Set Apart Part 4:
Under The Authority

- So much of 1 Peter and what we have been reading, not just last week's has all been about identity. Stepping into that Set Apart Identity God has designed and called us to. We see this pattern that is in 1 Peter and so much of the Bible, its this patten of: "Because God poured out His grace and mercy to you, now you are called to live different".

- And this pattern isn't just here, it's all throughout the New Testament, it first starts with the blessings and privileges of God because He loved us before we ever loved Him. He gave us so much we don't deserve but now we try our best to live worthy of the calling we received. And now Peter is about to share more of that with us. We've got identity but now how should we live. What does it consistently look like to actually be Set Apart for Christ. ***Because we are a Chosen Priesthood we have to be countercultural.***

- And today we are diving in to what it looks like to ***Live Under God's Authority.*** The way you respond to God's authority actually reveals how much you trust God. You can't trust God while rejecting the Authority God has placed over you. And we are going to pick up today right where we left off last week, we ended at verse 10 of 1 Peter chapter 2 so we are going to jump in at verse 11. But these next few verses really set up the teaching for the next few chapters.

- Everything God is about to teach us through Peter, everything about how to live differently under authority, what does that look like for a child of God, everything he is about to say must be received within the context of these first two verses. These next two verses will give us the right heart posture to actually receive the challenge that God is about to lay down for us through Peter. Okay let's look at those two verses, let's dive in.

1 Peter 2:11-12: "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." NIV

- Already going back to that theme we heard in chapter one, we are foreigners here, we are exiles here. And that is all throughout The New Testament, because we often have to refocus our attention and remember we actually don't belong to this place. It's easy to think we do but we have to live for beyond this world. And remember here with this term "pagan" that isn't mean't

to insult it's mean't as term for those who don't believe in Jesus. We live among people who don't believe what we do.

- We are being prepared here for the next section of verses here, he mentions we are to be completely countercultural. We shouldn't fit in anyway, and even we don't fit so much the world will accuse us of being and doing wrong. And in these first two verses God gives us three big truths through Peter. And these truths set up how we will receive the challenges that are about to be laid down. Three big truths here, if you are taking notes be sure to write these down.

Truth 1: We Belong to God's Kingdom

Philippians 3:20: "But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior." NLT

- If we belong to Heaven pure and simply we have to stop living like we belong to earth. Because we are foreigners and exiles the values of our King, The Kingdom of Heaven and different than the values of this world. The world says promote yourself, the Kingdom of God says humble yourself. The world says fight for your rights, the Kingdom of God says lay down your life. The world will say if someone hurts you you have to get retaliation, hurt them back. The Kingdom of God says bless those who persecute you.

- So this is where the tension is, how do live in a world that doesn't reflect your values? Peter is about to show us but first he reminds us and brings it all into context here with the fact: You belong to God's Kingdom! The second truth he gives us is this…

Truth 2: We Are Soldiers in a Spiritual War

- The act of trusting God even when we don't understand is waging war. The decision to live differently even when it costs you that's what a soldier does. Peter is really going to challenge us but again we are given this right context leading into the challenge. You belong to The Kingdom of Heaven, you are Soldiers in a Spiritual War! Now the third truth found in these two verses we need to receive…

Truth 3: We Are Witnesses To A Watching World

- He says live such good, set apart lives, that even when you are accused your life will speak for itself! Your very life testifies that you belong to something greater and somewhere else, and that's God and His Kingdom! Trust me on this: people are always watching how you live. People are watching how you handle authority. People are watching to see how you respond to different things in life. They watch how you react to things that don't go your way.

Your life is either proof of God's Power or an excuse for people to ignore God.

- One the biggest areas where our faith is tested, is how we handle authority. And the world is watching for this, this scripture is about to be challenged in ways that go against everything our flesh wants to do. We are going to taught and challenged to ultimate submission. And we need to understand something about submission. The way we think about submission needs to change.

Submission according to The Bible, according to The Kingdom of God is not weakness, in God's Kingdom submission is a weapon. It is an act of spiritual warfare. It is trusting God, it is how Jesus won the victory on the cross.

- I know in our world, especially for men we are taught being submissive is a weakness but let me tell you something it is an ultimate spiritual strength that a lot of believers never grow mature enough to do! And God through Peter is about to show us how to submit in a world that doesn't honor God. We are diving into a subject that our culture resists, that our flesh doesn't want to do, but this is where truth spiritual maturity happens. Let's continue in verse 13…

1 Peter 2:13-14: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right." NIV

- It's not for the sake of authority, but for the Lord's sake we submit to every human authority. Oh that's hard. Submission like this may be making some of us feel uncomfortable. Some of you may not be audible with them but I'm sure there are groanings in the room somewhere. I get it! Submission sounds like weakness, it sounds like losing, it sounds like giving up control. But in God's Kingdom submission is not a sign of weakness it is a sign of strength! Submission is not passive it is actually very powerful!

- Submission isn't passive, it isn't silent, it is actually trusting in God's sovereignty! Submission isn't about control it is about surrendering to the Authority of God!

Romans 13:1: "Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God." NLT

- That's a tough one to swallow isn't it? But the entire Bible teaches us that submission is the heart of the Christian life. But before we talk about who we need to submit to we need to understand why we submit. I think a lot of us have the wrong perspective of submission. So we need to understand what Biblical Submission is and what it is not.

What is Submission And What It Is Not:

- The biblical definition of submission is this:

Submission: Voluntarily cooperating out of love for God and others, it is not forced compliance or blind obedience

- There is a lot of differences between obedience and submission. Submission is yielding to God's design for authority, it is not allowing yourself to be abused or manipulated. When we talk about authority I know everywhere in our world authority has betrayed us and let us down. Whether that is family authority, government authority, employment authority, we all have so many stories of being let down or treated wrongfully. And because of that I know it makes submission sound like something we would never want.

- But submission isn't just allowing yourself to be abused or mistreated. ***Submission is however a position of humility that keeps your heart aligned with God.*** Submission isn't about agreeing with everything or never questioning decisions. That's not what submission is. And this is why submission is so powerful. ***It's not about who is charge, it is about who is in control! It's not about the people over you, it is about the God who is over them!***

- Submission is a test of God, before it is a trust. In fact let me say this and if you are writing notes please write this down because this important and powerful:

God Tests Us With Authority Before He Will Ever Trust Us With Authority

- If we want to be trusted with authority, and trust me God does want to give you authority, He will test you under it first. Jesus said it like this in the gospel of Luke…

Luke 16:10: "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." NIV

- Before God will ever elevate you He will test you and see if He can trust you. Joesph before he could lead Egypt as the second most powerful person right behind Pharaoh he proved himself serving under Potiphar. David had to submit to Saul before he could ever wear the crown. Elisha had to follow Elijah before he ever got the double portion. You will never lead with authority if you refuse to submit under authority.

- Every test of submission is a test of trust. Do you trust that God is over the people who are over you? Do you trust that submission brings blessing even when it is hard? Do you trust submission is not only part of God's plan for your spiritual development but also part of His process for elevation to leadership? The greatest example of submission is Jesus Himself…

Philippians 2:8: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." NKJV

- Jesus submitted to The Father's will even when it led to His suffering. He could have called down legions of angels from Heaven, and yet He submitted. He could have crushed His enemies with one word and still He surrendered. Jesus could have fought for His rights and life and yet He freely laid them down. Jesus not only taught submission He fully embodied it. Submission is something we as Children of God in The Kingdom of God must learn to live out.

- There are four tests Peter gives us here four tests here to truly and properly living under Authority.

4 Tests to Living Under Authority

- Peter starts with the hardest area for a lot of people, and we are going to look at what this means for us as people of God. Remember the context to this all: it's because we belong to God's Kingdom, because we are fighting a spiritual

battle, and because we are witnesses to a watching world. So the first test The Holy Spirit through Peter brings up is this, and with an election around the corner it is ultra relevant:

Test 1: Submission to Government-Live Honorably Under Earthly Authority

- I know the moment you hear the word government we all started forming opinions in our heads, and the funny thing probably half of our opinions are different than the other half. Some people trust it too much, some people trust it too little, some fight against it, some fight for it, some of us just ignore it, but God through Peter brings it up explicitly.

- And remember Peter's audience here, this was written and read by Christian's whose government was actively persecuting and killing them. Remember this is Emperor Nero, this horrible government and the message given isn't to riot or rebel but instead to reflect Christ through honor. And this is so difficult for us because submission and honor do not come naturally to us, that isn't flesh, natural reaction.

- But the words here to us in 1 Peter challenge us to see authority differently, see authority the way God sees it. Let's go back and reread verses 13 and 14 and then continue on…

1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, 14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. 16 Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. 17 Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor." NIV

- This could be one of the most challenging commands in all of scripture. Not because it is hard to understand but for so many it is so hard to obey. Peter is writing to Christians under the reign of Emperor Nero, a wicked and corrupt emperor that burnt cities then blamed Christians. Fed Christians to Lions for sport, burned them on stakes, crucified them, and Peter writes through the Holy Spirit these hard three words of: "honor the emperor". That one, Nero, not another one, but that one. Honor him.

- We have to submit to every human authority, even the ones we disagree with, or dislike, because we are to live honorably in a dishonorable world! You may

think our government is corrupt but I promise none of us have yet to see a world or government like that under Nero. No United States President ever has been as corrupt or wicked as Nero.

- Peter is speaking submission into that landscape. Remember submission isn't blind obedience but it means our posture towards authority should reflect our faith. That we actually trust the fact God is in control! This brings up a critical question, what if the government is corrupt? What if the laws contradict God's Word? We see examples of that in Daniel chapter 3.

- I know you know this account, this is Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We know these men were under a corrupt government, again one far worse than anything we've seen. King Nebuchadnezzar legislated idol worship. But these men refused to bow. These men honored the King without compromising their obedience to God. That is what Biblical submission is. Honoring authority but still refusing to sin against God.

Submission to Earthly Authority never comes at the cost of disobeying God!

- Here is how it is: submission is about your attitude, obedience is about your actions. You are not commanded to blindly obey, but you are commanded to submit, there is a difference. ***So the question is how do we submit to imperfect leaders?*** What does that look like for us? How do we live like this? Let me give a few quick tips for this.

1- You Honor Their Position Even When You Disagree With Their Decisions
2 -You Obey Unless It Clearly Violates God's Word
3 -You Must Trust God Uses Even Corrupt Authority For His Purposes
4- Influence Through Righteousness, Not Rebellion

- God is calling us as His Children to a higher standard, to respect every person, love your family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor or in our case our governmental leaders. And when those very leaders are imperfect we live honorably because we represent The Kingdom of God!

- Submission to government is one thing but what about when the authority over you is directly impacting your daily life? It's one thing to honor people in power from a distance it's another thing when it comes to the boss who is over you today. What about that leader who takes credit for your work? Or maybe that supervisor who micromanages you? What about the company that doesn't reward your effort?

- Peter now takes this concept of submission to a personal day by day level. So the second test to living under God's authority is…

Test 2: Submission in The Workplace- Working With Integrity, Even When It's Unfair

- God has called us to work with integrity, even when it is completely unfair! Submission to government authority is one thing but what about submission in your daily life? What about when the person over you is unfair, unkind, or even incompetent? What about the leader above you that is so difficult? This is where your submission is tested. This is where your integrity is being revealed.

- Anyone can be honorable under great leadership but how you act under bad leadership determines how much you actually trust God. Peter doesn't mince words here either. We are about to be challenged in a way that goes against everything our flesh wants to do. Look at verse 18…

1 Peter 2:18-20: "Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God." NIV

- We've got to remember the system of slavery in the Roman world was so different than how it was here in America. It had nothing to do with race, people became slaves in war, through debt, or even as servants in a house. Many slaves in this time were highly educated and even held high positions. A lot of slaves even served as doctors, teachers, or managers, and was often very temporary. Slaves would work out their freedom and pay off their debt.

- It was a social and economical reality of the time. It's not God's design, it was a result of a bad human system. But the reason Peter addresses slaves here is because simply many believers at the time were servants and household workers and they needed to know how to honor God in difficult work environments.

- While slavery in that time was different the principles still apply to us today in our workplaces. You may not be a slave today but you might feel trapped in a difficult job. You may not have a master today but you may have a boss you

don't respect. You may not be treated as a servant but you may be underpaid, overlooked, or unappreciated.

- God's words through Peter challenge us: how we handle unjust treatment in the workplace says a lot about how much we trust God. In our works we may not get beatings but replace that with getting reprimanded, harshly. But when we endure it's commendable before God. When we are treated wrong or unfairly it is so easy to want to push back. But God says we are to submit, not because our boss deserves it but because we represent God. Your integrity is on display.

- Your attitude is on display, your patience is on display, this may sound crazy to you, but even your work ethic is a spiritual statement. For many believers our workplaces are our primary mission field. Your coworkers may never read the Bible but they read you every day. Your boss may never come here and hear one of my sermons but they are watching how you handle pressure. Your may not step into church but they experience your integrity, your attitude, your excellence.

- If the people at your work found out you are a Christian would they be surprised by that? Submission in the workplace matters! You honor God when work is fair and when it isn't! Even when you don't get promoted you still give your best! God is watching and so is everyone else!

Colossians 3:23: "Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." NLT

- We aren't working for people we work for the Lord. Your workplace isn't just about a paycheck it is about your posture. God will test our submission before He will ever put us in a place of leadership. Will you gossip about your boss like everyone else? Will you complain about the system, will you lower your standard because no one else cares? Or will you be the kind of person who honors leadership? A person who brings the presence of God into your workplace!

- Joseph was faithful in slavery before he was promoted into leadership. Daniel served under pagan kings before he shaped history. David submitted to Saul before he ever put on a crown. They all had one thing in common, they honored the position even when the person in the position was not honorable.

- You job is more than just a job, God is using it to test your faithfulness! A test of your attitude, a test of your obedience, before God promotes you, He is going to prove you! Submission in your workplace isn't about your boss, it's

about trusting that God is in control! Submission to government is the first test, workplace is the second, the third test of submission is…

Test 3: Submission in Suffering- Endure Like Jesus Did

- Submission to the government and to our workplace is hard but submission in suffering is far more difficult and that's where our faith is truly tested. We have to learn to endure suffering like Jesus did! I mean let's be honest, when life hurts submission is the very last thing on our mind. We want to escape the pain as quickly as possible but we are about to be challenged by these verses again pushing against our natural flesh thoughts.

- Submission in suffering isn't weakness it's actually the pathway to glory, let's look at verse 21…

1 Peter 2:21-25: "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. 24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." 25 For "you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." NIV

- Peter here is talking not just suffering but specifically unjust suffering. When you suffer for doing good, when your insulted, when you are mistreated, when you experience betrayal, rejection, injustice, instead of being told to fight back we are being pointed to Jesus. Jesus had every right to defend Himself but didn't. Jesus was falsely accused and still stayed silent. Jesus was beaten mocked and crucified and yet did not retaliate, because He entrusted Himself to God.

- Submission in suffering is not giving up, it's giving it over. It's giving over your pain to the one who can heal you! It's giving over your need for justice or retaliation to the one who judges justly! It's giving over your situation to the God who is in control! So when you suffer will you entrust yourself to God or will you take matters into your own hands? When you suffer will you hold on to bitterness or release it?

- The world will tell you fight back, but Jesus says trust me. Surrender. Endure. Suffering is not the end of your story it is a setup for God's Glory! Suffering

isn't meaningless, it is actually forming you. Every trial you endure is refining you into the image of Christ. The greatest spiritual leaders all have one thing in common: they had to go through the fires of testing so your pain isn't meaningless it is forging you! Plus your suffering is temporary!

- The way you suffer is a witness and a testimony to the world. When you suffer with faith, endurance, and trust, people take notice. Remember we are witnesses to a watching world! Suffering is apart of the path of our life. Which means trust must be our response! And that leads us to the last test of submission. If we are going to live under God's Authority this last test of submission and that is…

Test 4: Submission in Marriage- Reflect Christ in Your Marriage

- Submission to government is about trusting God's authority over nations, submission in our workplace is about honoring God's authority in our daily lives. Submission in suffering is about entrusting our pain to God. But submission in marriage is different. It's not about hierarchy it's about harmony. It's not about control it's about covenant. It's not about who is in charge it's about who is willing to serve.

- Marriage is a reflection of Christ and the church. All of us married people are called to reflect Christ in our marriage. Moving into chapter 3 of 1 Peter we are about to be challenged in another way that again goes against our flesh.

1 Peter 3:1-6: "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, 2 when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. 4 Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, 6 like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear." NIV

- Submission in marriage is a two way street. And submission in marriage is not about superiority it is about sacrificial love. Biblical submission is not about who has power it is about who is willing to lay down their life for the sake of love. Remember submission is strength it is not silence. Peter is not saying

woman should have no voice. Biblical submission is about honoring leadership while still standing strong in our faith.

- It is about trusting God's design and order for marriage. A wife's submission isn't about making herself less, it's about lifting her marriage up. It's about leaning into God's plan for marriage. Peter even in addressing wives with unbelieving husbands saying that your character as a Godly wife is so powerful it can win over your husband to the Lord. Not by arguing with him but just by your Godly character and Godly submission, how powerful.

- And husbands don't be comfortable because Peter comes for you next, husbands we are told leadership is service not superiority.

1 Peter 3:7: "In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, 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." NLT

- Husbands and wives both are coheirs, we may not be made the same or designed the same but we equal partners in marriage and life together. So that nothing hinders our prayers. Husbands our spiritual walk is directly connected to how we love and treat our wives. We can't dishonor our wives and expect God to honor our prayers.

- We can't neglect our wife and then expect God to bless our work. We can't mistreat our wife and still think our walk with God is fine. If we want powerful prayers husbands we better be loving and honoring our wives in our homes.

Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her" NKJV

- So when we read here in 1 Peter as husbands we must be loving, considerate, honorable, and treat our wives with understanding what this means is we don't get to check out, we don't get to be passive. God calls men to lead in a marriage but the greatest leaders are the greatest servants. We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church, think about that? How did Christ love the church? He laid down His life for it. Husbands if you can't or won't sacrifice for your wife you aren't leading like Jesus.

- Submission in marriage isn't about who is in charge it is about who loves like Christ. Wives are called to submit with strength, husbands are called to lead and sacrifice with love. Together we reflect Christ and His church. This is the

ultimate picture of submission. When we submit to the government, in our workplaces, in suffering, in our marriage we aren't just submitting to people we are submitting to God.

Submission is never about control it is about surrendering to God's perfect and sovereign design!

- The call of submission is the call of being set apart, it is so countercultural, so against the grain, so against what we naturally want to do. Honor the government even when it is corrupt. Work with integrity, even when it is unfair. Endure suffering, even when you didn't deserve it. Submit in marriage, even when it is extremely difficult. Everything in our flesh wants to fight back, push for control, demand what we think we deserve. But God says not according to your Kingdom Citizenship. We must submit.

- Submission is not weakness it is power. It doesn't mean surrendering to people it means surrendering to God. It doesn't mean silence it means trust. At the end of the day, Jesus submitted first. Jesus submitted to earthly authority as the true King of King. He submitted to suffering even though He was sinless. He submitted to the cross even though He had the power to stop it. And through His submission He conquered death and secured salvation for anyone who accept Him and declares it by faith.

James 4:10: "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." NIV

- Where in your life do you need to trust God more through submission today? Are you fighting authority instead of honoring it? Are you resisting unfairness instead of trusting God in the middle of it? Are you running from suffering instead of enduring it with faith? Are you fighting in your marriage instead of reflecting Christ in it? Submission leads to elevation and it's time we elevate to submission today!