Okotoks Evangelical Free Church

Freely Submitting

1 Peter 2:11-25

October 27, 2019

SERMON OUTLINE

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**Finding Fulfillment in an Age of Rights and Freedoms**

1 Corinthians 9:1-23

If I am free…

1. I choose E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from my E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 1-17)

2. I seek the E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of E \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 18-19)

3. The W\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is O\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , but my W\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

is just B\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (vs.20-23)

My E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Christ

should change E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*What do I need to do with what I have heard today?*

Main Point

As those who have been freed by Christ, our primary motives are to glorify God and seek the welfare of others.

Thinking things through

*Connect the sermon to the study.*

**1. Who in your life is a model for integrity? Share an example of a time when he or she demonstrated integrity in a situation where it would have been easy to compromise.**

**2. Why is it important that Christians live as people of integrity in the world?**

***Leader:*** In today’s text, the apostle Peter explained what integrity in the Christian life looks like to persecuted Christians struggling in their faith. This passage from 1 Peter highlights three ways Christians are to have integrity: by staying away from temptation, by showing respect for authorities, and by seeking God in the midst of suffering. To truly live as God’s free people (v. 16), we must seek continual growth in holiness and integrity.

Digging Deeper

*Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.*

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:11-17.

**3. What motivation did Peter give for living God-honoring lives in verses 11-12?**

**4. What reasons does this text give for obeying and respecting authority (see also Romans 13:3-5)?**

**5. How might a faithful track record of submitting to authority “silence the ignorant talk of foolish people” (v. 15)?**

***Leader:*** The original recipients of 1 Peter faced severe persecution and enjoyed much less personal freedom than we do today. It was easy to accuse Christians of trying to undermine the authority of the emperor because they served another Lord much of the persecution of the Roman world was based on this accusation. Yet, they were commanded to submit to the very governing authorities that turned a blind eye to their persecution. Thus, before we determine to disobey the governing authorities in our lives, we must make sure that obeying this governing authority would require disobeying God. Secondly, we should be certain that our primary motives are to glorify God and seek the welfare of others. Protecting our personal freedoms and desires are not biblical reasons to defy the government. Finally, we must remember Paul’s command in Romans 12:18: “as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

**6. Look at verse 16. What are some ways we might use our freedom as a cover-up for evil? How can we live as free people but also as God’s slaves? What does that slavery look like?**

**7. How did Peter command believers to respond to authorities in verse 17? How did he command believers to respond to God? What is the difference?**

***Leader:*** Peter challenged his readers to submit to and honor the governing authorities in their lives, but also made clear that the Christian’s relationship to God must be different than his relationship to the state—we are to honor the emperor, but we are to fear God (v. 17).

> Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 2:18-25.

**8. Who did Peter challenge slaves to submit to in verse 18? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?**

**9. How does it bring favor when we suffer unjustly? How might suffering provide us opportunities for spiritual growth (see 1 Pet. 1:6-9)?**

***Leader:*** The word “unjust” is actually better translated “evil” or “crooked.” The idea behind Peter’s command to slaves in 2:18 was that slaves live lives marked by obedience to their masters whether their masters are fair or not. Peter did not give this charge because he was unsympathetic to the plight of slaves or because he thought slavery as an institution was just. Peter gave this charge because more than anything else, he was concerned with helping Christians, slave or free, live faithfully for Christ. Peter sought to help all people, in all circumstances, embrace their role as advocates for Christ’s kingdom. In other words, a slave suffering under an unjust master had a unique opportunity to proclaim Christ by persevering in doing good in the face of injustice.

**10. What unique opportunities to live for God’s glory and advance Christ’s kingdom might unjust suffering provide us?**

**11. How does the example of Christ show how we are to rightly use our freedom to glorify God and build His kingdom?**

***Leader:*** We face unfair circumstances all the time. It would be easy to just look at Peter’s teaching on slavery here and think it doesn’t apply to us because we are not slaves. But this text does apply to us, because we are called to proclaim the gospel in everything we do. Unfair circumstances provide a prime opportunity to share the gospel—a message that addresses the really big problems of life such as sin and separation from God for eternity. The gospel is a message about true freedom—freedom from the wrath of God, freedom to delight in Jesus!

**DOING LIFE TOGETHER** *Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.***12. What are some ways we subtly fail to show respect for our authorities and exhibit faith in our suffering and thus undermine our integrity?**

**13. Are there any authorities in your life that you need to reconcile with as a means of showing them respect and honor? How might this humble act lead you to share your faith and honor Christ’s example?**

Prayer

Close in prayer asking God to help group members live with integrity by resisting temptation, respecting authorities, and seeking Him in suffering.

Memorize

16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. – 1 Peter 2:16

**SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE** on the passage

1 Peter 2:11-25

Peter wrote this letter to several congregations in what is now Turkey. These believers were undergoing persecution. This persecution probably did not come from the authorities but from their neighbors who misunderstood the nature of the Christian faith.

2:11-12. Many false rumors circulated about Christians. They sometimes were accused of weakening families. After all, family stresses did arise when one family member trusted Jesus as Savior and others did not. This stress was particularly acute when a wife trusted Christ and not her husband. Christians in some places were accused of cannibalism. Did they not meet weekly to eat the flesh of a man (misunderstanding of the Lord’s Supper)? And others claimed Christians participated in immoral and even incestuous activities (misunderstanding of the “love feast” or fellowship meal that often accompanied the Lord’s Supper).

Peter reminded these believers they were called to live as those set apart to God’s service. Their lives were to exhibit a total transformation from the pagan lifestyle they had known prior to meeting Jesus Christ. If they simply lived so as to reflect the holiness of their Savior and God, they would put all such slanders to rest.

2:13-14. The verb “submit” also can be translated “be subject to” or “rank yourselves under,” and normally includes the idea of obedience. Believers are commanded to submit to government at all levels. Christians are not permitted the freedom to choose the regulations or officials to which they will submit. Believers are to respect human authorities even if they don’t agree with them. Of course, such submission does not include obeying commands that are sinful or contrary to Scripture. The king to whom Peter referred was most likely Nero (A.D. 54-68), the degenerate emperor who cruelly persecuted Christians. In stating that Christians should submit to the king, Peter was focusing on the authority of the office rather than on the character of the officeholder.

2:15-20. Peter first offers an evangelistic reason to respect authorities. Unbelievers are always watching believers to see whether their behaviors match what they profess. Thus, when Christians are “caught” doing good, the government may commend them. When Christians live as good citizens, their actions will counter false accusations made against them. Such behavior may result in unbelievers being more receptive to the gospel.

But if Christians are mandated to submit to the governing authorities, in what sense have they been “set free” by the gospel? Peter says that Christian liberty is always a responsible freedom—the freedom to choose what is right and good. Believers are to live as free persons, delivered from bondage to sin. Christian liberty is never to be used as a cover-up for evil. Therefore, there is a sense in which Christians are not free at all. They always live as servants of God. The word translated “servants” means “bondslaves,” those owned by a master. Here is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity: Only those who have become God’s slaves enjoy true freedom. Christian liberty does not mean being free to do only what we want; it means being free to do what we ought to do.

2:21-25. Peter identifies with his suffering audience, reminding them they, like Jesus, have been called to suffer. Suffering because of one’s faith is not a probable or possible: It is certain. Just as Christ’s suffering led unbelievers to repentance and faith in Jesus, so may the suffering of Christians. Identifying with Jesus’ suffering gives purpose and solace to suffering Christians.