

# Submission When Providence is Harsh

## 1 Peter 2:18-25

**Introduction** – If you are a Christian then you need to know that you have been called to obedience even in the difficult things. More important than a slave gaining his freedom and more important than you being treated fairly, is your calling to endure unjust suffering without returning evil for evil and without harboring bitterness. We must learn from Jesus why He would dare to allow others to mistreat Him, and then we must learn to imitate Him.

**Submission Even When Harsh** (vv18-20) – This strong and important teaching is often overlooked because of its politically incorrect context.

**Slavery** (v18) – Our egalitarian, humanistic, unsubmitive culture proclaims that slavery *in and of itself* is a wicked practice. However, the Bible permits Christians to own slaves and requires slaves to act in a particular way towards their masters. Whom do we follow? And so, this teaching is for slaves towards their masters, even if their masters are unreasonable and abusive. How much more, it should be argued, is this teaching for us in less harsh, less unreasonable relationships in which we find ourselves?

**“With all fear”** – Servants are to fear their masters because they fear God (v13- “*for the Lord’s sake*”). Our submission to authority is not because of who *they* are, but because of who God is.

**To the Good and To the Harsh** – “Salute the uniform” some have said. Whether he is respectable or not, the one whom God has placed in authority over you deserves your submission because God has placed Him there.

**Motivation** (v19) – We are not to roll over and submit out of fear of man, but ‘*because of conscience toward God*’. It is because of our faith in One who will justify us and glorify Himself in the end. Notice, we are to ‘endure’, so it is only for a time. Is it a privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ? (Acts 5:41, Phil 1:29, 3:10).

**Suffering Wrongfully** (vv19-20) – That is not to say every time you suffer it is because you are being wrongfully mistreated. Make sure you don’t deserve it.

**“This is commendable”** (vv19-20) – This translation does not mean you have earned anything before God. Literally, it could be translated, “*this is grace*”. In other words, if you act this way, when it is so unnatural to the flesh, then here is the evidence of the Spirit of God working in you. God sees this as a tribute to His grace.

**Our Calling in Christ** (vv21-23) – Every time you are mistreated, you must remember that it is no random act of chance. For Christians, this is your calling.

**To Follow His Example** (v 21) – Jesus is our example in suffering unjustly. This verse is not teaching that He is only an example. He really took our sins upon Himself and bore the wrath of God for those sins on our behalf. He is our substitute, our propitiation, and in Him, full satisfaction to the Father’s justice is found. (Rom 5:8-10, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 John 2:1-2). But He is also an example of how to live when we are treated unjustly.

**To Suffer Even if not for Sin** (v22) – Here is another important Christian doctrine that is denied today. Christ was sinless (2 Cor 5:21), and as such was the spotless Lamb of the Old Testament shadows, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Nor should there be sin in us causing us to suffer.

**To Commit Ourselves to God’s Care** (v23) – We are to imitate Christ in His trust in the One who judges righteously. Here is the secret to patient endurance. You are not saying that justice doesn’t matter. You are not saying that vengeance is wrong. You are saying that vengeance is God’s, that He is the final judge, and that you trust Him to judge His enemies and vindicate His children – just as He did for His Son.

**Efficacious Suffering** (vv24-25) – See what Christ endured, what it accomplished, and consider your own participation in unjust suffering.

**He Bore our Sins** (v24) – Christ did not die to provide the potential salvation of each and every person in the world. He secured the salvation of those for whom He died. He bore their sins. He healed them. His suffering accomplished exactly what God intended for it to accomplish.

**How Do We Die To Sin?** – In the context of this passage, we die to sin when we deny our natural tendency to pay back evil for evil, when we do not demand ‘justice’ now on our terms for our suffering, when we suffer patiently with our faith in God. “*This is commendable*”. “*This is grace*”. We die to sin when we deny that unjust suffering cannot effectually produce anything good. We see what God the Father did in Christ’s suffering, and so we rejoice to share in the fellowship of those sufferings that we might share in the efficacious work of those sufferings.

**Our Shepherd** (v25) – Jesus is our Pastor, our Elder, and Bishop over our souls. This should strengthen our love for Psalm 23. Do you trust this Shepherd to use His staff and rod appropriately? Do you trust Him to prepare a table before you in the presence of your enemies? Only then will you endure unjust suffering and bring great glory to your Father.