

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

THE FOREGINERS | FOREGIN REQUEST

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Well, it's good to be with everybody today. And if you have a Bible or Bible app go ahead and turn to or power on to 1 Peter, chapter 2. 1 Peter 2.

We are roughly about halfway through this series that we've been walking through together this fall. So if you are brand-new to our church family, we are just walking verse by verse, chapter by chapter through this epistle in the New Testament, which is really just a letter, called 1 Peter.

As you are turning there and kind of getting settled in, guys, I just want you to know that it's two weeks away—our Men's Night. Anybody excited about Men's Night? Alright. Yeah. October 28, it's a Friday night, from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

I'm praying that we'll have close to 2,000 men in this room. This is not just for men in our church, this is for men across our city. So make those last-minute invites. I promise you we're going to have a ton of fun together.

When we get together we're going to have some really good food, there are going to be some cool cars on the campus, but most importantly, here's what I'm praying for. I'm praying that there will be a group of men gathered in this room and that God would speak and capture their hearts and they would never stay the same.

You get that many guys in a room together and if God shows up, anything can happen. So can I ask you guys, use the standard QR code and sign up if you haven't already and invite that last-minute friend to come with you?

And ladies, could I just ask you to join us between now and then to be praying and maybe even that evening, Friday night, from 5 to 11 p.m. would you just be praying that God would move in the lives of these guys? You change 2,000 men's hearts, man, something dramatic will really happen. So we're looking forward to that.

Today we are continuing on in this series called *The Foreigners*.

You know, several years ago I was on an international flight headed back to Indianapolis that did not go well. Any of you ever been on that flight? So we lined up at the gate and we're ready to board and they come on and they say the dreaded words that you just never want to hear right when you're getting ready to board the plane, "This flight is delayed." So we all go and sit down.



And then they come back on, and they say, “Hey, we’re having some mechanical issues with the flight and this plane isn’t going to be able to take off. But don’t worry, we’re going to get you on the backup plane,” which does not instill a lot of confidence. I don’t know, any time I watch the Indy 500 that backup car is never as good.

“We’ve got to put you on a bus and we’re going to take you to the far side of the tarmac where the backup plane is parked,” you know in the back 40 somewhere. I don’t know when this plane last flew.

So we get on the bus, we’re headed across the tarmac and I’m not even exaggerating this, another plane is coming in on approach, so we stop so the plane can land. It lands and then it catches on fire right in front of our bus. So we’re all sitting there on the tarmac. We can’t go forward because there is a burning plane in front of us. Thankfully, nobody was hurt. Nothing blew up. Fire trucks came to put it out.

We were on the bus for about 45 additional minutes. Then we navigate around the burned plane to our backup plane. Alright? So we get on the plane, and we get up in the air and immediately the guy in front of me lowers the seat back like really fast. I’m all cramped. I’ve got three inches of space.

So I decide to lower my seat back to give myself a little bit of room. And the guy behind me pushes the seat back up. He stops me from lowering it. And then he hits my seat two times—boom, boom—as if to say, “Don’t try to lower your seat.”

And I was like, “Man, this isn’t going to fly.” So I stand up and I’m going to confront this guy. I stand up and I turn around and that’s when I laid eyes on him for the very first time. He was a very large individual.

I quickly aborted that plan and went to plan B. And plan B was to stretch and pretend like I had to go to the bathroom. That’s what that was. Alright? We eventually made it back to Indy, but it wasn’t a very comfortable flight.

My guess is that you’ve been on that flight. And it reminds me of something that author Max Lucado said one time. He said, “Our attitude toward living in this world ought to be very similar to that of being a passenger on a plane.” The plane isn’t the destination. The plane is taking us to one.

So when the plane lands, nobody ever sits in the seats and goes, “Oh, man. Do we have to get off? Can’t I just sit here in this little seat and eat my little pretzels and drink my ginger ale forever? No. As soon as the plane lands, we can’t wait to get off of the plane.

Now, the plane ride is necessary. The plane ride can sometimes be enjoyable depending upon what in-flight movies are being shown, but it’s oftentimes uncomfortable and cramped. It’s not the destination. It is taking us to one.

This is what is on Peter's mind as he writes this short letter to a group of Christians (they were oftentimes referred to as "the Christ ones") within the Roman Empire. And he says, "Hey, listen. Don't get too comfortable in that seat because you're not going to occupy it forever.

And, in fact, a letter like 1 Peter, and specifically what we're going to cover today and next week, will not make sense unless we understand that we've got to live this life and read this text in view of eternity.

Now I'm going to keep coming back to that phrase. As believers, we don't just live our lives with the circumstances we see right in front of us. Now, are they important? Yes. Are they everything? No.

So the way I spend my time isn't just in what I can see in front of me. It's in view of eternity. The way that I treat other people is in view of eternity. The way that I handle my finances is in view of eternity.

So Peter is writing to this group of Christians, and he calls them foreigners right out of gate in chapter 1. Another word for that can be exiles. And he says, "Don't get too comfortable in this world. You are destined for eternity."

Now, that's Peter's thesis. That's why he writes the letter. So we know that it's just going to be a matter of time before he's going to write some things that sound very foreign to our ears.

Much of what Peter is going to write—I just want to kind of ask you to buckle up right now, because much of what he is going to say in our passage today, I'm just telling you, is going to run against the grain of how you and I have been conditioned to think within the current cultural context in which we live.

In fact, I'm just going to go ahead and say it. I'm going to read some things out of 1 Peter and likely you're going to have an emotional reaction to it. And can I just say this? That's okay. That's okay. We shouldn't expect the Bible to just say or to agree with us on every single point. The Bible is, as it's described, living and active and it penetrates.

So there are going to be some things which we're going to read, and they are going to be so encouraging to us. There are going to be other things that we read, and they are going to bring appropriate conviction into our lives.

Here's what I want to ask you. When I read something here in a few minutes and you get a little bit of an emotional reaction, can you just stop for just a minute and just get really curious about that. Just say, "God, what is it that You're trying to say? Why is this in Your Word?"

Right before I was getting ready to leave the house today... I get up early on Sunday morning, like 5:30 and get ready and then I just spend the rest of the morning praying

and going over my notes. And then when I'm done I go into the bedroom, and I tell my wife goodbye.

And she was in our little sitting area in our bedroom, and she was drinking her coffee and doing her morning devotions and I said goodbye to her, and she said, she always asks me, "How do you feel about the message today?"

And I said, "Well, it's going to be a tricky passage. This is going to be tricky to walk through." And she goes, "What do you mean?" And I go, "Well, we're covering 1 Peter chapter 2 and 3 where Peter is going to urge us to submit to government, unjust masters, and spouses. What could go wrong?"

So that's where we are going today. And you're going to see, right out of the gate, Peter just goes there. Look at verse 13 of chapter 2 with me. He says:

"For the," whose sake? Yeah, *"... the Lord's sake,"* remember that. He says, *"For the Lord's sake,"* and once again, we are living our lives for an audience of One. He's writing to believers. You live your life in view of eternity.

And so it is for God's sake that you, *"submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right."* 1 Peter 2:13-14 (NLT)

So right out of the gate, Peter drops the "S" word. The other "S" word: *submit*. Although in some of your minds you don't see much difference between the two.

And I'm just guessing that with that word (we haven't even gotten into the application of it yet) there is already a little bit of an emotional reaction within you. And, by the way, that emotional reaction could be totally legit.

Maybe you grew up in a church setting that was highly legalistic, there was no grace, and it was actually somewhat abusive. So this word was used to weaponize against you.

Maybe you've had some sort of experience with a person who used this word in such a way that it was never intended to be used.

What I want to bring you back to is, once again, the context in which Peter is writing this. Remember on week one I said that the first rule of effective Bible study is when you read a passage you have to first ask who was this originally written to and what was the application for them then? Once we clarify that application then we can make application for us today.

Peter was writing to a group of Christians and society had turned on them. Peter was writing to a group of Christians who would have faced all kinds of unfairness and injustice at every single corner.

And he says that the way that the world lives is to retaliate. The way that the world lives is to defend. And he says, "What I want you to do is I want you to let God be your audience. For the Lord's sake, live your life in view of eternity." Actually, "Live your life so differently that it stands out to others."

So Peter—to really grasp the weight of what he has just said and what he's getting ready to say.... Understand that Peter writes this letter from Rome, in AD 62 or 63, when a really, really corrupt leader by the name of Nero was in power.

Now Nero had all kinds of things that he did that were so corrupt. But one of the first things that Nero had done is he really sort of loses his mind. There was this mysterious fire that broke out in Rome, and it destroyed much of Rome.

We don't really know who exactly started the fire. Many believe it was Nero himself. We don't know for sure. But what we do know for sure is that Nero blamed the Christians for it.

Because of that they were incredibly unpopular, and they were being mistreated in every sphere of society. And it is within that context that Peter just wrote that they must submit to all human authority.

I think that the reason why this feels like such a foreign request is because:

Submission feels unnatural.

Doesn't it? It just feels unnatural. It's not my first impulse.

Several years ago—at the risk of you thinking less of me, I just want to be really vulnerable—I pulled into Costco to get gas at the Costco gas station. And those of you who have ever done that, you know that it is all one-way traffic through the pumps.

So, you've got to get in the right lane where it matches up to your gas cap. I didn't know that. It was one of the first times I'd used it. So I automatically got in the shortest line, which you naturally do, or at least those who are rushed and driven like I am.

I get in the lane, and I get up to the pump and I had pulled into the wrong lane. It was a right-sided gas pump, but my gas cap is on the left side of my truck. So I thought, "Well, no sweat. I'll just flip a U-turn. So I flipped a U-turn where I was headed in a different direction of traffic.

I get out and I'm pumping the gas and a man comes out of this little booth out of nowhere, I don't know where he was, and he's got this yellow neon jacket on, and he comes up and he's like, "Sir." And I just pretended like I didn't hear him. And he comes up and he's like, "Sir, do you see those arrows?" And I pretended like I didn't see them.

I'm almost finished getting the gas pumped. I'm just trying to get there before he forces me to move. He comes up and he goes, "Sir, you need to stop right now and get in your truck and move. You're facing the wrong direction."

Now, here's what I said. I'm actually telling you but I'm not recommending this, this is not one of my finer moments. Alright? Here's what I said. This is honestly what was in my heart. I looked at him and I said, "Hey. It will be okay, big guy." That's what I said.

I'm just guessing that first service is where all of the rule followers attend because I gave that illustration and they were like, "Oh..."

Either, right now, you're going, "That's why you're my pastor. I love you so much." Or others of you are going, "We're finding a different church, Martha." That's what is going on.

I'm wondering. Is that within any of you? Like me? Please say yes so I won't feel so alone. Yeah, here's where all of the rebels are. If the speed limit is 70, you're just naturally going to go 75. Right? You're happy to follow the rules just as long as the rules make sense. But for the rest of you rule followers, and I know, I'm married to one....

Challenging authority, that just kind of comes naturally. Peter writes this and this is so foreign to our ears, "Peter, why would I ever do that?"

I think it's important to understand that:

Biblical submission is unforced.

Biblical submission is, what we might say, unforced. Another word for that would be it's voluntary. This should come from a willing spirit because for whose sake are we doing it? God's. Yeah, the Lord's.

The word *submit* here is in the middle voice. It literally means to place yourself there. You do it. You place yourself in submission. Nobody can demand it of you. Nobody can force it. If somebody has to stronghold you into submission, that is not submission.

What's happening here is that Peter is giving a group of Christians who had had all of their freedom stripped away, all of their decision-making opportunities taken away—he's allowing them to make the decision to place themselves in submission.

Now, he knows this is going to be a difficult pill to swallow, not only for them but even especially for us today. So he follows it with a really compelling motivation. Look at verse 13. He says:

"For the Lord's sake..." as we've already covered. You submit. In other words, submission, as a believer, to the guy in the yellow jacket at the Costco gas station is not dependent upon him being right or even rational. I'm doing it to please my heavenly Father.

And, honestly, that day I did not. It was one of those things where this conviction in my spirit said, “What was that within me?”

I don’t know that I could fully grasp this until I became a father of children who are now growing into young adults. My son is a second-year college student. He’s a student at Missouri Southern State University—our hometown. So he’s actually going to school where Lindsay and I grew up.

Now, here’s the thing that I wasn’t anticipating, nor was it the thing that he was anticipating. I have eyes all over that town. In fact, he’s been gone for two months, and I’ve already received a couple of text messages from people who I grew up with who have run into my son.

They met him at church or a football game. They texted me, and that’s always a little bit nerve-racking when you get a text from somebody who’s talking to you about your kid. But I’ve gotten these text messages and they said this, “Ah, man. We met your son last night. Man, he’s so respectful. He’s so kind. He was so engaging. You and Lindsay have done such a great job raising him.” And I’ve got to tell you, as his dad living 500 miles away, that just honored me.

This is what Peter is driving at. He says the point isn’t the unjust human authority that you’re submitting to. The point is that when you do that, here’s the word, you are showing the security of your identity as a child of God. You are absolutely living with Him as your audience.

You’re like, “Well, it’s unfair.” Yeah. You’re right. In fact, Peter is going to drive at this. He’s going to say, “Yeah, Jesus was treated unfairly. Jesus was treated with a fair amount of injustice. And yet He still submitted Himself.”

Peter goes on in verse 15 to explain biblical submission. Here’s the second thing:

Submission magnifies our impact.

It magnifies the impact that we have. Look at verse 15:

“It is God’s will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. For you are free, yet you are God’s slaves, so don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.” 1 Peter 2:15-16 (NLT)

So what was happening is that these Christians living in Rome had all kinds of false things said about them. So they were accused of setting fire to Rome. Not true. They were accused of cannibalism. The reason why is because non-believers heard them talking about taking communion, which was drinking the blood and eating the flesh of Jesus. So they were cannibals. They were accusing them of that.

They accused them of incest because they heard them talk to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. That’s crazy, but that’s what they were accused of. They were

initially accused of atheism because they didn't worship Caesar or any of the Roman gods. They were being canceled before canceled culture was a thing.

And it brings up this really important question for all of us: What do you do, what's your natural reaction when somebody lies about you, when somebody says something that isn't true about who you are?

I don't know about you, but I get defensive. I try to stand up for myself. I try to push back. And oftentimes I try to discredit them. And usually, most of the time, it does no good.

Here's what Peter is saying. He's saying, "Let God fight your battles for you."

Then Peter comes along and he says something just dramatically different from how you would have been conditioned in our culture. He says, "Listen, man. Live your life in view of eternity."

Now after laying out this difficult command, for the rest of the chapter and on into chapter 3 he's going to lay out the difficult applications of this principle. How does this play out in the lives of everyday Christ followers? Look at what he says in verse 17:

"Respect everyone, and love the family of believers." Which would be the church family you're connected to. *"Fear God, and respect the king."*

I've just got to ask: how much different would our culture be right now, if, as believers, we could just apply that one sentence, just that one sentence?

So the first application of submission he writes is to:

The Government

Or to governing authorities. Now this would have been as unpopular to say then as it is today. But it's important to understand that as Peter writes this, he would not have approved of or endorsed the vast majority of what the governing authorities of his day did.

If they would have had free elections, which they did not—they were not in an environment of a democracy, they were in a dictatorship—Peter wouldn't have voted for any of the Caesars. If you think we have reasons to complain about our political leaders, Peter had more. Alright?

Let me just give you a rap sheet list of what the governing authorities of the day did. Nero was the guy who was in office at the time and he, as well as the two Caesars before him, all rode the crazy train to cuckoo town.

The first would have been a guy by the name of Caligula. So Caligula was king, the reigning ruler of the day, before Nero. And shortly after becoming Caesar he had his

mom and his brothers killed to make sure that they never challenged his right to the throne.

He openly committed incest with three of his sisters. He frequently cross-dressed and went out in public. He installed his favorite horse as a senator, and then promoted him later to consul.

Caligula once got mad at the weather and declared war on the false god of Neptune. He had the heads of statues of deities removed and replaced with his own face. That's who he was.

After him you had a guy by the name of Claudius who was a hair less crazy than Caligula, but he was every bit as cruel. And then he handed the throne over to Nero. Now, when I say handed the throne over, I do not mean that he got voted into office. I mean that Nero's mom had Claudius killed in his sleep so that her baby boy could become king. How sweet.

And then you have Nero who was so corrupt toward Christians, and it is within this dumpster fire of government that Peter writes to them and says, "Hey, submit to governing authorities."

Now, what does that mean? Well, Peter says earlier in the text that what the government should do is they should punish the wrong and commend what was right. And neither one of those things were happening.

First of all, let me say this. Is there ever a time, as a Christian, when we should defy authority? And if we just answer that from Scripture itself, we can say yes.

There are several different examples of this in the Old Testament. When Pharaoh told the Hebrew midwives to kill all of the newborn baby boys, they defied that. They refused.

As you know (we just came through a series in Daniel) Daniel and his friends disregarded government orders when the king commanded them to stop praying to the one true God and worship false idols.

In the book of Acts we even read that Peter, himself, didn't always submit to the government. Peter was told that he could no longer speak about Jesus. He was no longer able to share his faith and try to convert people. And Peter's response to the authorities in Acts, chapter 4, was that he said, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." And in chapter 5 he says, "We must obey God rather than men." So, yes, there is biblical precedent for this.

Now, we are blessed today to live in an imperfect democracy, not a dictatorship. And part of what that means is that as good citizens we vote with conviction and pray for

our elected officials who are in office and hold them accountable. However, there is a way for us to do this that honors God.

So what does this look like? Once again, this is where many times, as Christ followers, we're watching too much daytime news TV and we get all spun up and we lash out in anger, fear, and anxiety. That's an indicator that we are no longer living with eternity in view. That's an indicator that we've lost our confidence in a Sovereign God who is ruler and reigns over temporary earthly authorities.

This doesn't mean that we shouldn't be concerned. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't pray. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't be involved. What it does mean is that we refuse to become angry or anxious over political rulers.

Peter knows that the best way to change the world is not through political rebellion. And the perfect example of this is Jesus, Himself. Jesus knew a thing or two about changing the world and it jumps out at me that Jesus lived in an unjust and unrighteous government setting, yet we do not have a single record of Him attacking the government of His day. He never led a protest. He never led a civil rebellion.

In fact, He had a chance to lead one one time when they came to Him and they said, "What should we give to Caesar? Tell us what you would do." And He goes, "Pay to Caesar what is Caesar's. Give to God what is God's."

He never spoke up about the injustice of His own trial. He only spoke of the kingdom of God.

In fact, they wanted to make Jesus king. They wanted Jesus to run for office. In John, chapter 6, there was a political group called the Zealots and they wanted Jesus to overthrow the oppressive government of His day. But He refused.

He seemed to understand that government and politics, as important as they are, are limited. Instead He chose a different way to make an impact, to proclaim the kingdom of God. This is what Peter is talking about.

The next application that Peter drives at is to submit within:

The Workplace

Look at verse 18. It goes:

"You who are slaves," once again there's going to be an emotional reaction to when we hear that word. Hold on to that. I'm going to circle back around.

It goes, *"You who are slaves must submit to your masters with all respect. Do what they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are cruel. For God is pleased when, conscious of his will, you patiently endure unjust treatment."*

"Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you." 1 Peter 2:18-20 (NLT)

The first thing that I would say right out of the gate with this passage is that Peter is not advocating slavery. The reason why I can say that is because he speaks directly against it in 1 Timothy, chapter 1. We can go to the Old Testament, and it speaks against it there as well in Exodus, chapter 21.

We read a passage like this, this is where a good rule of Bible study is so important, we've got to read it within its context and what it would have meant to them first before we make application for us today.

We read this on this side of history and with America's history with slavery and immediately we think about that. In the first century, Peter is not saying that slavery is right, but it was different in the sense that this was more closely associated with a work environment.

With slaves or servants in that day race played no role, education was encouraged, they could own property, many of them eventually obtained their own freedom. Many actually chose to stay with their masters because they were so well treated.

So the application for us today is simply this. Any of you in a work environment where your boss is unfair? Any of you in a work environment where you are like, "Man, this is just an impossible situation for me to navigate?" And Peter would say you are first a Christian so do your job with God as your audience.

I remember my very, very first job between my eighth and ninth grade year of high school. I got a summer job at a trucking company. It was one of my dad's friends who owned the business. And I would show up there at six in the morning every morning that summer to break freight.

What that means is I would go onto the loading dock. All the semis would pull up. I would unload all of the semi-trucks, reorganize them, and then reload them so that way they could deliver their freight where they were going for that day. It was hard work and a hot job.

My boss had a temper. I remember one day he was on the phone in his office. He was having a conversation and I could tell he was not excited about having it. And he was watching me through the little window in his office as I was working. I could just feel his eyes on me.

I was trying to unload a pallet of yard lamps that were all shrink wrapped together. And I was having a hard time with it. I couldn't get it maneuvered by myself.

So he hangs up and walks out of his office and he comes right toward me, pushes me out of the way, “Move.” And he picks the thing up in the air and then he threw it on the ground. It shattered all of the yard lamps.

And then he did this. He went, “Phew.” You could tell it was a relief for him. And then he goes, “Clean it up.” And I remember thinking right then and there, “I need to stay in school.” That’s what I needed. Alright? An important lesson.

Maybe you’ve got a worse example than that. Maybe you work for a boss who is corrupt. Maybe he is abusive in some way. Here’s the thing. Peter says, “The first place that you begin is to recognize your identity as a Christ follower.”

That doesn’t mean that you subject yourself to abuse over and over again. That doesn’t mean that you stay silent in the face of injustice. What this means is that you are viewing your job with eternity in mind. And you’re recognizing that the call to Christ is a call to be on mission with Him. Just like Daniel in Babylon.

God loves that boss. God loves those co-workers. And quite possibly He’s placed you in that really difficult environment for you to provide a different example from everything that they see everywhere else in the world.

This is tough to apply. But this is the idea where we need His Spirit helping us, “God, I want to conduct myself in the face of this kind of unfairness and injustice in a way that brings honor to You and makes other people stop and say, ‘What is it that is so different about you?’”

Peter knows that this is not going to be easy to hear or to apply. And so once again he follows it with a compelling motivation. Look at verse 21. Here’s why you should do this:

“For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps.” 1 Peter 2:21 (NLT)

What that means is, when this becomes incredibly difficult to do—and it will be—you and I do not do this in our own power. We keep our eyes fixed on Jesus who gave us this example.

Jesus was not thrilled about going to a cross. In fact, He asked God, “God, if there is any other way, show Me what it is.” But He submitted to the will of the Father.

His trial was illegal. It should have never happened to begin with. The accusations made against Him were blatant lies. He suffered unjustly.

He was willing to become a foreigner in this world so that you and I could become citizens in heaven. Jesus was willing to leave home so you and I could come home. Jesus was willing to be called stranger in this world so that you and I could be called a friend of God. He was willing to be forsaken by His Father so that we could be accepted by Him. He is our example. He is our example.

So Peter starts with government, and he goes to a corrupt workplace. Then he's going to finish it off:

Within Marriage

Now I want to read these next verses in the ESV because I think it brings some real clarity to this. It says this:

"Likewise," meaning this is a continuation of the application. *"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands,"* now notice he did not say, "Women be subject to men." He didn't say that.

He said, *"... wives, be subject to your own husband so that even if some do not obey the word,"* non-believing, inactive Christians who they may be married to, he says this, *"they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct."* 1 Peter 3:1-2 (ESV)

Once again, maybe there is an emotional reaction that rises up. Maybe for good reason. Maybe you've got a bunch of questions as we read that passage. Maybe here's the first one. Why are the wives mentioned first? Now, Peter's going to mention the guys, so guys buckle up. When he does, buckle up. Alright? Why does he start with the wives first?

I think that there is just a very practical reason why he does. In the first century church the majority of that church would have been made up of women who were coming without their husbands.

There is actually not a lot that has changed. Roughly 60 to 65 percent of those who are engaged in our church are women. Not all of them come without their husbands. I'm not trying to stir this up. I know that there are some husbands who come here without their wives. I'm just saying the vast majority in this first century church would have been women.

Here's the context for them. Many of you know this. Within the Greek civilization it was really tough being a woman. They were treated like property. They didn't have a say in court. Their very livelihood was connected to being married to a man. And if they would have been left, they would have been divorced, it put them at significant financial risk.

Now here's what was happening in the first century church. There were married couples who, when they got married, neither one of them were Christians. And then she gives her life to Christ.

And now all of a sudden the husband is going, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait a second. I didn't marry a Christian. This is a bait and switch." And for many of them they saw this as reason enough to divorce their wives and leave them.

So understand this. For a woman to become a Christian after she was already married, that was a significant risk. And many of these ladies, God had captured their hearts and changed their lives and that was a risk they were willing to take.

Now, they found themselves in this unfair environment of a marriage, in which, quite possibly, their husbands were being stubborn and mean spirited. And Peter says to them in the face of this, "Be subject to your unbelieving husband. Submit to him."

What does he not say? He does not say, "Your husband is superior, and you are inferior." He does not say that. He doesn't say, "Your husband is president, and you are vice-president." He doesn't say that. He doesn't say, "Your husband is Batman, and you are Robin." That's not what he says.

He says, "Voluntarily, you don't have to do this, voluntarily submit to him, be subject to him." Why? So that he might be won. So that God might get ahold of his heart.

In my own life, the person who has the most influence over me more than anybody else is my wife. God speaks through her. And this is this idea where he's saying, "Hey, ladies, without even maybe a word from you, the way that you are living your life..." keep in mind what he just said about government and the workplace, "the way that you are living your life would quite possibly stop him in his tracks, 'There is something different about you,' even if he doesn't acknowledge it at first."

What's happening is you are propping him up to get a view of God that he would never get by any sermon. I love what Beth Moore says about submission. Here's how she defines it, "Submission is ducking so that God can punch my husband!"

I love that.

Some of you might know Phil and Mary Jo Wright. They have been in our church for decades. Just a dearly loved couple in our church.

Phil has been on our staff for years and years and years. He served as an elder for a while. Mary Jo has been involved in our worship ministry going all of the way back into the 1970s.

And right after I got to Traders Point I remember talking to them. And Phil was telling me a story. Phil is just like a giant in the faith. He and Mary Jo were married several decades ago. They had young kids at home. And Mary Jo gave her life to Christ. She started coming to Traders Point.

Phil was not only a non-believer, Phil was an adamant atheist. He was very smart, and very antagonistic. He had a sharp wit about him.

He was working as a brick mason during the day and he was really annoyed that Mary Jo had become a Christian and that she was so involved in the church. In fact, she

joined the choir. So she was singing on Sundays and then she was going to choir practice an evening during the week.

And Phil was so annoyed when he would come home from a long day at work and she was gone, she was at choir practice, and he was there with the kids trying to get dinner ready and all of that kind of stuff.

And he was like, "You know what?" It was causing arguments between the two of them. And he told me, he said, "Aaron, I got to this place where I was going to come home and demand that she quit the choir because I didn't want her out anymore."

So he goes, "I went home fully prepared to have that argument with her." And he said, he walked in the door one evening and she was already home. He was expecting her to be gone.

She was in the kitchen, and he walked up behind her, and he said, "Hey, I thought you were going to be gone." And she turned around and he said, "Her whole disposition was so Christ-like. She wasn't aggressive. She wasn't passive aggressive. She wasn't angry."

He just said, "She turned around and she looked me right in the eye and she said, 'Phil, I love you more than anything else. And I've decided that I'm going to step away from the choir because it is creating too much tension between us.' She goes, 'I love Jesus, but I love you too and I'm willing to make this sacrifice.'"

He said to me, "Aaron. It wasn't any sermon. It wasn't any argument. It wasn't apologetics that got ahold of my heart." He goes, "That was the precise moment that Jesus began to get ahold of my heart and I thought, 'Something about this is real.'"

This is what Peter is talking about. And with that said, I know for a fact that there are a number of ladies who are listening to this right now and that encourages you.

And for some of you that discourages you because you are like, "Aaron, I've been doing this. For years I've been praying for my husband, my non-believing husband." Or maybe, "My husband believes but he's inactive, he's not really following after God. And I've tried to submit to him. I've tried to keep his interests in mind. But he's just so stubborn."

And Peter acknowledges that as well in verse 1, it says, "Even if he refuses to obey."

And here's the thing, ladies. Men, I'm speaking as one, we're proud. So even if you're impacting us, we may not let you know it right away. Peter says, "You continue to set an example."

I realize that others of you, maybe you are asking, "Well, wait a second, what about an abusive, angry husband? Should I submit to him?" Can I just say this very clearly. No.

Remember what I said earlier. This is a voluntary thing. You don't have to do this. If he is doing something illegal, harmful, or destructive there is nothing here that says that you

need to subject yourself to that. You don't need to subject yourself to physical, mental, psychological, or sexual abuse.

It does not mean that you can't make decisions or express your feelings within a marriage. And any man who tells you otherwise is simply misreading the text.

And Peter realizes that there are going to be some selfish, narcissistic boys disguised as men who will hear this and use it as justification to continue their destructive behavior toward their wives. So he addresses that in verse 7:

"In the same way, you husbands must," actually this is not voluntary. He just lays out a flat-out command. He goes, *"... you must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are,"* all that means is you likely outweigh her in physical stature, *"but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."* 1 Peter 3:7 (NLT)

If that sounds like a threat, it's because it's a threat. Listen. He says in other words, "Men. Do not expect God to listen to you if you are mistreating or manipulating your wife. Do not expect your wife to submit to you unless are submitting yourself to Jesus."

It is unfortunate that this is such a minefield of a passage today. I don't think it needs to be. If we had more husbands leading like Jesus by honoring His sacrifice for their wives, I don't think we'd have any problem with this passage.

I didn't think I would get very many claps for that. Hey, I'm almost done. I'm almost done.

Peter finished up the passage by addressing all Christians collectively. Here is where he lands the plane. Verse 8:

"Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude."

You may not be right. You likely aren't. Verse 9:

"Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing." 1 Peter 3:8-9 (NLT)

I just want to end with this. Everything within our culture says the exact opposite of what we just read, doesn't it? Here's what I just want to present to you. Is it working? No. It's not working. So what if we just got really curious about it and said, "God, how about we try Your way?"

"I'm just going to sit down on the inside and the next time I feel compelled to defend myself, I'm just not going to do that. The next time I feel compelled to curse someone, I'm actually going to do the exact opposite of what I feel and I going to bless them. The

next time I get angry or upset, I'm just going to take a deep breath and I'm just going to say, 'God, it's clear. I need to submit this area of my life to You.'"

And some of you may be, "Man. What we just read. This seems impossible." And that's because it is. You cannot do this in your own power. We need the Spirit of the living God within us helping us to do this.

At the end of the day, that's really what it means to be a Christian. We submit to the Spirit of God. That still, small voice that is speaking to you, convicting you. If there is anything that I want you to apply, it's that.

So today, is there any area of your life in which the Spirit of God is beckoning you to take action, beckoning you to obey, beckoning you to run against the grain of your impulses. And are you willing to listen to that? That, my friends, is where true transformation begins.

In our remaining moments here together in the quietness of the room, let's just submit ourselves to Him.

Father, I thank You so much for hard passages because one of the things that I've learned is that it's usually the hard passages that bring about the most transformation. We're not afraid of it. We're not going to shy away from it. We're not going to edit Your Word; we want to get really curious about it and know that as our heavenly Father it's there for a reason.

So, God, I pray today that You would bind up our wounds in us. There are some here who has been hurt in the name of submission. And so, Father, I pray that You would bind up the wounds. I pray that You would bring healing to lives. I pray that they would not dismiss this because of their woundedness, but that You might redeem their pain and You would help them to see what this really means.

For those of us, God, who are sort of rebellious of heart, like me, God I just pray that you would help me more and more to just submit every area of my life. To recognize that I'm not always right. Most of the time, I'm wrong. And I need to be in tune with Your Spirit as You are speaking to me and in me and through me.

God, right now this world is hurting, it's divided, it's a dark, dark place and we need more believers on mission with You who are willing to go against the grain of culture, living lives in view of eternity.

Help us to not be too comfortable in this plane seat because this is not where we are going to stay forever. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.