

**TITLE: "Silencing the Critics" (Part 6)**

**PASSAGE: 1 Peter 2:16-17**

**THEME: The Believer's Submission to Civil Authority**

**NUMBER: 02071PE2.16-17(54)**

**DATE: February 11, 2007**

---

## Read Passage

### This is it . . .

Today we finish this section that we began several weeks ago. It's really been a blessing to my heart (trust yours as well); but I'm also anxious to move forward to see what God would have for us in vv. 18-25.

Recently, someone coined t/phrase "Islamofascism" as a term used to describe t/political & religious philosophy of Islam, part. as it relates to terrorism.

I was taken aback this past week to discover that a campaign worker of Democratic presidential hopeful, used t/term "Christofascist" to describe elements of Xnty, particularly as it relates to politics.

I'm sure that this disparaging remark is largely undeserved & uncalled for. But I am a bit concerned that there may be elements of t/CH today that do deserve that title.

John MacArthur observes the danger when he writes:

"With the society sliding headlong into greater and greater evil, debauchery, violence, and corruption, and seemingly populated outside the church by no one but 'modern barbarians,' the temptation is strong for believers to jump into the cultural fray as self-righteous social/political reformers and condescending moralizers." [Why Government Can't Save You, 127]

### We're not to be {cite above}

When we are those things, t/world does see us as "Christofascists."

Again, I'm not saying that Xns should eschew political involvement // Xns should not get involved // we should avoid addressing moral issues. Not saying that at all. I'm thankful for genuine believers whom God has called to serve as judges, senators, members of congress, just as I am thankful for those believers whom God has called to serve as college or univ. professors, school teachers, factory workers, students, housewives, professionals, auto mechanics, small business owners, whatever. Whatever God has called you to, be salt and light there.

### **It's really a matter of focus**

Realize that your focus is to be on truth; you're to have an all-encompassing worldview of truth, truth that's grounded in t/God of truth, & t/Word of truth.

Realize that it's only t/truth of t/Gospel that will transform our culture. We do that one heart at a time.

### **It's like raising children**

You can teach them to be religious. You can discipline them and exert your will upon them to act as you want them to act. But if you never address t/fund. issue of t/heart what happens? They rebel. They grow up to be all those things you fought against. Why? They never knew t/fundamental reason why they were to act a certain way. Was all external, divorced from t/heart. Address t/heart w/truth & Spirit of God has something with which to work, to transform.

Same thing w/our culture. We can get all red-faced & flood t/polling booth & pass laws, but if we never address t/issues of t/heart - men's souls as standing guilty B4 a holy God, it's all temporary, like putting a band-aid on a fracture.

BTW - If I can draw from that analogy of child-rearing once again, there also has to be a home-life, example of parents, that's consistent w/the message. You can have t/right message, you can address t/heart, but if your life doesn't demonstrate those things your mouth utters, they're not listening.

Same thing w/the world around us - {cite vv. 12 & 15}

We've got a nation of mega-churches // million dollar mega-ministries. By some accounts, more Americans ID themselves as Christian or Evang. than ever B4. What's wrong? What's wrong? Why does our culture not reflect that? Issues isn't a lack of money // lack of big buildings replete w/state of t/art technology & a Starbucks. Issue is a faulty message. The CH in America is like that of t/CH of Laodicea in Rev. chapt. 3 {read vv. 15-19}

I've never put much stock in polls. Was Mark Twain who said, "There are lies, damnable lies, & statistics." And I'm not a huge George Barna proponent. But I sense his recent survey is quite accurate – a survey which concluded that only 9% of evangelical Xns have a biblical worldview (WV is defined by them as believing in absolute truth, that this absolute truth is defined by t/Bible, that JC lived a sinless life, that God is an all-powerful, all-knowing Creator of all, that He providentially rules t/world today, that Satan is a real person, that a Xns are responsible to share their faith w/others, and that t/Bible is accurate). 9%! Means that 91% do not have a view of life that reflects t/truth of historic Xnty.

Barna goes on to say that "few . . . consistently demonstrate the love, obedience and priorities of Jesus. The primary reason that [these professed Xns] do not act like Jesus is because they do not think like [him]." [Whistleblower, April, 2005, 15]

Might I suggest that t/reason why 91% of professing believers do not act like Him whom they profess is because many of them are not regenerate?

### All comes down to truth

What kind of a gospel does t/CH proclaim? An easy Xnty that has no room for t/cross, or one that includes sin & repentance? Do we proclaim health, wealth & ease, or self-denial & sacrifice?

Michael Horton once observed that ==>

". . . the reason so many unbelievers can sit comfortably in our churches and even call themselves born-again Christians is that we give them very little to deny. The offensive message of the cross has been replaced with 'God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,' with the cross tucked somewhere underneath it." [Michael Horton in Christ The Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation, 54-55.]

What would happen if every CH in America began to proclaim t/truth w/o apology or compromise? I can tell you one thing that will happen, a lot of people would leave. We've even seen that happen here. People would leave, t/budget would suffer, might have to sell that mega-church complex, scale down. That's okay. There would be a lot less people walking around masquerading themselves as something they're not. Not a bad thing.

I can't help but think of Jesus in John 6. He was never bashful about t/truth. He says some difficult things in that chapter. He declares that he is God; That He is sovereign; that there is a cost involved in following Him. He even demonstrates his omniscience in knowing from all eternity who would or would not believe in Him (v. 64). He goes on to say that this is more than just knowing, but that God actually determines who can or can't come to Him (v. 65). Reaction? ==> V. 66 says that many of his disciples chucked the whole thing. They walked away. *"We don't want to hear that! C'mon Jesus can't you just minister to our felt needs?"*

John 6:67-69 67 Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.69 "And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

## Stand for the truth & let God be God

Even as it relates to our culture (focus of what we've been studying) There are so many lessons from history that we could draw from on this point. I mentioned t/preaching of Wesley a few weeks ago that was greatly used to transform England. Could add to that t/preaching of Whitefield as well.

But we can go back even further in time to t/16th c. Swiss Reformation. Back B4 t/time of John Calvin, Geneva was a city ruled by sin and vice. The people ran around t/town naked in drunken stupors. Promiscuity was rampant, people were hedonistic, concerned only w/their own pleasure.

The city at that time had a ruling body called the Council of 200. This council passed all kinds of laws against this immoral behavior. But it's indeed true that you can't legislate t/heart, so their laws were pretty much ignored.

So eventually they said, 'Well, maybe the answer is religion. We have been a Catholic country all this time, maybe we need to become a Protestant country.' And so, in 1535, they declared' as The Council, from that time on Geneva was going to be a Protestant country, they would align themselves with the Reformation.

Do you know what happened? Nothing at all, of course! Same problems existed. But they did do something good along the way. They said, 'If we are going to be Reformation city we need a Reformation preacher.'

Martin Luther wasn't available, course. But there was this skinny intellectual from Paris named John Calvin. They sent for him to be their

preacher. He came the following year, 1536. First thing he began to do was to teach the Bible. Might wonder what he was teaching. Was Calvinism, of course! And lots of people didn't like it then any more than they like it today or in the time of Christ.

Wasn't long, a few years, and they chased him away. He went on down the Rhine to Strasbourg where he settled in for about 2 ½ years. In t/meantime things were not going well in Geneva. All of the old problems were continuing. And finally they said, 'Look, we probably should bring this guy Calvin back.' And so they did; he didn't want to go back there, but they finally persuaded him. So he came back in 1541.

Now he didn't have any political power; he didn't have any authority. First year he was there they didn't even bother to pay him. So he certainly didn't even have money. But he did have a Bible and he came back and started to teach it. And the story is he picked up in 1541 exactly where he left off in 1538, 2 ½ years before.

Don't know where he left off, but if it was Romans 9:2, he came back almost three years later, he said something like, 'The last time we were studying verse 2 and I'd like you to open your Bibles to verse 3. He began to teach t/Word to t/people. He taught every day, several times on Sunday. And under the impact of the preaching of the Bible by John Calvin, Geneva was radically transformed. People became converted, when the became converted they stopped behaving like pagans, they started acting like Xns. Immorality drastically declined. People began to be concerned about their neighbors. There were all kinds of poor people in the city, because it was a refuge center for refugees from all over Europe because of the persecutions. They were sleeping out on the grates. They said, 'We need to do something about people.' So they built hospices to take care of them; many were sick, they built hospitals. There were children running all over the place; they said, 'Look, how are these

children going to grow up to be Christians if they can't study the Bible and they can't study the Bible if they can't read, so we better start educating them.' So they established a whole system of schools that began with the youngest grades and went right on up the great Academy established by Calvin where the teaching was for the ministers who went out and spread the Gospel all over French speaking Europe. And they got interested in industry. They brought in the silk industry and other things, and the city began to prosper. John Knox was one who had studied there, and he said years later from where he was in Scotland that in those days Geneva had become literally a new Reformation. The way it happened was by the teaching of the Word. Nothing is more important than that." [Adapted from James M. Boice, "Preaching the Bible: The Sufficiency of Scripture," cassette tape 2, side 2, Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, 2/2/99]

That's one very long introduction to ==>

## **I. The Believer's Submission to Civil Authority: Silencing the Critics (2:13–17)**

The emphasis here is that we, as those who name t/name of X, submit ourselves to governing authorities. We obey t/Law, we respect those political & governmental leaders that God has placed over us. In doing so, v. 15, those who would attempt to scandalize us would have no reason for doing so. Would be silenced.

The command is simple = we saw that in t/first

### **A. The Command for Submission (2:13a)**

**Submit yourselves to every human institution . . .**

### **B. The Motive for Submission (2:13b)**

**. . . for the Lord's sake . . .** (that is, "For the sake of Jesus Christ.")

### **C. The Extent of Submission (2:13c-14)**

**Submit yourselves to every human institution . . .**

## 1. It's to every human institution: Includes Govt. in general

That's t/machinery of men, local, state and federal law.

## 2. It's to every supreme leader

**Submit yourselves to every human institution, whether to a king as one in authority. . .**

## 3. It's to every secondary leader

Those leaders & rulers who are lower on t/political scale. As Peter puts it: **or to governors as those sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.**

## 4. Peter focuses on two specific reasons why these governments and leaders are given by God

**. . . for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.**

## D. The Reason for Submission 2:15

**For this is the will of God, that by doing right you might silence the ignorance of foolish men.**

That is, t/reason for our submission to governing authorities is that the critics be silenced, that those who would jump at t/opp. to speak out against us & against our God have no reason to do so.

## 2. They will literally be muzzled (φτιμωω)

Brings us to our 5<sup>th</sup> point in v. 16==>

## E. The Attitude of Submission 2:16

**[Act] as free men . . .**



## 1. This may be translated

### Submit as free men . . .

No verb. Most natural verb to supply would be "submit" from v. 13.

## 2. This is how we are to behave: as free, liberated, emancipated men & women

In antiquity this phrase would have been understood in light of its opposite: enslaved. Slavery. What we will look at next time in vv. 18-25

### Submit (or act) as free men . . .

## 3. This isn't political freedom (free from the state) or societal freedom (free from servant/master relationships)

This is spiritual freedom. Spiritual freedom is t/best freedom. It's emancipation from sin, from death, from self to serve and worship JC. That sort of freedom can't be constrained. That sort of freedom liberates regardless of circumstances. A man can be a slave & yet be free in X // in prison // bondage to a tyrannical government.

## 4. We are free because we have been redeemed

### a. Remember 1:18-19? {cite}

#### (1) God the Father purchased you!

He paid for you in full. You cost t/very life of His Son who died for you, who took your place.

We saw t/outworking of that from eternity right at very beg. of our study in chapt. 1 - How t/Father Selected you; T/Spirit Sanctified You; Son Saved you. T/Predestinating Work is of t/Father; Convicting = H.S.; Saving = JC.

You are freed from the condemnation of sin (Rom. 6-8); // the penalty of t/law - death (Gal. 3:13); // the bondage of Satan (Heb. 2:14); // the allure of t/world (1 Jn. 5:4); // the power of death (1 Cor. 15:54-56).

## **(2) You see, we were all captive to the slave market of sin**

You know that in antiquity, not even that long ago in our country, there were slave markets. You could go to t/slave market & find myriads of slaves. You could look them over, you could bid on them/purchase them.

### **(a) That's a picture of the believer in Jesus Christ**

You were in t/slave market. Problem is, no one was buying you. It wasn't like God looked you over ahead of time & said, "Oh, she's a good specimen. More worthy than t/others." No, you were dead. No one wants a dead slave! God came along & out of t/freeness of His grace He chose you. He made you alive by His Spirit & He paid for you w/the precious blood of X.

### **b. There's a wonderful passage in Zechariah chapter 11 that I wish we had time to look at**

In Zech. 11 t/prophet Zechariah is asked by God to to symbolically act as Shepherd over His people. Playing t/part of t/Messiah, X.

Passage predicts t/destruction of Jerus. in AD 70 when t/Rom.Gen. Titus Vespasian conquered t/city & destroyed t/Temple. Over 1 million Jews slaughtered.

You have in this passage Zechariah prophetically acting out Israel's rejection of X, something that would not occur for another 500 years.

Toward t/end of t/passage, Zechariah, speaking as JC, says to t/people, "I'm not going to be your Shepherd. You're unfaithful; you have rejected Me so I am going to reject you. And if you think it is good, give me my

wages as a prophet. If not, never mind. What he's really asking is, "*What am I worth to you?*"

12 . . . So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. 13 Then the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

How much did Zech. receive? 30 Shekels of silver, which, according to t/Law was t/price of a slave.

What did he do w/the money? He threw it into the Temple.

Move forward in history about 500 years. Matt. chapt. 26. Jesus & His disciples are only hours away from t/events that would lead to his crucifixion. Key in that regard would be his betrayal by Judas Iscariot.

Matthew 26:14-15 14 Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him [how much?] thirty pieces of silver.

And if you remember, Judas felt remorse, & later in chapt. 27 he throws t/money where? Into t/Temple. What do the Chief Priests do w/the money? Buy a potter's field, a place where potters dig for clay (a piece of relatively worthless land full of holes) to bury strangers in.

Zechariah played this entire scenario out 500 years B4 it occurred.

But, note this (here's my belabored point): JC, t/God of t/Univ. was worth what to sinful men? 30 shekels, t/price of a slave.

He was betrayed for t/price of a common slave! Yet, His blood was of infinite value in redeeming those who really are slaves, slaves to sin, us! We're t/slaves, not Him. What a play on events! That God would humble himself to be bought for t/price of a common slave when in reality it was

through that act that He would purchase out a people for Himself, people who were t/real slaves.

### c. You're Free!

[Act] as free men . . .

### d. Note the rest of the verse

. . . . but not as those using their freedom as a cover for evil, but as servants of God.

Again, this is to be our attitude. This is ==>

### *E. The Attitude of Submission 2:16*

### 5. Here's a bit of a paradox: We are free yet in bondage

We are liberated, yet enslaved // freed, yet held captive. We are L. from sin, yet enslaved to X // Freed from R old self, held captive to do His will.

Ro. 6:22 puts it this way: "You have been freed from sin & enslaved to God..."

### a. You see, there's no such thing as absolute freedom

Myth. People think that they want to be "free." Everyone is enslaved to someone or something. No such thing as freedom from every constraints. Was something the ancient philosophers discovered: man is not really free

2 Peter 2:19 speaks of those who promise freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

Question isn't whether you're in bondage; ? is what are you in bondage to? True freedom comes through bondage to JC (get that?). That's 1 Cor. 7:22: For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

"A freedman could become the slave of the one freeing him." [NLEKGNT]

Genuine freedom liberates the one who is freed to do good.

**[Act] as free men, but not as those using their freedom as a cover for evil, but as servants of God.**

IOW - Don't claim your freedom in X as a way to put a veil (meaning of t/word ἐπικάλυμμα - cover, veil) over your sin.

Point of Romans 5:20-6:23. Should we sin that grace abound? No! Why? You've died to sin. You're dead to sin & alive to God.

## 6. Let's not miss the context

"Respectfully submit to civil authority so that the critics be silenced."

Abuse of freedom as an excuse to disobey authority. {read vv. 13-15}

Temptation might be to think - I'm free in X, my sins are forgiven, & I recognize how evil t/govt. is & unreasonable, so I'm not going to submit myself to it.

Or, I'm going to take matters into my own hands. I'll fight back. I'll get angry. I'll resort to worldly means to accomplish spiritual ends.

1 Peter 2, that Christ left us an example. And then in verse 23 it shows us what that example was. "When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. While He was suffering He uttered no threats. He just kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."

## 7. When Jesus was on earth He was murdered by the coming together of two authorities: the Jewish authority and the Roman authority

He lived under their unjust and unrighteous rule for His life. Yet, He never attacked the government. He never attacked the rulers. He never

attacked those in authority. He never led a protest. He never led in an act of civil disobedience. He never led a demonstration against Roman abuses. He never even protested when they violated every law of justice in His own trial. He spoke truth, He proclaimed t/KD. He called sinners to repent, come to Him and enter His Kingdom. And He simply kept entrusting Himself to the God who judges righteously and He knew God would do right because God was sovereign and the whole world was in His control.

## 8. Two weeks ago we looked at the account in Luke 22

Scribes & chief priests attempted to trick Jesus into saying something they could use to condemn him. So they sent spies who pretended to be righteous, to try to catch Him in some statement, that would render him guilty before Rome. They asked Jesus a question==> “Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

His response==> “Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” And they said, “Caesar’s.” And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

On one side of t/coin = Caesar; Other = pagan God or goddess.

### a. This brings us to a very important issue: How do we reconcile the authority of God and Man (theological & civil)?

Up to this point you may have at times gotten t/impression that I'm telling you to obey t/government or anyone in a position of authority regardless of t/issue. Could be federal or local government. Could be a superior at work. Could be a husband or one's parents. Could be a CH leader.

Some may erroneously think that since God is sovereign, & since He has placed person X over me, whatever person X says I am to do w/o question.

### (1) Here's the principle I want you to understand (very imp!)

Principle is that we submit to those in authority over us unless there is a conflict with a higher authority, the law of God.

Here's a simple way to look at it: We must always do that which God commands; we must never do that which God forbids. Positive/Neg.

We may lawfully disobey any authority when that authority commands us to do something God forbids, or forbids us to do something God commands.

### (a) See this illustrated t/o Scripture

Back during t/time of t/Exodus, t/Hebrew midwives are commanded by Pharaoh to put to death every male child born among them. Did they do that? Heb. 11:23 commends this as an act of faith. They were commanded to do something God forbids: murder innocent children.

Daniel chapt. 3 - The Babylonian Monarch, Nebuch., makes a golden image & demands that everyone, at the appt. time, fall down & worship it. Time comes & three faithful servants of God, (Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-Nego) are present. Do they worship t/image of Nebuch? They were commanded to do something God forbids: worship another god.

Later in Daniel, chapter 6, a conspiracy is formed against Daniel whereby all prayer or petition to anyone other than t/King is strictly forbidden. A faithful Jew prayed three times a day facing Jerusalem. "Daniel, you are commanded not to pray to your God for 30 days." Did Daniel listen? He was forbidden to do something God commanded: pray.

In t/NT - Acts 4:20 t/disciples are commanded to stop preaching X. Do they? They were forbidden to do something God commanded: preach X. See t/same thing in Acts chapt. 5 & their response is: **"We must obey God rather than men."**

Corrie Ten Boom was righteous in saving t/lives of many Jews, contrary to t/wishes of Nazi Germany.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer was right to speak out against Hitler & to strengthen t/underground church.

Martin Niemoeller was right to go on preaching t/gospel even to t/point of being imprisoned. Story is that another preacher came to see him & said to him, "Martin, all you have to do is be silent about some things & they will release you." "So why are you in jail?" To that, Niemoeller replied, "Why aren't you in jail?"

We may lawfully disobey any authority when that authority commands us to do something God forbids, or forbids us to do something God commands.

This may cost us a job, a friendship, a marriage, our money, our freedom, our church, even our life.

### **(b) speaking of churches**

As a nation we are not far from censoring t/message of t/CH (and all Xns). We may only be a few decades (less) away from having t/govt. tell us what we can lawfully teach/preach.

Right now, the greatest threat to t/CH in this regard is the homosexual agenda and the wave of godless paganism in our culture that fuels it.

Groups like the ACLU are already spying on churches to see if they are promoting any political agenda (and if they are, they report them to t./IRS who threatens to take away their tax exempt status). It's not a far cry from that to groups spying on churches to see if they preach or teach that homosexual behavior is sinful. If they do, then t/government comes along & charges t/CH or preacher w/hate crimes. Or Jim & Joe come to be married & you refuse . . .



We may lawfully disobey any authority when that authority commands us to do something God forbids, or forbids us to do something God commands.

## F. The Application of Submission 2:17

### a. Four direct, to the point statements

#### **Honor everyone.**

Everyone is created in God's image & is therefore worthy of honor & respect. Equality of all men is grounded in t/Bible. There's no basis for human respect & dignity apart from t/Bible.

Atheistic Evolutionism upholds t/survival of t/fittest. The fittest have more "worth" than those weaker than they. Relative. We uphold the worth of all men because we believe all men are created in God's image and likeness and are unique creations of His.

Overriding principle/umbrella. Honor everyone, even those who persecute you, even those who hate you.

#### **Love the brethren.**

Saw that in 1:22 {cite}

ROM 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*

HEB 13:1 *Let love of the brethren continue.*

#### **Fear God.**

Saw that also in 1 Peter, 1:17 {cite}

PRO 1:7 *The fear of the \Lord\ is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

## Honor the King.

This brings the passage full-circle back to where it began in v. 13.

---

### This is how we silence the critics

Also how we proclaim t/excellencies of He who called us out of darkness into the light. All comes down to truth, truth of God's Word.

"I sought for the greatness and genius of American in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in her fertile fields and boundless prairies, and it was not there; in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

[Alexis de Tocqueville, French historian, during his 1831 visit which resulted in his 4-volume work, Democracy in America]