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Called To Patient Endurance

1 PETER 2:18-25

Introduction

1. I believe that all of us are born with an inner sense of fairness.
2. At a very young age our children are quick to let us know if they think something isn't fair.
3. Our natural tendency is to fight back against unfair treatment.
4. How do you respond when you are treated unfairly by your supervisor or employer?
 - a. Do you complain, get angry and blow up?
 - b. Do you vow to get even and make him or her regret treating you as they have?
 - c. Do you throw in the towel and walk off the job?
5. In our text this morning Peter addresses this very issue to a group of Christians in Asia Minor he calls "servants," "slaves."
6. The word he uses is not the typical word for slave (*duolos*), but *oiketes*, which generally refers to a household servant.
8. In Peter's day there were some 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.
9. However, these slaves were not like the ones we think of here in our country prior to the Civil War.
10. Many of these slaves held positions of responsibility within their household: doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, secretaries.
11. They were normally paid for their services and could expect to eventually purchase their freedom.
12. For this reason, what Peter says to these Christians is more in keeping with an employee and his relationship to his employer or his supervisor.

13. Let's look and see what he has to say about the way we respond to those who are dishonest and unscrupulous.

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I. Yield To Those Who Are Over Us

A. EVEN THE UNJUST

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.” (1 Peter 2:18, NASB95)

1. Not only are we to submit to those employers or supervisors who are “good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”
2. It is easier to submit to those who are “good and gentle,” but it is much more difficult to do so with those who are “unreasonable.”
 - a. The word which Peter uses here is *skolios*, which literally means ‘crooked.’
 - b. It is the same word from which we get scoliosis — a lateral curvature of the spine.
 - b. *Skolios* refers to a person who is “unjust,” ESV; “harsh,” NKJV, NIV; “cruel, HCSB.
3. Peter is making a contrast between two kinds of “masters” (i.e., employers, supervisors) — the best and the worst.
 - a. The “good and gentle” on one hand.
 - b. The “crooked” or “perverse” on the other.
4. Not only are we to submit to such individuals, we are to do so with “all respect” (*phobos*, lit. “fear”).

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B. BE MINDFUL OF GOD

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.” (1 Peter 2:19, NASB95)

“For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.” (1 Peter 2:19, ESV)

1. What makes it possible for us to patiently bear up under unjust suffering?
2. It is our conscious awareness of God’s presence. We are “mindful of God.”
3. Our respectful submission to undeserved suffering “finds favor” (lit. “grace”) with God because such behavior demonstrates His grace.
4. To put it another way, we find “favor” (grace) with God because we show “grace” (favor) toward our unjust boss.
 - a. We are treating them the same way we want them to treat us (Matthew 7:12).
 - b. Thus, we receive grace because we extend grace.
5. When we respond in this way, we are imitating our heavenly Father (Luke 6:35).

“He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men” (Luke 6:35, NASB95).
6. There is another reason we can respond to such injustice without resentment or rebelliousness.
7. Peter brought it out back in verse 15, “such is the will of God that by doing right (good) you may silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Peter 2:15).
 - a. When you and I keep doing good, we show ourselves to be different from the world.
 - b. How do most people react when mistreated by those who have authority over them?
 - c. They complain, retaliate, bring lawsuits, steal or something else.
 - d. However, by doing good, we silence foolish people and ultimately bring

them to glorify God, either in this life or at the judgment.

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C. SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.” (1 Peter 2:20, NASB95)

1. There is an exception to all of this which we must not miss — if we are to experience suffering, let it be because we are doing good and not sin.
2. None of us should expect any praise or credit from God for our patient endurance of harsh treatment as the result of wrong doing on our part.
3. How many of us have known of someone who did wrong and was punished for it, but who claimed they were being mistreated.
4. Remember the two thieves who were crucified on either side of Jesus?
 - a. One was hurling abuse at Jesus and saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39, NASB95).
 - b. The other rebuked him and said, “we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41, NASB95).
5. Peter says that if you and I are to “patiently endure” suffering, it should be for doing “what is right” (v. 20).
6. Such a response will come as a surprise to those who caused our suffering.

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II. Look To Christ As Your Example

A. YOU AND I HAVE BEEN CALLED TO EMULATE CHRIST

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,” (1 Peter 2:21, NASB95).

1. God has called us to patiently endure our unjust suffering because it will bring us to spiritual maturity and it finds favor with God (v. 20).
2. This runs counter to a mindset which constantly asks "what's in it for me?"
3. It also rebuts a "health, wealth" gospel which teaches all of life is roses and good fortune after our conversion.
4. Like our Lord, we will experience tribulation in this world because of our decision to follow Christ:

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;" (Romans 5:3-4, NASB95)

"For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake," (Philippians 1:29, NASB95)

5. Christ's obedience to His Father throughout His unjust suffering has left us an example of the kind of life that is pleasing in God's sight.

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B. HE COMMITTED NO SIN

"who committed no sin . . ." (1 Peter 2:22a, NASB95)

1. Paul said that Jesus "knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21).
2. Hebrews 4:15 states that Jesus was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."
3. In 1 John 3:5, the apostle John stated plainly, "in Him there is no sin."
4. God's desire for us is that we live a perfectly sinless life, even when we face the most difficult circumstances.
5. Will we be successful in doing so? No, but we should try nonetheless, because we are trying to emulate our Lord.
6. Even though we may find ourselves suffering at the hands of an unjust employer, one thing they should be able to recognize about us is that we always strive to do what is right.

Slide 7**C. NO DECEIT WAS FOUND IN HIS MOUTH**

“nor was any deceit found in His mouth;” (1 Peter 2:22b, NASB95)

1. In the beginning of his gospel, the apostle John, said that Jesus was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).
2. Jesus called Himself “the truth” (John 14:6).
3. If we are to emulate Jesus, we must be known as people who speak the truth (Ephesians 4:25).

“Therefore, laying aside all falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25).

4. Not only should we be known for speaking the truth, but for doing so in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Slide 8**D. HE DID NOT RETALIATE**

“and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats . . .” (1 Peter 2:23a, NASB95)

1. As Peter was writing these words, he, no doubt, was thinking about something the prophet Isaiah had written over 700 years earlier (Isaiah 53:7).

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.”

(Isaiah 53:7, NASB95)

2. In 3:8-9, Peter describes a life that avoids retaliation:

“To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:8–9, NASB95)

3. Not only are you and I to avoid getting even or insulting the one who has insulted us, we are to bless his or her life.
4. The result will be God’s blessing in our own lives.

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E. HE ENTRUSTED HIMSELF TO GOD

“. . . but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;” (1 Peter 2:23b, NASB95)

1. Entrusting Himself into His Father’s care was the attitude we see throughout Jesus’ life here on earth.
2. It was powerfully displayed on at least two occasions:
 - a. In the Garden of Gethsemane as He was praying to His Father (Luke 22:42).

“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42, NASB95).

- b. On the Cross (Luke 23:46)

“And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” (Luke 23:46, NASB95)

Conclusion

1. On the cross, Jesus, Himself “bore our sins in His body.” Why?
2. So that you and I “might die to sin and live to righteousness.”

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3. Through His own wounds, He heals us. Listen to Isaiah's description (Isaiah 53:5).

“But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.”

(Isaiah 53:5, NASB95)

4. Though you and I “were continually straying like sheep,” through Jesus' sacrifice we have been able to return to “the Shepherd and Guardian of [our] souls” (1 Peter 2:25).
5. The world, as a whole, will never appreciate or applaud us for our faithfulness to Christ.
6. Unless we understand that it is God's praise rather than man's we are seeking, we will find ourselves becoming discouraged and turning away from God's will for our lives.
7. You and I belong to Christ. Our citizenship is in heaven.
8. When we are called by Him to make sacrifices or endure hardships, it is the knowledge we are His special people that gives us something to hold on to.