God.

So you’re absolutely correct. That’s where the Holy Spirit will give us a creative alternative. That’s what He did to Daniel. Daniel came up with a creative alternative, and said, (*paraphrase*), “Look! Why don’t you just feed us vegetables, food that is not given to the king? I can’t do that, because the Scripture prohibits that for me. My law, as a Hebrew citizen, prevents me from doing that. Why don’t we try this? Why don’t you just feed us vegetables and fruit for a number of days, and at the end of those days, if we’re not better than the other kids, you can do with us what you want.” A creative alternative—submissive to the authority, but entrusting himself to God.

And you notice, in that next verse, that God granted favor in the heart of the eunuch. Who protected Daniel?

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Participant: God.

Bruce: God did. That’s entrusting yourself to God, being submissive. Remember, submission is lining up under the authority of God, for our own protection. You know, we are protected when we are submissive, and we entrust ourselves to God.

Now the real trick is, how do I know when I’m really entrusting this act of submission to God? That’s the battleground. That’s what we really have to think about. How do I entrust this act of submission? I can give you some examples next week, when we talk about being submissive as a coworker. I’ve had twenty-eight years of experience in doing that at PNC.

It’s very interesting. I can give you all sorts of illustrations of being submissive to your authority, and entrusting that to God. I can give you a couple of examples next week.

But do you understand, brothers, the real difference between submission and entrusting? Yes, Bishop?

Bishop Rodgers: If I understand rightly the traditional doctrine of civil disobedience, if you are in a situation where there is no creative thing that will avoid this, that you show your submission by going to jail?

Bruce: Exactly. That’s it. You do good.

Now let me give you just a practical illustration. You asked for one. As you know, many of us my age served in Viet Nam. There were many who chose not to do that for various reasons. I had several Christian friends who said, “I can’t do that. My ministry is going to be rejecting this. My draft card burning, that’s my ministry. It’s burning my draft card.”

I said, “Here’s your ministry. If you with a clear conscience cannot go to Viet Nam, and be engaged in a war, if that’s what the Holy Spirit is leading you to do, then your ministry is going and being submissive to the government and saying, “Here. I cannot do that. Put me in jail. And I will do good deeds while I’m in jail.”,”

“Now that’s your ministry.” The ministry is suffering, and while you’re suffering, doing good in the midst of your suffering. That’s the ministry. The ministry is not rejecting and burning your draft card. The ministry is going to jail, and suffering the consequences. When there is no creative alternative, you do good while you’re in jail. There’s your ministry. That’s the demonstration of being submissive and entrusting yourself to God. Yes, Ted?

Ted: I think probably that the greatest example of civil disobedience in our era was Martin Luther King.

Bruce: Absolutely.

Ted: And that of the folks who went and sat at the lunch counter, with the civil rights movement in the 1960s. He did go to jail.

Bruce: He did. Remember, you don’t do this to get out from under the consequences. What’s the reason for it? “Be subject to all authorities for the Lord’s sake.” That’s the motive. It’s for the Lord’s sake. It’s not for my well being. That’s why you do it. That’s how you come under the protection of.

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The key thing that I want us to understand today, men, is this. Do you understand the difference between submission to authority and entrusting that act of submission to a holy, sovereign God? You and I entrust that to God. That’s how you and I are protected. That’s how we are protected.

We’ll pick this up next week, when we talk about being submissive as workers, as coworkers and managers, how we do the same thing. But the principle here is this. Line yourself up under the authority of God for your own protection. That is what submission means. Yes, please?

Participant: I still have one question, and I don’t remember the verse that Dale read before, but it began with “let every soul.” Do they use that word “soul” as a personage, or were they talking to the spirits? I’m not really sure.

Bruce: Well, it depends on the context. It’s both/and. It depends on the context in which the verse is found. Sometimes the soul means a person. Sometimes it means your inner being. Any questions on that? Do you understand the difference between submission and entrusting?

Now let me read this. This is a summary statement for us. Back to 1 Peter. Here’s our model. I can give you all kinds of creative models, but the best ones always come from Scripture. And here is the best model we have.

“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.”

That’s our example, brothers, and we do that. We submit to human authority, for the Lord’s sake.

Let’s pray. Lord, help us in our misunderstanding. We desire to live godly lives, and do it for the Lord’s sake. But we live in a world that is anti-Christ. And Father, just help us discern, with Your Holy Spirit’s guidance, that which is true. Give us the means of entrusting ourselves to you, a holy God, who is sovereign and has the right to rule. And we do that for our own protection. May it be so, for Jesus’ sake. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen.”