**Submission**

Based on [Exodus 8:16-20](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Ex8.16-20)

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Lenten Midweek 3

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These several weeks of Midweek Services, we have been considering themes or topics that are prevalent in the Lenten Sunday Readings, having to do with the more sobering aspects of the Christian life. We’ve considered temptation, we’ve considered struggle, and today we will consider the topic of submission.

Submission is a word that rarely, if ever, is used in a positive way today. For instance, t**o speak of, for instance, a submissive wife once was a compliment--a womanly virtue according to Scripture. Today it suggests to the modern mind that she must have an domineering husband.** To preach submission is to promote oppression. True freedom, for the modern person, is to choose for yourself what to believe, how to behave, and who to serve.

But God calls us to submission in every area of our lives, in every vocation we hold. **Simply put, submission means to yield oneself to the power or authority of another.**  “Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord.” “Submit to the governing authorities.” Children submit to their parents. Husbands submit to the example of Christ, and Christ submitted to the will of His Father. God is a God of order, not chaos.

A sign of the Last Days is rebellion, which is a refusal to submit to those that have been given authority over you. “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, **disobedient to their parents,** ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying it’s power.” (2 Tim 3:1-5). In this list, St. Paul mentions disobedience to parents, which is a refusal to submit to their authority. There are those who abuse authority, no doubt. But what our world is reluctant to admit is that l**iving lives in submission to earthly authorities is simply an extension of living in submission to God. It is to this life you are called.**

On the Last Day, Christ will come again and there will be forced submission. Every eye will see him; every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. And even as, (in the Scriptures), the demons would shudder and writhe and grudgingly acknowledge him to be the Christ, so it will be for those who live in rebellion against God ordained authority. They will submit to God on the last day. But their submission is compulsory, and of no benefit because it is without faith.

God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a command, “Let my people Go”, and his unregenerate heart could not willingly obey God’s command. Scripture says that, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. The command increased the trespass as He was made stubborn. A mule is stubborn; the harder you pull the rope, the harder he resists. It’s like a reflex. Rebellion is a reflex of the human heart against authority. All men and women are born enemies of God until Christ claims them as his own. “**For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot”** (Romans 8:7).”

This is why we are in such desperate need of Grace, first that we may trust God in all things, and second that we may obey Him willingly . This trust comes only through the good news of Jesus Christ--that God so loved the world that he suffered to save it melts our hearts of stone by the knowledge that the wrath we deserve has been assuaged, and the plagues we deserve are spared us and poured out on another.

Before faith, God pulled and we resisted; but now that faith has come, we submit. He leads us by grace and we follow by grace. Once we submitted to the sin of our flesh, a cruel taskmaster to be sure and one bent on our destruction. Now we know the truth, and we gladlysubmit to a loving and all-wise God, who holds no grudge, but freely forgives our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ submitted to the will of his Father. Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be seized. He prayed “**If it be your will, take this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.**” He hungered and did not eat. He thirst and did not drink. He was beaten and did not resist. He was tempted in every way as we are but knew no sin. He was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross…and that death made payment for our eternal life. By his stripes we are healed, and the Lord has laid upon him the chastisement of us all.

Pharaoh would not submit to God willingly and was destroyed. So too our wills were in bondage to sin, with no power to move towards God or submit to his will. But it was precisely when we couldn’t choose God that he chose us. You were appointed before the foundation of the world, atoned by the blood of Christ, and anointed in your baptism to walk in the newness of life with Christ.

So walk in the newness of Christ. Deny yourself and live submissively to the Lord. Resist the devil, not God. Cling to Christ not sin. Rebel against your flesh, and submit to His Spirit. Do not be wise in your own eyes; do not live as though God had nothing to say, lean not on your own understanding but submit to the word of the Lord in everything.