

## It's Just **Not** About Here and Now!

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by Wayne Goff

**I** honestly don't know if you and I will ever truly get it! The New Testament is **full** of instructions which make it abundantly clear that we are "*strangers and pilgrims*" here on **this** earth who are to develop our hearts and minds for the eternal kingdom to come! And that means we are to sacrifice this world for the next! Yet we live in our fragile "*tabernacles*" hoping and wishing for life to go on here and now as though that is all that matters! Arghhhh!!!!

I believe that Jesus explained our earthly plight with these words: "*the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (**Matt. 26:41**). It is so easy to sacrifice *then* for **now**; *tomorrow* for **today**; *eternity* for the **temporary**. It is difficult for earthly creatures to long for the heavenly.

What brought these thoughts to mind is my daily reading that brought me to **1 Peter 2:13-21**. If you read carefully, you will see this common sacrificial thread in every line.

- Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake — kings, governors, etc. (**v. 13**) — no matter how evil they might be. This is to be done for the promotion of God's spiritual kingdom through our *sacrificial* lives. The instruction makes no sense if you look at it from only an earthly standpoint. But when you see the long term effect, it makes perfect sense.
- The will of God is that by always having a sacrificial spirit in honoring others, you may put to silence the "*ignorance of foolish men*" (**v. 15**) — and thereby promote good will by sacrificing our own "rights" that the kingdom of God might be glorified when men see our good works and give God the credit (**Matt. 5:16**).
- Don't use your Christian freedom as a "*cloak*" (cover) for a sinful life, **v. 16**. If you do, then you are providing an opportunity for the enemies of Christianity to blaspheme God, Christ, and His holy church! This is the very opposite of God's desire to promote the gospel through peace, love and long-suffering.
- "*Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king*" (v. 17). It's not about *you and me*, it's about **others** — **all others!** Christianity is not promoted by earthly-minded, self-centered "disciples"(?).
- Christian servants are to be submissive even to the **harshes**t masters, **vv. 18-20**. Because if you suffer **wrong** *patiently*, thinking of how that example will magnify God, then you live a life commendable before God! Wow! That doesn't exactly fit the current mindset, now does it? And again, it makes no sense to one who is living for the present! The carnal mind says "Claim your rights! Cry foul! Get that evil slave owner busted! Do everything you can to be free! You deserve it!" But God says, "Be patient. Take wrongful abuse patiently. Look to God for comfort and strength. That's what My Son Jesus did when He was so mistreated!" (It's hard to argue with that!)
- Christ's example for us was to come to the earth, give His life a "*ransom*" for many (**Matt. 20:28**), **sacrifice** His life as "*the lamb of God*" (**Jn. 1:29**), **become poor** though He was rich in heaven (**2 Cor. 8:9**), thereby teaching us that it is better to **give** than to *receive*! So when Jesus was wrongfully reviled, threatened and killed — it was not for **His** *here and now*, but for **our** *there and then*! (**1 Pet. 2:23-25**)

So here's the lesson you and I may never truly get: "*For to **this** (sacrificial suffering and giving) you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps*" (**1 Peter 2:21**). When we put on "*the mind of Christ*" (**Phil. 2:5**), then Peter's instructions make perfect sense. Oh boy....

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