

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Between Two Worlds

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9

TITLE

Enduring Unjust Treatment

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 2:18-25



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Hope you've had a good week. And if you're new with us, we're glad that you are our guest. If you have in your hand a Bible, if you want to turn with me to 1 Peter chapter two, and we're going to start reading in a few moments in verse 18. If you're new with us or if it's sort of been a long time, whether you're at home or here in the room, we're just walking verse by verse through 1 Peter, and we happen to be up to chapter two and verse 18.

I can tell you that the contents of what we're about to read and what we are about to sort of walk through, they are going to challenge you. They're going to challenge what you believe. In fact, who you are as a person and where you grew up, everything about that is allergic to our text today. And so if you're going to not only enjoy this moment, if you're going to learn from this moment, if you're going to receive for this moment, it's literally going to take a miracle of God in each of our lives. I'm absolutely sincere.

And so let's pray for that miracle. Okay? Father in heaven, we believe that you have to move mountains, but we believe you can. And so I ask that you would. Would you speak through weakness and through all the different distractions and through the heritage of our country and the heritage of the church? Would you work through all of the complexity of our brokenness, and would you help us to believe? We ask, holy spirit, that you would make that possible. We believe if you don't work in our life, if you don't pour out your power upon us, we won't be able to believe what we read. We won't be able to apply it to our life. We won't find the courage that's necessary. We won't see in Christ a model. We won't see in Christ a beauty and a truth that's worth setting aside so many things in our life that we simply don't want to lay aside. So would you help us by your spirit to see just the glory of Jesus once again this morning and help us to believe? We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

These sets of verses, they ask a question. And that question is this, is what are you willing to give or give away in order to glorify Jesus Christ? You won't be able to keep what you think is important and do what we're about to be asked to do, if you're going to glorify Jesus. And so this idea of the glory of Jesus, how important is it for the dominant fruit of your day today that he receives honor? That's a really important part of this passage.

1 Peter, it was written by Peter. Peter was writing Christians, people who had trusted in Jesus Christ and were following him with their life. They were scattered throughout the Roman Empire because of severe persecution. And as a result of that, they're landing in places and they're uncertain how to live in places that are unsympathetic to the gospel, unsympathetic to the very truth that they're claiming their lives upon, that they're resting their lives upon, that they're building their lives upon, and that they're suffering for.

For nearly the entire history of Western civilization, Christianity has been the dominant, the favored religion, the adopted worldview of the culture, even the parts of the culture who had never read the Bible. You go back even decades in our own country, and there were people who had never once darkened a church or read the Bible, and yet they would have a worldview that included things like sobriety, honesty, integrity,

male-female sexuality, things that they didn't know that they were in agreement with the Bible. They'd never read it, it was simply a part of the Western worldview.

But today, particular in urban centers where people have come and they say, "We want to live here in this place," because of the entertainment options, because of the people who were there, because the opportunities are there. We want to come to these urban centers, and today in these urban centers in the last 20 or 30 years, culture is hostile and is growing even more so to Christianity.

The ethics and virtues that you read about within the New Testament, within the Bible, you find there's almost a repulsion in parts of the culture, and now those parts are even celebrated more so than those that would hold fast to being a follower of Jesus. Our culture, they don't celebrate anymore.

In fact, there's a hostility even to the gospel. This idea that there was somebody who came to this earth, a man whose behavior, whose actions, and what other people and the Bible say was his greatest accomplishment, to die for sin and rise from the dead 2,000 years ago, has any bearing in my life today, any bearing upon my marriage today, any bearing upon my future or how I make my decisions.

There's also a hostility, a growing hostility to the exclusivity of the gospel. And that's the fact that Jesus stood on this earth and said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the father except through me." That is a repulsive message. It will grow even more so in our culture.

Some of us, we take comfort, we think, well, we live in the South, and so here in Raleigh it's not going to feel like that. We hear all those stories about up in the Northwest and the Northeast, where you have a whole city, and you hear these stats like, yeah, there's like one or two percent of the entire city attends a church.

Within the last month, I was meeting with social scientists within our own city, and the prognosis actually says that within 10 years time, because of the enormous expansion of people who are moving to the city who are unchurched and how the church has been so far relatively ineffective in reaching those people, is that if our ability to continue to reach stays at the same pace and the growth of the city continues at the same pace, within 10 years time Raleigh will be 4% churched. It's growing that fast, and we're reaching that ineffectively.

Everything we hear about ... oh, Boston's like that. Raleigh will be like that. And the question then comes, how do we live? How do we live in this world? For many of you, us who are over 40, it's an enormous adjustment from living in a culture where the worldview is generally Christian to a post-Christian world that's hostile to our faith.

And this is exactly where Peter's writing. He's writing to people who are living in places that are hostile to their faith. After a chapter and a half of explaining to them who they are in Jesus Christ, he makes an appeal in 2:12. He says this. He says, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak

against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

In other words, what he’s saying to us, providence is this, the city is going to read our lives much more and more often than they’re going to read a Bible. So let’s live in a way that helps them to see and to glorify Jesus. And what he does for the rest of the letter is simply extrapolates on this verse to say, “Now, what does this look like in different arenas where we live our life?”

Last week, we looked at civil responsibility. Today, we look at something that is really challenging, and that is .... Its primary context was slavery. The text begins, “Servants,” same word, slaves. In our general context, what we’re going to find, though, is this, is how is it applied in our lives today is ... could be within the work-place or anywhere where somebody with authority is mistreating you and how you should respond to that treatment. So how should we respond? This is what he says.

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

The first thing I want you to see is there’s some things in this passage that Christ is going to be doing to us, and he’s doing it through the pen of Peter. And the first is this, for each one of us, is that Christ entrusts every believer with a decision to glorify him.

I don’t know what your place is in life, your position. I don’t know your station, your status, where you work, where you live, if you have lots of authority, if you have no authority, if when you go to those places, wherever you go, you are the one who makes decision. It actually may be to where you get to those places, wherever they are, and you have no decision-making rights. What Peter says here is this, no matter where we are, no matter how much injustice is around us, we all have a decision to make. And that decision is in this situation in my life, will Jesus Christ be glorified or not?

You notice that his instructions are addressed to servants, verse 18. Servants who are subject to their masters. Literally, the word is slaves. Some of your translations actually say the word slave. “Slave, be subject to your masters.” Now, you have to understand what’s happening here. In the Roman Empire, masters had all authority to make decisions, slaves had none. And so what Peter is doing is he’s making decision-makers out of people in the Roman Empire who were unauthorized to do so. He’s saying we all have a decision to make

no matter where we find yourself in life.

When we hear the word slave, we automatically, instinctively think of involuntary race-based chattel slavery that was a reality in our own country and our own churches. And it's a reality even today in parts of the world where a human being is stolen. The Old Testament, the word they use is man-stealing. Where a person has stolen, they're stripped of their rights and their dignity and their personhood, and they're owned as a piece of property.

Let me just say that the Bible, I'm going to show you, affirms that this is a grotesque sin. And it's a sin that, like a rock that's tossed into the water, and then after a period of time you no longer see the rock, but you still see from generation to generation to generation ripples because of that behavior. This is what you see. And there is nobody in this room who lives in this country that's young enough that should expect to live their entire life and these effects and these ripples not be a part of your life. This is the reality of where we live. This took place.

Now, Rome was not above this kind of slavery, but it was not a predominant part of what he's addressing. He's addressing something that is called bondservanthood. If you can imagine, it's almost stunning to think about Rome. You think of the power of the Rome, but in between 30 and 50% are the estimates. I know that's a wide gap, but that's still a lot of people. 30 to 50% of all citizens within the Roman Empire were bondservants. That's an enormous percentage. You think about how big of a percentage that is, and what that means is that that was one of the most dominant factors in the economy, in the marketplace.

And what a bondservant was is could be one of two things. If you were in such debt to a lender and there's simply no other way to pay it off, that you could voluntarily, this is the big difference, you voluntarily become a servant to that person. They would have decision-making rights over what you would do. But the law said that the master would have to feed and shelter you and your family while they give you work, a means to pay off that debt so that you could be free. In other words, baked into the idea of bondservanthood was at least a tinge of mercy. What do you do for the least among the culture and society?

But then there was another way that you would become a bondservant, and that is ... Let's just say you didn't have any debt, but you were living in one place and you became persecuted as a Christian, and then all of a sudden you had to run for your life to other places of the Roman Empire, and nobody was there to hire you. What would you do? You would become a bondservant in order to take care of your family.

So Peter is writing people, he's writing churches within the Roman Empire where literally many of the people who were coming to church at the very same time, some of them in the room they're masters and some of them are bondservants. They're all listening to this together. And what he was saying to those who were servants was this, even in this, you have a decision to make: are you going to glorify Jesus?

Now, we should just take a step back, and let's talk about this just for a moment. And the reason is because this is part of our history, not only of our country but also of church history. It's a sad reality that there are pastors, real pastors, who opened up this passage and used this passage to justify the chattel slavery that was in our country. They opened it up and they said, "Servants, be subject to your masters. That's why this is right." And so this is not only a part of our culture, it's a part of our American church history.

And so you have to ask the question, why in the world would Peter and Paul, Paul in Colossians and Ephesians has instructions to bondservants. Why would they not at that very moment just say, "Just rebel. This is an insult to humanity, just rebel." Why would they not attack the institution? A lot of people ask that. And so what we need to do is just take a step back real quick and ask this question: what would the rest of the Bible, this redemptive history throughout scripture, say to inform how we're supposed to believe and interpret this passage? This is so important that we do this, and it's also very important.

See, you probably brought a friend and they're sitting next to you, and you're like, "Oh, my gosh, I brought them to this Sunday. He's talking about slavery. What am I doing here? This is the wrong Sunday to bring a friend." I realized that there's a sensitivity to what we're talking about right now, but let's not stand over it and say something like, "You know what, we wouldn't talk about it if it wasn't in the Bible," because inadvertently what we're doing is saying that we have more mercy and compassion for people than the God who wrote it.

God looked into people's life, and he said, "They need to know this." The same God who killed his son on our behalf, who is that committed for our good, he wrote this for us, for our good. So let's not stand over it. Let's try to interpret it from what we know from scripture.

And so the best place to begin is in the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth. He created humanity in his image. And this is so important, god created every single person in his image, wrapped them with a particular color of skin for his pleasure and his glory. What that means is this. We look differently because he wanted us to look differently. We look differently because he's glorified in that way. He chose that. It was his will.

And then the Bible tells us that we sinned against God. He wanted to protect society, he wanted to protect our relationship with him, and so he gave us some instructions. And those instructions, they included one restriction. One restriction. And we looked to that one restriction, and we went, "You're so overbearing." And so we violated his word. We sinned against God. And what that does is it creates a climate where sinning against God, it leads us to mistreat people who are made in the image of God.

Don't you see what's happening? God creates us. We're all different. We look at God, we say, "No." We mistreat him, and then we find a bunch of people who look a little different, and yet they're all image-bearers of God, and we begin to mistreat them. And this is what happened. This is the sin. We're man-stealing, and every other sin against humanity comes in.

And so God says in this moment, it's amazing, he could just say, "Just wipe out, and we just start over again." No, instead, he goes, "Look, I'm going to send a rescuer. A rescuer that's going to be able to knock down the walls of injustice between each of you and between you and me. All the sin, all the ... He's going to be this powerful of a messiah, Christ.

He says, "But it's going to take some time, so before he comes, I'm going to give you some laws." The laws within the Bible are there for a reason. Not only are there to instruct us how to live, they're also to show us that we haven't lived the way that we should. In other words, people are sinning, they don't know it, so God says, "Let me write a law to say, hey, by the way, what you're doing right now, that's not right."

But the law also is designed to help us to see not only am I doing what is right, but wait a minute, he's a holy God. If I'm not doing what is right, I need a savior. The law was supposed to say, "I can't save myself." It's not a ladder to climb to heaven. It's a mirror that says you can't climb to heaven.

And so 1 Timothy, this is what Paul says. Look. "The law is not laid down for the just." It's not laid down for those who do what's right. Now, let me tell you who it's for. He lists a bunch of things among enslavers, man-stealers, slave owners, liars, perjurers. And what else? "And whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine." In other words, if you ever come across somebody that says, "You know what, slavery must've been okay because it's in the Bible," slavery was sin, period. It was sin.

And then in the fullness of time, the story continues. God sent his son, Jesus Christ, who treated people with perfect courtesy, kindness, love, mercy. He yet took our sin upon himself and there he went to a cross, he died for that sin. And just as he promised, on the third day, he rose from the dead. Having all the authority.

Then we move to the next part of the story, which is where 1 Peter finds itself, and that is that this Jesus, he forms this people, this holy people, he fills this people with his spirit, teaches them how to love, and then commissions this people to go live in a broken world, showing people how to love, showing people his love by the way that they love those people. This is what 1 Peter is. He's saying, look, the world is busted up. This is where we happen to find yourself. And so what should we do right now? What should you do right now in that social circumstance in order to glorify Jesus Christ?

And if the beginning and if the redemption and if the law and if all of that's not clear enough, then we simply need to look at the finish line. Because when you look at the finish line, you see in the book of Revelation, chapter five and chapter seven, that there at the throne of God, the redeemed people of God, it says from every tribe, every tongue, every ethnicity, every nation, every color, we're all going to be there. And instead of fighting, no one will be fighting. We'll all be so mesmerized by Christ we're simply going to worship him.



In other words, we will one day live in a diversified heaven and there will be no strife, no animosity, no insecurity, no mistreatment. It's going to happen, and it's going to happen because of Jesus Christ. So why then if the origin was diversity, if Christ knocked down by his death all of the sin that caused all of the injustice to the diversity, if heaven is full of diversity, why in the world would Peter and Paul in the New Testament not strike it down and said, "Slaves, just rebel. You know this isn't his will"?

And he did it for two reasons. He did it for love. You say, "Why love?" Because he knew that these people were so vulnerable. For some of them, if they would rebel against their master, their kids wouldn't eat that night. And so baked into this is just mercy for people who were literally in peril.

But he also knew the gospel's power. See, he knew that when someone believed this gospel, that the spirit of God would come into their heart and regenerate what is dead, would give brand new desires, would reorient their life. Not to becoming like the culture, but to where whatever we once believed, however we were trained as children to think about whatever it is, that we would open up the Bible and we'd say, "Wait a minute, I need to orient my life and my thoughts to this instead of what I was taught." This is the power of the gospel.

And then the holy spirit comes and teaches how to love, and suddenly our love becomes a lighthouse, and that lighthouse attracts people who are weary and beaten down. And because a life of love is so attractive in such a dark world, is that people may then even begin to give us influence to say, "You know what, you care so much and you serve so much at the school that you should serve on the school board." And now all of a sudden the Christian has influence. This is the path. This is the path that Peter gave to people who were living in cultures that were unsympathetic to the gospel.

So let me encourage this first application, let's not lose sight of the gospel to cause change. I know some of us, we want things to change. Do not leave the gospel in the bag. I have a wood lathe at home. You put a piece of wood on it, and it spins real fast, and you put a blade on it, and you can form that wood so that it looks differently. Okay? It forms it. Now, if I take that blade and if I say, "You know what, I'm going to try a hammer instead," and I try to put a hammer up to it that's really smooth, it's not going to form anything.

What I'm trying to say is this. For Christians to devote all of their time to laws and leaders instead of the gospel is like leaving the sharpest blade in the bag. It's negligent. We have the gospel that changes people's heart. We have to take it out and share it. We have to let people know.

The second thing that Christ does is he calls us to be subject to the just and unjust. I know that our hearts are allergic to this verb, be subject, and so ... Well, I'll just keep going. Verse 18, notice what he says, "Be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust."

So the principle here is very clear, but its application is not. And the reason is because we live in such a different place where we have the opportunity that they did not, and that was to shape our leaders and to shape



things such as labor, laws, and wages.

Last week, I ran out of time like I do every single week, and so we finished honoring the emperor. And I didn't have enough time to explain what that meant, and so ... It was an eventful week with people, which is totally cool. But the word honor doesn't mean agree with them, celebrate everything. That's not what it means to honor them. Jesus, when he was on the earth, under the banner of scripture, he looked at the leaders and he says, "Do you see how they use their authority and lord it over people? Yeah, that's wrong. We're not going to do it that way."

In other words, to honor our leaders doesn't mean that we agree with everything, celebrate everything. It means that this. It means that when we evaluate what's happening under the banner of scripture, we continue to treat them like a human being instead of a dog. We pray for them, we care for them. If they would fall, we would run and try to pick them up because they're still human. Honor your leaders.

So we get to this one, you're like, "Wait a minute." If you get slapped tomorrow at work by your boss, there's labor laws to where ... There's things you can do as opposed to just, okay, so I got that and I have this. And this is why it's so important when we walk out of here. This is why understanding is sometimes easier than understanding how to apply it to our life.

Sometimes where you go tomorrow ... We all are going to be in a different place, and so it's good for us to pray, but it's good to take this to the life group, other believers, and say, "Hey, let's talk about application in our current climate where we do have the opportunity to shape laws, leaders, wages, things like this. What do we do?" You just need to remember what's happening here is this, is that Peter's readers had one lever to influence change, and it was called honorable conduct. They had no influence to change rules. They had no authority.

And so this is the principle that he gives, verse 19 and 20, that is so allergic to us and, really, the American way. You ready? And this is the opposite of "don't tread on me." Here it is. "This is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God."

Now, watch what's happening. This is what he's saying. He's saying, look, if you endure, feel sorrow within your heart. And the reason that you feel sorrow within your heart is because you are being treated unjustly. And instead of retaliation, you repay that evil with good, and you do that because you're mindful of God, because you're conscious of God. And this is what he says. Then God almighty will see it, and when God sees it, he says, "Beautiful." He hates the mistreatment and the injustice, and yet he looks at that honorable response and he says, "Only grace would allow that to take place."

Isn't it interesting that you agree with this? When you see somebody who's criticized in public, and they respond with meekness and mercy and they walk out honorably, do you go, "What a weak person"? No. You say, "What stunning strength for that person to be able to contain the desire for retaliation in that moment to still honor the Lord."

This is why we love the story of Joseph so much, isn't it? You remember Joseph? He's sold by his brothers into slavery. He gets to the slave house and he's like, "Well, I never wanted to be a slave, but unto God, I'm going to be the best one here." Literally. And all of a sudden, God just multiplies his efforts. He's just honored. And so his master, he goes, "Man, you should rule the whole house." Then the master's wife begins hitting on him. He's like, "Man, what should I do with this?" We're told exactly what he thought. Watch this.

Genesis 39. He says, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" You know what this is? This is mindful of God. That's what that means. Right here, mindful of God. "I'm conscious of God. I'm getting hit on by the owner's wife. If I say no, worse things may happen to me. But there's still a God."

She's not so happy about being declined, and so she falsely accuses him. He ends up in prison. Now he's like, "Man, I never wanted to be a prisoner, but if I'm going to be a prisoner, unto the Lord, I'm going to be the best one here." And God continues to simply multiply his influence. Eventually, he's ruling the whole country.

You see, Peter is not honoring passivity here. He's honoring a kind of strength that only happens when we're mindful of God, that points people to God. He's saying that this. He goes, "You may in your culture, in your context have the ability to retaliate in such a way that it feels so good, and yet the good that you would receive from retaliating, it may undercut all of the glory that Jesus could receive if you responded in honor."

And so let's not lose sight of God while responding to man. Let's be mindful of God as we live our life. In fact, there's a really important little word in verse 18. He says, "Be subject," if you notice, "to your masters." Then he says, "With all respect." This word, respect, is the word *phobos*. It's where we get phobia or fear.

You say, "Well, wait a minute, if I were not supposed to fear. We're not supposed to fear because God made promises. We're not supposed to fear, and yet there's some instructions in the Bible that says we should fear." Next week, when we talk about wives being subject to your husband ... That's going to be fun, isn't it? Y'all excited about that one? I am too.

Verse two, he says this, look, "When they see your respectful, your fearful and pure conduct," and then he gets to the end, in verse six, he says, "Now, look, wives, don't be fearful." Then you get to 3:14 and 15, and this is what he says there. He goes, "Look, have no fear of all these people around." He says, "But in your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy. Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and a little bit of fear." Phobia.

Wait a minute, what's the balance between ... I'm supposed to have fear and I'm not supposed to have fear. There's a kind of fear we're supposed to have. And where this passage comes from, Peter was actually quoting, he's thinking about Isaiah 8. So let's look at it.

Isaiah 8 says this. God comes to Isaiah and he says, "Do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear and let him be your dread. And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense."

This is what he means. That if you see God as he is, and if you fear him as you ought, then what happens is you don't run away from him, you run to him because there's no place to run away from his wrath. So you run to his mercy and his son, and as a result of that, he becomes a sanctuary. And when God is your sanctuary, you don't have to fear man.

But for those individuals who fear God wrongly, maybe not at all, or they run away from him, he becomes to them a stone of offense. And therefore, they must spend the rest of their day being and living in the fear of man.

You see what he's saying to us? That when he says, "Servants, be subject to your masters and do it in a way that's marked by fear," he's not saying fear them. He's saying, "Your fear is in God. You're being mindful of God. God, you, I want you to be glorified in this situation. This person is the authority, this person is mistreating me, but I want to honor you in this situation." So we need to keep God in view.

The last thing is that Christ provides us a model to follow. I want to encourage you to never forget that we're followers of Jesus. Sometimes we think, "Well, we're Christians." We are, but there's a lot of things in the world called Christian that are not followers of Jesus.

Verse 21 says this. "For to this you've been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you might follow in his steps." In other words, for this you've been called. What he's saying is this. This model that we just discussed, this is your calling in Jesus Christ. That when you feel sorrowful because you're being mistreated, you're mindful of God, so you don't retaliate and you respond with goodness, and God says, "Great."

Do you know anyone else who did that? Do you know anyone else in history? Maybe even this book who, ready, felt sorrowful because he was being mistreated, and yet being mindful of God's will, he didn't retaliate with his power, but instead he continued to do good. Maybe like when they put nails in his hand and he said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they're doing." This is why we have this calling, for two reasons.

First is because he suffered for you. He suffered for you. And then he extrapolates and he tells us how he suffered in verse 24 and 25. He says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you’ve been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but now you returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.”

Do you not see that this is the sweetest news in all the world, that our sins brought us everlasting ruin before a holy God, and God sent Christ to fix that? By dying and taking our sins upon himself, bearing them for us. But then he goes on, and he says, that’s not the only reason.

You go back to the 21, it says, “Not only did he suffer for us and bear our sins, he did this to leave us an example, that we would behave like him.” What was his example? Well, it’s in verse 22. “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten.” See what he’s saying? Jesus went into a situation where he was mistreated, and he didn’t sin, he didn’t lie, he didn’t revile, he didn’t threaten.

What did he do? “He continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” He entrusted his wrath to the father’s justice. You see, when we’re mistreated, every bone in us says, “If I let it go, justice won’t prevail. Forgiveness means release.” See, laying down the burden of vengeance is simply trusting God’s promise that he’s going to pick it up.

God is committed to upholding his justice by punishing every single sin, either by the wrongdoer who doesn’t trust in Christ and hell, or by Christ on the cross where all of our wrongs were paid.

It’s the last application, let’s not lose sight of the cross while facing injustice. Let the substitution of Jesus sit upon your heart. Let this picture influence your response when you are mistreated. What’s that mean? It means that if I’m standing between this picture and you, and I revile you, this is supposed to influence how you respond back to me.

We cannot let this sight go. We’re followers of this man. Let’s respond in a way so that people see a reflection of this man. And for those of you who’ve never trusted Christ, I welcome you to do that right now, to admit that you are a sinner, that you need a savior and you cannot save yourself, to repent of trying to save yourself, to put your faith and trust in the one who came, who bore your sin, who gave you an example, who was so mistreated and yet he endured in love, to put your faith in him and to confess him as Lord. The Bible says he forgives you of all of your sin. He brings you into his family. He makes you a citizen of heaven. It’s why you’re alive. Trust Christ and live.



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