

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"Appealing Versus Rebelling – Part II."*

Two Wednesdays ago the leadership shared that at this time we feel led to submit to the government, and appeal through letters, praying, and fasting.

Last Sunday I began explaining why we came to this conclusion, and I'm continuing that explanation this morning.

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Before we look at the verses let me remind you of the first lesson from last week...

### **LESSON 1: WE DON'T SUBMIT TO SIN.**

I left this in your bulletins, so you don't have this nagging question about how far submission to government extends. There is a point that we disobey, and I discussed that extensively in last week's sermon.

But currently, we – the elders – don't think we've reached this point, b/c we don't think the government is telling us to sin. Later in this sermon I'll share why I don't believe the government is telling us to sin.

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Let's look at **Rom 13:1**...

**Rom 13:1a Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.**

This is similar to what we read last week in **1 Pet 2:13**...

**1 Pet 2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution**

And it's similar to **Titus 3:1**...

**Titus 3:1 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities**

Titus was a pastor. When Paul told Titus to **remind them**, he meant, remind his congregation **to be submissive to rulers and authorities**.

The only reason I can imagine Paul telling Titus to give his congregation this reminder is we must be reminded **to be submissive to rulers and authorities**.

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And if there's any time that we probably most needed to be reminded of this, it's when we don't want to submit to the government...which makes this particularly fitting, b/c I can't remember another time more people wanted to disobey government.

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The Greek word for **be subject** or **be submissive** is *hypotasso* (pr: who-puh-toss-oh). It means "to obey," which is why it's translated as obey elsewhere in the NT...

For example, **Titus 2:5** commands wives to obey their husbands...

**Titus 2:5 (NKJV) 5 [wives should] be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient (*hypotasso*) to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.**

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John MacArthur said, “*The Greek word [for be subject] was used of a soldier’s absolute obedience to his superior officer. Scripture makes one exception to this command: when obedience to civil authority would require disobedience to God’s Word.*” ...or would require sinning, which is why we said we wouldn’t submit to sin.

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*Hypotasso* (pr: who-puh-toss-oh) is the same Greek word used to command wives to submit to their husbands:

- **1 Pet 3:1 Likewise, wives, be subject (*hypotasso*) to your own husbands**
- **Eph 5:22 Wives, submit (*hypotasso*) to your own husbands, as to the Lord.**

The reason I mention this is the same word commanding wives to submit to their husbands is...

To be consistent, whatever we think it means to submit to government, we must also apply that to wives submitting to their husbands.

So if we say, “*Well, I don’t think we need to submit to the government, I think we only need to show honor or respect,*” then we must also say, “*Well, I don’t think wives need to submit to their husbands, I think they only need to show honor or respect.*”

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Consider this verse...

**Eph 5:24 Now as the church submits (*hypotasso*) to Christ, so also wives should submit (*hypotasso*) in everything to their husbands.**

The marriage relationship is a picture of our relationships to Christ:

- Christ is the husband
- The church is the wife

Wives are commanded to submit to their husbands the way we’re commanded to submit to Christ.

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The reason I mention this is – again – to be consistent, whatever we think it means to submit to government, we must also apply that to our submission to Christ.

So if we say, “*Well, I don’t think we need to submit to government, I think we only need to show government honor or respect,*” then we must also say, “*Well, I don’t think the church needs to submit to Christ, I think we only need to show Him honor and respect.*”

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Look at the next part of **verse 1**...

**Rom 13:1b For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.**

The word **For** introduces the reason we should submit to governing authorities. Their authority is given by God.

Because God is sovereign – which is to say all authority belongs to Him – if people have authority, He gave it to them.

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Listen to what Jesus said when He was before Pilate...

**John 19:11 “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had BEEN GIVEN YOU FROM ABOVE.”**

Pilate was an ungodly man. He turned Jesus over to be crucified. But Jesus made the point that even the authority he had was given by God.

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This doesn't mean that God is responsible for the sins of people in authority – they're still responsible for their sins, such as murdering babies or perverting marriage – but it does mean the authority they abused came from God.

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Let's imagine something for a moment...

Imagine Paul wrote this when the Roman emperor at the time might not have been a Christian, but was at least a moral man.

What could we say?

*“Well, Paul told them to submit, b/c the emperor was halfway decent. But we're being told to submit to Governor Inslee and he's way worse than the emperor in Paul's day.”*

Who was the emperor in Paul's day?

Nero.

Over the last few weeks I've heard people say terrible things about Governor Inslee, usually to argue why we don't need to submit to him. I'm not going to defend the governor, but I will say this...

Even if everything said about Governor Inslee was true, Nero would still be ten times worse....yet Paul still commanded believers to submit to his authority.

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Since all authority is given by God, to resist authority is to resist God.

Look at the next verse...

**Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.**

We're resisting God when we resist the authority over us b/c He's the One who put the authority over us...and this brings us to Lesson 2...

## LESSON 2: RESISTING AUTHORITY IS RESISTING GOD.

You could say, *"I don't like your interpretation of the verse."*

I didn't interpret the verse. I read it.

I don't know how anyone could read these words without acknowledging that resisting the government is resisting what God has appointed...b/c that's what the verse says.

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John MacArthur said, *"Since all government is God-ordained, disobedience is rebellion against God."*

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Rhea has gotten old enough that sometimes we put her in charge. We tell the kids, *"If you disobey her, it's like you're disobeying us."*

Why?

Because we gave her some of our authority.

Similarly, God put governments in charge, and when we resist them, we resist Him b/c He gave them some of His authority.

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And let me tell you why I'm trying to make this clear...

It's not b/c I'm trying to upset anyone:

- I don't have an agenda
- I don't have an ax to grind
- I don't even want to tell you this:
  - I want to disobey
  - I want to preach to a full church
  - I want to see all of you again

But...

I care about you and the verse says **those who resist [authority] will incur judgment:**

- I don't want to bring judgment on myself
- I don't want to bring judgment on my family
- I don't want to bring judgment on my church

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One thing I've heard many times throughout this situation is that:

- We shouldn't fear the virus
- We should only fear God

Agreed!

And it's my fear of God that makes me want to obey this verse and avoid judgment...and help you avoid judgment.

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We often talk about a biblical worldview:

- We say we want a biblical worldview
- We say we want to raise our church to have biblical worldviews

What does it mean to have a biblical worldview?

It means to look at the world around us – the people, decisions, events, and circumstances – and interpret them through the pages of Scripture.

But this is particularly difficult to do during this season, b/c of the emotions involved...and this brings us to Lesson 3...

### **LESSON 3: WE MUST (PART I) THINK BIBLICALLY VERSUS EMOTIONALLY.**

The quarantine has become very emotionally charged for good reason:

- Our lives have been changed dramatically
- We know the quarantine negatively affects people financially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually...in that we can't be w/ our brothers and sisters in Christ
- We might not know anyone personally who has the Coronavirus, but we know plenty of people personally affected by the quarantine...b/c it's affecting everyone

We're told:

- We can't see loved ones
- We can't worship the way we want
- Some people are told they can't work

When our freedoms are affected this dramatically we – understandably – begin asking whether the government has the authority to do this.

Now based on this lesson, how should we evaluate what the government is doing?

With our emotions...or with Scripture?

If we want to have a biblical worldview – which I believe we do – we must set our feelings and emotions aside, and interpret what we’re seeing through Scripture.

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And we need to do something else...

I’ve heard many Christians recently talking about the Constitution and what is and isn’t constitutional. I understand that b/c as American citizens, this is the law for our country, so it should definitely be taken into consideration.

And if you’re an American first, and a Christian second, then here’s the approach you should take:

- You should study the Constitution and quote Articles and Sections from it
- You should interpret the world around you through the pages of the Constitution
- You should figure out what the Constitution says and do your best to hold to it

But...

If you’re a Christian first, and an American second:

- You should be thankful for your American citizenship...
- You should be thankful for the Constitution

But:

- You’re more thankful for your citizenship in heaven
- You’re more thankful for the Word of God

So you take this approach:

- You study the Bible and quote chapters and verses of it
- You interpret the world around you through the pages of the Bible
- You figure out what the Bible says and do your best to hold to it

As wonderful of a document as the Constitution is – and I do think it’s wonderful – I would like to think that the people I pastor would say even the Constitution is NOT the final authority for them...even on government.

Since **Rom 13:1** says all authority comes from God, we should answer our questions about the government’s authority by looking to Scripture:

- Scripture defines the government’s role for us
- Scripture defines the range and limitations of the government’s authority

In other words, we can look to Scripture to see what the government should and shouldn’t do.

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With that in mind, look down at **verse 4**...

**Rom 13:4 for he (this is the government) is God’s servant for your good.**

God established government b/c:

- We’re sinful...

- We can't govern ourselves...
- Without human government:
  - We'd have anarchy and lawlessness
  - We'd have Lord of the Flies

Therefore, government is for our good.

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But let me point out the obvious, nagging argument...

Sometimes governments do not act **for [our] good:**

- Sometimes governments act for their own good
- Sometimes governments act absolutely wickedly

We could have an entire sermon – or sermon series – on all the evils governments have done.

So the question is...

How do we know when the government is acting **for good**...or acting for evil?

Based on our lesson, we interpret the government's actions through the pages of Scripture.

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And here's the question we're all wrestling with...

Is the quarantine **for our good?**

Let's look at Scripture to see.

Please turn to **Lev 13**...third book of the Bible...Gen, Exo, Lev.

These first verses are about infected people...

**Lev 13:1** The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 **“When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a case of leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests,** Although many of your Bibles say **leprous disease** there's an asterisk, b/c it's referring to anything infectious or contagious.

**Lev 13:3** and the priest shall examine the diseased area on the skin of his body. And if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a case of leprous disease. When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him unclean.

There's no question that these people were infected.

Then:

- They were isolated, or quarantined, and kept outside the camp

- They were kept away from the religious life of the nation.

Interestingly, this has similarities w/ our current situation:

- We're isolated from our brothers and sisters in Christ
- With the church doors closed, we feel kept away from our religious lives

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Let me address a common argument I've heard, and I want to say very clearly, that I think it's reasonable...

*"We should open the church doors b/c we have faith. By keeping the church doors closed, we're being fearful, and faithless."*

These verses reveal the wisdom God wants applied...and this brings us to the next part of Lesson 3...

### LESSON 3: WE MUST (PART II) BALANCE FAITH AND WISDOM.

Here's what I mean...

- Imagine parents who say, *"We let our children play in the road, b/c we have faith God will protect them."*
  - We wouldn't say these parents have faith.
  - We would say they're foolish.
- Imagine people who say, *"I don't lock my doors at night, b/c I have faith God will protect me."*
  - We wouldn't say these people have faith.
  - We'd say they're foolish.
- Imagine people who say, *"I need a job, but I just sit at home instead of looking for one, b/c I have faith God will provide one."*
  - We wouldn't say these people have faith.
  - We would say they're foolish...and lazy.

The point is...

It's not just an issue of having faith versus lacking faith. It's also an issue of being wise versus being foolish.

And as Christians, we should always choose the path of faith AND wisdom...and that's what God demonstrates in these verses in Leviticus.

Notice He didn't tell His people:

- *"You should keep the infected people in your midst and have faith that I'll protect you."*
- *"If you remove the infected people you're acting in fear, and I've told you not to fear."*
- *"If you trust Me, you won't be afraid of getting infected...and if you get infected, simply trust that was my will."*

Instead, God wanted them to apply wisdom to the situation and take certain steps.

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This is why...

In some parts of the nation when the weather gets particularly bad b/c of snowstorms or icy roads:

- Churches close their doors
- And even if the church is left open, some people decide to stay home

I don't condemn these churches or people:

- I don't say, "*They're disobeying God. They're fearful and lacking faith.*"
- Instead, this is what the path of faith and wisdom looks like for them.

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Similarly, some people in our church have said that if the government allowed us to open our doors, they would still watch the live stream at home and return at a later time.

As much as I would love to have these people at church, I wouldn't condemn them and say, "*They're fearful and lacking faith.*" Instead, this is what the path of faith and wisdom looks like for them.

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Think about this...

Leviticus contains some commands for radical cleansing that were very difficult to obey...such as tearing down people's homes!

Old and New Testament saints had had to embrace these commands by faith, b/c they had no knowledge of bacteria, viruses, and germs...and that was the case for millennia until the invention of the microscope.

But when – by faith – they applied the wisdom from these commands, they benefited.

For example...

The Black Plague, also known as the Bubonic Plague, peaked around 1350, and killed up to 200 million people.

The Jews in Europe followed the cleansing commands in Leviticus. They:

- Washed away germs...before they understood germs
- Practiced sanitation
- Destroyed clothing and items
- And practiced the quarantine commands that we're reading about

By faith, they applied the wisdom in God's Word...and they didn't experience the same suffering, sickness, and death as the rest of the population.

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Now here's where this gets very interesting...

The main argument against the government's actions sounds like this...

*“The government is quarantining healthy people, but God only wanted sick people quarantined.”*

The problem is, that's not true.

Notice the first word of **verse 4** is the word **But** – which is a word of contrast – b/c we're moving from discussing infected people to discussing people who might be infected...or might not be healthy.

Look at **verse 4**...

**Lev 13:4 But if the spot is white in the skin of his body and appears no deeper than the skin** (which simply means someone has a mark that might be something or it might be nothing...it might be leprosy or it might just be a mark), **and the hair in it has not turned white** (which means they DON'T have the common sign of leprosy), **the priest shall shut up the diseased person** (it says **diseased** but it simply means the person w/ the mark) **for seven days** (even though there might not be anything wrong w/ them). **5 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the disease is checked and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall shut him up FOR ANOTHER SEVEN DAYS** (poor guy is going on his 14<sup>th</sup> day of quarantine when there might not be anything wrong w/ him !). **6 And the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day** (or the seventh day of the second seven week of quarantine, or the 14<sup>th</sup> day), **and if the diseased area has faded and the disease has not spread in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only an eruption. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean** (and then he can finally return to the people).

This is important...

These people were quarantined when there was only the possibility that they were infected...they could've been completely healthy...but they're quarantined anyway.

I know some of you have John MacArthur Study Bibles. Let me read what he wrote on **verse 2**, and I could read plenty of other commentaries saying something similar...

*“The symptoms described in **verses 2, 6, 10, 18, 30 and 39** are not sufficient for a diagnosis of the clinical condition. For the protection of the people, observation and isolation were demanded for all **SUSPECTED** cases of what could be a contagious disease.”*

In other words, if there was suspicion, or potential for infection, they were quarantined – even if they were healthy – b/c according to God, it's better to error on the side of caution – or wisdom – than to allow an entire nation to become infected.

And this brings us to Lesson 4...

## LESSON 4: QUARANTINING THE HEALTHY OCCURRED IN SCRIPTURE.

The White House put together their Coronavirus Task Force. I jokingly told Katie we could've saved a lot of time and money if the president would've had a Bible study on Lev 13-15.

It's nice to see the recommendations the Task Force made to flatten the curve, but God said the same things to His people 3,500 year ago.

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Some Christians are objecting to the quarantine, b/c they believe only those w/ confirmed infections should be quarantined. But:

- That's not the case in Scripture.
- That's not the wisdom God shared w/ His people

Please hear me when I say this...

God gave Israel's leaders the authority to quarantine based on suspicion and concern, and when I see God give Israel's leaders the authority to do something I'm not going to object to our leaders doing something similar.

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I understand this isn't a perfect correlation...

You might be saying, *"Okay, Pastor Scott it might be reasonable to put people outside the camp, but we're all being put outside the camp, b/c we're all being quarantined."*

I get it, but b/c of the circumstances, I don't see a way around it:

- Israel could look for skin diseases on people
- We can't look for the Coronavirus, b/c people can be infected and show no symptoms...but still infect others

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Consider this verse...

### **Psalm 91:6 The pestilence that stalks in darkness.**

This is a fitting way to describe the Coronavirus. It spreads invisibly and silently.

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I know this is hard for people to hear, and I will be the first person to say it's hard for understandable reasons...

Our government has a history of...

- Overstepping their boundaries
- Intruding into the jurisdiction of the family and the church

So I understand why there's suspicion when the government imposes on our freedom...and this quarantine has affected our freedom more than anything we've ever seen before.

But I also understand that we have a moral and spiritual responsibility to evaluate every situation according to its own merits...and as we look at this situation biblically, we see the quarantine having biblical support.

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We might disagree w/:

- The quarantine's effectiveness...
- Whether it should be lifted...
- Whether it's become worse than the virus itself

But we can't argue that there's no biblical precedent.

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Now please hear me when I say this...

If I'm going to draw a line in the sand and tell my church:

- *"We will not do this. The government is way out of line."*
- I'm going to do that with:
  - Murdering babies
  - Destroying biblical marriage
  - Accumulating trillions in debt
  - Creating a welfare state...
  - Stealing from people through socialism...

All things the Bible condemns.

But I'm not going to do that w/ something – like the quarantine – that looks so much like something God told His people to do in the Old Testament.

And why is that?

Since:

- **Rom 13:2** says **Whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.**
- And since submission to government is commanded so clearly in Rom 13, 1 Pet 2, and Titus 3...

It is a very serious thing to lead the church to disobey the government, and I'm only going to do that when there's clear conflict w/ God's Word.

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Now I need to address something else...

Jeff Durbin is the pastor of Apologia Church. I highly doubt that Jeff knows who I am, but I know who he is:

- I have been blessed by his ministry
- I love watching his street evangelism
- I have been challenged – and convicted – by all he's done to fight against the murder of babies...and recognize I would do well to follow his example

He preached a popular message titled, *“Sermon to the Governor of Arizona.”*

Considering he’s preaching that we should do the opposite of what I’m preaching, I feel obligated to share a few points...

He said...

*“We will submit to civil government when it agrees w/ God’s Word. We will disobey civil government when it conflicts w/ God’s Word.”*

I agree w/ this statement.

But when the civil government is telling us to do something that’s very similar to what God told Israel’s leaders to do, that’s not conflicting w/ God’s Word...that’s agreeing w/ it.

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Last week and this week I said we submit to authority unless we’re called to sin, and I’m not going to say our government is telling us to sin when there’s precedent for their actions in Scripture.

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Jeff also said...

*“If you read your Bible just a little bit you’d know all the heroes in the Bible resisted authority.”*

This is completely untrue.

Next week we’ll look at a few of the accounts that demonstrate godly people in Scripture typically appealed to authority – versus resisted – which is what led us – as elders – to want to appeal.

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I don’t have time to discuss everything Jeff said, but if I was going to summarize his message in a sentence it would be this...

*“I am not going to submit, b/c I disagree.”*

Here’s the big problem w/ this argument...

Submission is in place entirely for when we don’t agree. If we agreed we wouldn’t have to submit.

So the question isn’t, “Do we agree w/ the government.” The question is...

“Is the government telling us to sin?”

I would say, “No.” Then we’re expected to submit.

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Now let me share something else...

Because of some of the things we've discussed, such as:

- Governments overstepping their bounds...
- Governments doing evil things...

I understand people saying:

- *I have trouble submitting to the government, b/c I don't trust them.*
- *It would be easier for me to submit to the government if I could trust them.*
- *I do trust God...I just don't trust the government.*

But this is what I'd say...

We're never expected to submit to people b/c we trust them. We're expected to submit b/c we trust God...and this brings us to Lesson 5...

## **LESSON 5: WE SUBMIT BECAUSE WE TRUST GOD.**

I hope this sermon and last Sunday's sermon conclude w/ two important points about submission:

- Last week I said when we submit, we're submitting to God, since He's the One who commands us to submit.
- This week I'm saying when we submit, we're submitting b/c we trust God, since He's the One who commands us to submit

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Let me give you some verses that make this point...

When Peter wrote about Jesus' submission in **1 Peter 2**, he said Jesus sets an example for us...and part of His example in submission was trusting God...

**1 Pet 2:21 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. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 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** (referring to His Father).

So Jesus set an example for us in His submission, and how was He able to submit?

By trusting His Father.

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One chapter later, Peter discusses wives submitting to their husbands, and listen to what he says...

**1 Pet 3:5 (NKJV) For in this manner, in former times, the holy women WHO TRUSTED IN GOD also adorned themselves, BEING SUBMISSIVE TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS,**

Why did these holy women submit to their husbands?

- Because they trusted their husbands?

- Because their husbands were perfect?

No, b/c they trusted God.

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So let me be perfectly clear...

- I'm not telling you to submit to the government b/c I trust them
- I'm telling you to submit to the government b/c you trust God...and b/c the government isn't telling us to sin...they're telling us to do something that looks like God told His people to do

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And let me be clear about something else...

I don't have any illusions about how these sermons sound to some...

- I know what would sound heroic, faith-filled, and courageous is something like this: *"Let's defy the government. Let's throw open the doors of our church. Who do they think they are?"*
- I know the sermons I'm preaching sound cowardly, and faithless to some: *"Submit to government, if you resist the government you're resisting God."*

My point in sharing this is two-fold...

First, I want you to know I don't like what I'm preaching. I don't want anyone saying, "Pastor Scott says all this, b/c he loves our government."

I've never preached any sermons in my life that I dreaded more than these. I know this isn't popular. Every Sunday it's like, "How many people are going to be upset this week?"

I'm not complaining. I'm just being honest.

The other reason I share this is simply to point out that...

I must trust God too, not just regarding submitting to authority, but regarding preaching the sermons that command us to submit to authority.

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Let me close w/ this, which encourages me, and hopefully encourages you too...

**1 Pet 2:23** says Jesus [**entrusted**] **Himself to Him who judges justly.**

The word for **entrusted** means, *"to give into the hands of another."*

It's the same word used in **John 19:16** when it says [**Pilate**] **delivered** [**Jesus**] **over to** [**the Jews**] **to be crucified....**or put Him in their hands.

The word for **delivered** is the same word for **entrusted.**

The point is, just like Pilate put Jesus' in the Jews' hands, at the same time, Jesus was putting Himself in His Father's hands.

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Let's let this be an example...

My encouragement for each of you – and for myself – is this...

Submit by putting yourself in the Father's hands.

**Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.**

Let's pray.