

Submission In The Workplace

1 Peter 2:18-25

Pastor John Miller

I'm going to read this entire text. It's lengthy but I just want you to hear the Word of the Lord beginning in verse 18.

Peter says, "Servants..."—or it could be translated "slaves"—"...be subject..."—or "submit yourselves"—"...to your own masters. And do it with all fear..."—or "reverence"—"...not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the forward..."—or to the "harsh"—"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and you suffer and you take it patiently, then this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps." Now referring to Jesus, he said He "did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered, He threatened not, but He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously; Who in His own self bore our sins in His own body on the cross..."—or "the tree"—"...and that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by Whose stripes we have been healed. For we were like sheep going astray, but we've now returned to the Shepherd and to the Bishop of our souls."

In 1 Peter 5:12, Peter tells us why he wrote this first epistle. He says, "I've written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this..."—the letter that he wrote—"...is the true grace of God wherein you stand." So Peter is writing to encourage us to stand in God's grace, and he's writing to Christians who were persecuted for their faith. He's writing to Christians who were being opposed for their faith and for their Christianity, and he wants them to be strong and to stand. So beginning in chapter 1 to chapter 2, verse 10, he told them to stand in their salvation, to celebrate the redemptive work of Jesus Christ and that they were saved.

But Peter knew there was a danger in this new-found freedom in their salvation in Christ; that they could abuse it in thinking that "I'm free in Jesus, so I don't have to obey civil authorities or human government. I'm a Christian, I'm free." So we saw in verse 13 that he told us we need to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to kings, who are supreme." And we looked at the doctrine there of submission to civil government and authority.

But Peter moves now, secondly, to exhort them to live exemplary lives before an unbelieving world. And this began in verse 12. I want you to notice it; go back there with me. Peter says, "Having your conversation..."—or your "manner of living"—"...honest among the Gentiles..."—meaning the unbelievers, the non-Christians—"...that whereas they..."—that is, the Gentiles, the unbelieving, the non-Christians—"...speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold..."—or "observe"—"...glorify God in the day of visitation."

That's a key verse introducing the subject here of submission—submission to government,

submission in the workplace, submission in the home and submission in the church. It's a key verse because basically what Peter is saying is, "Live a good, beautiful, Godly life." And the motive, and the intention, and the purpose and the reason for which you do that is so that these unbelievers, who were attacking you, would be won to God. That's what he means that they will praise God "in the day of visitation." They'll get saved and say, "The reason I'm a Christian is because I worked with a guy, and he was the best worker, the hardest worker. He didn't complain, he didn't gripe and his attitude and the way he worked won me to Jesus Christ." And they'll praise God on that day of visitation.

So he's basically saying that we're all missionaries. And I want you to know that this morning. No one here as a believer has a secular job. In the Christian life, everything is a sacred duty. And no matter how mundane your job on a weekly basis, you're a missionary. And God planted you there to be a light in a dark place. I don't know how many times people have come to me and said, "Pastor John, I work in a very dark place. Everyone I work with are a bunch of heathens. Can you give me a job at Revival? I don't want to work around these creepy, unsaved sinners—wretched, vile sinners. I want to work around the 'saints' at Revival Christian Fellowship." And I can understand that, but I believe that we should let our light shine in the dark place. And believe me, I understand how hard it is and difficult it is to be a Christian in our secular society and in the workplace. But God put you where He put you to be a witness and to be a testimony. Not to demand your rights but to give up your rights for the sake of others and for the glory of God, to win them to Jesus Christ.

So our text today is a call to submissive obedience in the workplace. If I were to summarize this passage in one statement, that would be it; that we are to submit in obedience in the workplace, even if we are being treated unfairly or harshly. Now I know in our American culture in the western world, we have workers' rights, and we do have governmental protection for workers. And I think those are good and that's fine, but as Christians, we are to deny our rights for the sake of the Gospel. It's more important that Jesus is glorified and people are won to Christ than you get your way on the job, or that you get the promotion, or that you get the raise or that you're treated fairly. Whether you're treated fairly on the job or not isn't the real important thing. This is not a feel-good text; I'm just going to warn you ahead of time. This text is going to say things that you don't want to hear. You say, "Can I leave right now, then?" No; you need to hear this. It's going to say that even if you're treated harshly and unfairly and accused when you are doing right, you're to take it patiently so that you can glorify Jesus and others can see Christ in your life and in your work on the job. The best way to win the lost is being a good witness. It's more important than getting your rights. It's not about you; it's about Jesus and His kingdom. Amen?

Now there are three things in this passage—if you're taking notes I want you to write them down—three main points. The first is the mandate—write that down. The mandate or the command to submit in the workplace. And I want you to see it; it's in verse 18. Go back with me to verse 18 of chapter 2. Peter says, "Servants, be subject to your masters." There it is. "Servants, be subject to your masters..."—how?—"...with all fear, not only to the good and the gentle, but also to the forward"—or the "harsh."

Now the word “servants” in the Greek is an interesting word. It’s not the word “doulos” or bond slave, which is more common in the New Testament. It’s a word which means household slaves, household servants. And it would be primarily people who worked within the house. But I do believe the principles should have a broader application to the slaves of that time that worked anywhere.

Now we’ve got to stop for just a moment, and before we apply this text, we need to ask a couple of questions about the Bible and the issue of slavery. Because whenever you read a passage like that the first thing you might ask, “Why doesn’t the Bible condemn slavery? Why don’t we read any verse in the New Testament that says, ‘Free the slaves. Don’t have slaves. Slavery is bad. You’re all equal and you ought not to have slaves’?” Let me respond to that. Though the Bible does not, in so many words, condemn slavery, neither does it commend slavery. In the Bible days, it was simply accepted as a fact of life.

You need to understand the Bible in its historical setting. Whenever you interpret Scripture, you have to bridge a history and a time gap; it happened a long time ago in a different place. You have to bridge a cultural gap; you have to take what was culturally happening and transpose it into our culture today. And even a grammatical gap in the structure of the words and the Greek. And a theological gap when you interpret Scripture. So there’s a lot involved in taking a passage and saying, “What does it mean? What does it say? And how does it apply?”

In that culture and in that time, it was part of the fabric of life. The majority of the first Christians were slaves. There were also slave owners. But there were slaves. Now slaves in those days were highly educated. They could be doctors and lawyers and things like that. And though they were the property of their master, they were loved, they were respected, they were given good living conditions and they were well taken care of and provided for by their masters. There was the cruel kind of slavery that we oppose, but it’s more like what we call employment today.

But that having been said, the Bible does not condone slavery. What the Bible does instead is to seek to regulate it and modify it so as to eventually destroy it through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And I believe that it is the influence of Christianity that has been the emancipation of slavery in the world today. Read about William Wilberforce, that man who was a member of British Parliament who devoted his entire life to freeing the slaves. If you get a chance, watch it in the movie *Amazing Grace*. It’s an amazing movie on amazing grace and William Wilberforce and John Newton. And then Abraham Lincoln and the others who fought for the emancipation of slavery in America. And I know that we still have a long way to go, and we have racial issues and we have modern forms of slavery with the sex trade and so forth. And it’s wrong.

But what happens is Christianity changes men’s hearts; amen? And when men’s hearts change, culture changes around us. Have you read the New Testament epistle of Philemon? It was written to a slave owner. He had a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus ran away from his master. He tried to get lost in the big city of Rome, and he got converted to Christianity under the preaching of Paul, the Apostle. And they were talking one day and Paul said, “So Onesimus, where are you from?” “I’m from Colossae.” “Oh, I’ve been to Colossae. Who do

you know in Colossae?” “Well, Paul, I’ll have to be honest with you now that I’m a Christian. I’m a fugitive. I’m a runaway slave.” “Well, who’s your master?” “His name is Philemon.” “What a small world,” Paul says. “I know Philemon. And guess what, Onesimus? He’s a Christian. I’m going to send you back to Philemon, and I’m going to write a letter.” It’s called Philemon. You have it in your Bible. “I’m going to write a letter, and I’m going to tell Philemon that he should receive you back, because now you’re brothers in Christ. And you go back, and you submit to him and I’m going to tell him to be kind to you. And I’m going to tell him that he owes me, too, because I led him to Christ, as well. And I’m going to tell him that if you owe him anything from your running from him, I’m going to pay it. But he owes me a lot, because I led him to Christ.” Read that little, tiny letter of one chapter in the New Testament called Philemon. This is how Christianity changed the slave trade.

The second question you might ask about slavery in the New Testament is, “Isn’t this passage irrelevant for us today?” When you read this passage you might say, “Well, there’s no slaves, and there’s no masters and isn’t it irrelevant?” And I say if slaves are to submit to their masters, even harsh masters, how much more should we today as employees submit to our employers in the workplace? Amen? You may not be a slave. Now you may say, “Ah, I’m a slave, pastor. You can’t believe how many hours my boss asks me to work.” And I understand that you have rights and blah blah blah, but today we’re talking about as Christians to forgo our rights and to have a mission of submission so that we can win others to Jesus Christ in the workplace.

So the Bible doesn’t condemn it, but it doesn’t commend it. And the application of this passage today is Christianity in the workplace, Christianity in the secular workplace arena. What does it tell us? Let’s go back to the text, verse 18. “Be subject.” And in the Greek it’s actually “submit yourself.” Voluntarily choose. If you’re a Christian today, before you go to work on Tuesday because of the 4th of July, today say, “Lord, I will submit to my boss, and I’ll do the dirty, rotten, stinking job that he’s asking me to do. And I’ll seek to do it with the right attitude, and I’ll seek to do it as unto you.” And the Bible says to the servant about his master, “Don’t do it just when the boss is looking.”

I remember working in a place when the boss would go “Woo!” everyone would freak out. Like junior high, middle school, when the teacher went out of the room, remember what chaos went on then? You had a spy watching for the teacher to come back while you’re terrorizing in the classroom. It happens in the workplace. “The boss is gone. Let’s party!” Christians aren’t supposed to do that. They’re to be conscientious and they’re to be God focused, and they’re to “do it as unto the Lord.” And then the masters or the employers—they’re to give what is just and right and fair and equal to those who work for them, knowing that you have a master in heaven, and one day you’re going to give an account to Him.

So submit yourself—look at it with me, verse 18—and you do it “with all fear.” And I believe “with all fear” refers to a reverence for God or respect of God. And some render that a consciousness of God. You want to know what’s going to make you a good employee and a conscientious worker? Having a God focus, a God center. Realizing I’m not working for my boss. I’m working for God. I’m working for the Lord, and it’s to Him I will give an account.

So you have a fear of God. And notice there are two kinds of bosses or employers. There's the good and considerate—thank God for them—and then there's the harsh. And that word “harsh” literally means “bent” or “crooked” or “awkward to deal with.” You go, “That’s my boss. He’s in the Bible. The dude is bent. He’s like full-on crooked.” Even those who are harsh or crooked we’re to submit to. The point is we have a mission in our submission. And what is the mission? To be a witness to Jesus Christ and to win other people to the Lord. How many people would say, “I’d never be a Christian. I hired a Christian and the worst worker I ever had. Took time off, you know. Slipped away to the bathroom reading his Bible, and I wondered where I’d find him.” Someone said, “I found him in the john reading the Gospel of John.” I actually heard that one time. “I found this employee in the john reading John.” It’s like, “Hey, you’re supposed to be working right now. You’re getting paid to work. We’re not paying you to read the Bible.” So you need to be God conscious on the job and realize you’re doing it “as unto the Lord.” And the point is you’re trying to win them to Jesus Christ.

Now there is an exception: if you’re boss tells you to break the law. If your boss tells you to lie or steal or to cheat or to cut corners or to embellish numbers to make them look good, then you say to them respectfully and humbly, “I’ll do my best. I’ll be a good worker, but my Christian conscience will not allow me to do that.” You say, “Pastor John, if I do that, I’ll get fired.” You get fired. “Well, will you hire me then?” As I was preaching this first service I thought, “I’ll have a ton of people come next Sunday and say, “Well, I’m out of work thanks to you, Pastor Miller. I did what you told me. I told my boss I’m not going to lie, I’m not going to cheat; you know?” I mean, what can you do? Are you going to disobey God? You can’t do that. You have to obey God and trust God to take care of you. Trust God to take care of you; amen? When you do the right thing and you put it in God’s hands, then it’s God’s responsibility. “Lord, it was right. I lost my job, so you’d better take care of me this month, because I need your help.” God will take care of you. So we’re to be obedient unless they tell us to do something that violates the Word of God, the law or our Christian conscience. But our goal is to be a witness for Jesus. Read Ephesians 6:5-9 where you see that the Bible is a balanced book. It doesn’t just tell slaves to obey their masters. It tells masters to be kind and gentle toward their slaves. So the first is the mandate in verse 18—submit yourself on the job.

Here’s my second main point. The motive of submission. Or the motive for submission. It’s in verses 19 to 21. Let’s read it. He says, “For this is thankworthy...”—or this is “praiseworthy”—“...if a man...”—or a woman—“...for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully.” So if you are suffering unrighteously—If you are suffering when doing good and you take it patiently, that’s commendable to God. Verse 20, “For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted...”—and the word “buffeted” there means to strike with a fist. You’re actually being beaten up by this boss—“...for your faults, and you take it patiently,” that’s no big deal. “But if, when you do well and you suffer for it and you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

Now let me point out the motive in submission. First is because it’s pleasing to God. That’s what the text says. It pleases God. In verse 19, “For this is thankworthy.” In verse 20, “this is acceptable with God.” And then he asks a rhetorical question in the 20th verse there, expecting

a no answer. He says, "What's the big deal if you do something wrong and your boss reprimands you and you smile and go, 'Praise the Lord. Thank you, Jesus. Persecuted for righteousness sake.'" No. Slap that dude. I'm sorry; I shouldn't say it. My wife always tells me, "Don't say 'slap that dude.'" If you do something wrong on the job and you get in trouble, it's not good. Did I make it clear? People go, "Oh, Pastor Miller, my boss is persecuting me." "Why?" "Well, I've been late for work a lot, you know. And I didn't do what he told me to do." You do-do bird. That's not commendable. That's not praiseworthy. God is not blessing you because you're a dummy. But if you do what is right and you suffer for it, and then you don't complain, you don't gripe, you don't bemoan your lot, and you take it patiently—It's not enough to suffer righteously. You must take it patiently. This is pleasing to God.

Now I just discovered something this week. That word "thankworthy" in verse 19 and those words "acceptable to God" in verse 20 are the same Greek word. You know what it is? It's the word "charis." Charis. We get our word "charisma" from it. We also get our word "grace" from it. Grace. And what he's saying there is that this is a quality of grace, when you can take your punishment gracefully, for the conscience sake, toward God. In other words, in verse 19, you're God focused, you're God centered, your conscience is toward God. You're living life in the light of God. And you endure grief and suffering that is wrong, and you do it patiently. This is acceptable or well pleasing to God.

Let me give you the second motive in verse 21. It's actually your calling. If you are a Christian—and this is going to blow your mind—but if you are a Christian—notice verse 21. "For even to this, you were called." To what? To suffer wrongfully and take it patiently. That's your Christian calling. You're going, "Well, I don't believe that." That's what the Bible says. You're actually being called by God to suffer from living a good life. All you got to do is go get a job out there in the world and live like a Christian on the job, and people will hate you and say bad things about you, and put you down. "Aw, holier than thou, your halo's crooked today, holy Joe. Look at him. He thinks he's better than everybody else, reading his Bible, holy Joe." And it's hard. You get put-downs and attacks. Slander. I've known many times Christians have lost their job because people don't want to work around that Christian anymore. "Let's get rid of that Christian. We don't want him in the office anymore." If you do that and take it patiently, then you're fulfilling God's calling in your life. We are called here to patient endurance of undeserved suffering.

The third motive—write this down. And this is what introduces us to the remainder of the text. It's in verse 21, the end of the verse. It's following Christ's example. When you suffer wrongfully and you take it patiently, guess what you're doing? You're living like Jesus. You're following Christ's example. Notice verse 21, "...because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example..."—key word—"...that we may follow in His steps." The word "example" was actually used for a piece of paper that a child in school would have learning to write. And remember when you, years ago—especially when we were in kindergarten, first grade—you're learning to write—they don't teach cursive anymore in public schools, but you're learning to write letters. At the top of the page Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee, Ff, Gg. They had the alphabet, and you were to just follow, stay within the lines. But you had a model of how the letter was done, and you would

learn to do your letters by following that model on the top; right? That's the very Greek word that's used for "example." That would be used for that. So Jesus is our model. Jesus is our example, which, by the way, is my third point. So we'll get there in just a moment.

So we have the mandate, we have the motive and Jesus will be our model. This is going to wrap up what we've just covered, as far as motive, and is going to introduce us to the next section on Jesus being the picture, or model, of patient endurance. We're following Christ's example. If you are here this morning and say, "I'm a Christian." Great. I'm glad to hear that. You're a follower of Jesus Christ. "Yes, I follow Jesus Christ." Have you read the Gospels? Do you remember what they said about Jesus? They lied about Him, they falsely accused Him, He was misunderstood, He was rejected, maligned, attacked, falsely accused, arrested, mock trial, crucified innocently, died on a cruel cross and all the time He said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." You're a follower of Jesus Christ? Yet when you don't get your way, and things don't go the way you want, you're calling your lawyer. I think some people know their lawyer's phone number better than they know the text of Scripture. "I'm going to sue you! That's not right!" I believe that respectfully there is a time to say, "That's not right. I have the right here. You're working me too much." And I understand that, but as a general principle, as Christians, we're not to be preaching our rights. We're to be submitting in obedience. And if we're following Jesus Christ—verse 21—who left us an example, and we follow in His steps, we must endure the same experience of rejection and misunderstanding.

One of my favorite authors is a woman by the name of Amy Carmichael. She wrote a book titled *Toward Jerusalem*. And in that book she wrote one of my favorite poems. It says what the text says. It's called *No Scar*?

Hast Thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear Thee sung as mighty in the land;

I hear them hail Thy bright, ascendant star.

Hast Thou no scar?

Hast Thou no wound?

That I was wounded by the archers; spent,

Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.

Hast Thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me.

But thine are whole; can he have followed far

Who has no wound nor scar?

You say, "I'm a follower of Jesus Christ." Well, is there some reason why you should be treated differently than your master? You see, Peter now switches the focus on our model, Jesus Christ. This verse summarizes how we are to submit, like Jesus, and then it introduces us to His suffering and His sacrifice on the cross.

So here's my third point if you're taking notes. Write this down. The model of our submission. So we have the mandate, and then we have the motive and now we have the model of submission. It's Jesus Christ. How did Jesus suffer? How did Jesus respond to His suffering on the cross? First of all, notice it in verse 22. He suffered blamelessly. He suffered blamelessly. In verse 22 it says, "Who did not sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth." It's taken from Isaiah 53:9 where it says, "Neither was there any deceit in His mouth."

Now how about you? When you are treated unjustly, unfairly and you are attacked when you've done nothing wrong, do you just keep doing what's right? Or do you resort to the flesh? And you want to fight fire with fire and you want to take vengeance in your own hands. Not Jesus. Jesus suffered blamelessly. And we need to examine our hearts, and if I'm being persecuted, if I'm suffering, I want to make sure it's for righteousness sake. Not because I'm a poor worker or I'm a gossip or something like that.

Secondly how did Jesus suffer? It's in verse 23. He suffered graciously. Not only blamelessly but graciously. It says that "when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not..."—"I'll get you!"—"...but He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously." So this verse has always amazed me. That when Jesus was being reviled, He didn't revile back. Can you see Jesus hanging on the cross and start spitting at people? [spitting] "You wait 'till I come back in the Second Coming. I'm gonna get you. You wait 'till you see Me come in power and glory. I'm coming for you, Buckaroo!" Rather, He says, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they do."

Have you ever gone home from your job and thought, "That's not right. That's not fair the way they're treating me," and then get on your knees and say, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they're doing"? They're treating you the same way they treated Jesus. But being reviled, He didn't revile back. He didn't write a nasty note or post it on Facebook. Tweet it. Instagram. "My boss is a jerk. Meet me at church this Sunday." I need to be very careful, because I counsel a lot of people. But I've heard, "My boss is a jerk." Have you spent any time praying? "I'm not going to pray for him! He's going to hell and I'm glad!" "Wow! I'll pray for

you.” “I’m just savoring the thought that he’s going to hell!”

That’s the wrong attitude. You’re a missionary. Missionaries are supposed to love the people they’re trying to reach. You’re trying to reach people. It’s not about making money. It’s not about the promotion. It’s not about having more time off and better benefits. See, I told you you wouldn’t like the sermon. It’s about being a good witness for Jesus Christ. I’m not saying you can’t have those things and a great job and great benefits and a great boss, but if you find yourself in a place where you’re being mistreated in the workplace, your job, your calling, your responsibility is to let your light shine before Jesus Christ. Watch what you say. Watch your attitude. Watch the way you respond. You should respond blamelessly, graciously.

And then thirdly, verse 23, He suffered trustfully. Trustfully. And believe it or not, this is one of my favorite statements in the whole Bible. Jesus is hanging on the cross at the end of verse 23, and what did He do? It says He “committed Himself to Him...”—that is, God the Father—“...that judges righteously.” He committed Himself to the Father, Who judges righteously. Jesus said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Jesus trusted His situation to God, the Father. I believe with all my heart that if you’re being falsely accused and attacked and persecuted for your faith in Jesus Christ, that this is one of the most important things that you can do. Put it in God’s hands. Don’t try to attack. Don’t try to defend yourself. Don’t try to plead your case. Just say, “God, take care of it.” Let Him judge righteously. Let Him do it. Let God be your defender. If you want to defend yourself, God will let you do that. If you want God to defend you, God will do that. You make the decision. So no matter how you’re being treated—and this could even apply outside the workplace. Maybe in the home. Maybe in a marriage. Maybe in just a friendship. Someone’s using you and abusing you. What should you do? You should put it in God’s hands, and trust God to be the One Who will take care of it.

But there’s one last point I want to make about Jesus’ death. And that is in verses 24 and 25. He closes by saying Jesus suffered vicariously, which is interesting because he moves from Jesus as a model to Jesus, our Savior. Jesus, the example, to Jesus, the Redeemer. This is how he ends on a theological note. Notice he says that Jesus, verse 24, “bore our sins in His own body on the cross...”—The word “tree” is a reference to the cross—“...that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness, and by His stripes, we were healed.” Because all of us “were like sheep, and we’ve all gone astray, and we return now to the Shepherd and to the Bishop of our souls.”

Jesus died vicariously; He took your place when He died on the cross. So Jesus took our sins. In verse 24, it makes it very clear that He “bore our sins in His own body.” You know, when Jesus died on the cross, your sins were placed upon Him. All of the sins of all of humanity for all time were placed upon the pure and sinless and holy Son of God. And He died vicariously as a substitute in your place. I want you to know this morning if you’re not a Christian, Jesus took your sins, and He paid their penalty. It says that we’re dead to sin in that text. It means He paid for the penalty of our sins. We don’t have to die spiritually, that we might live unto righteousness in that passage. He paid that we can be free from the power of sin altogether. And one day when I die and I go to heaven, I’ll be free from the very presence of sin. So he

died to set us free.

And it's interesting that he says "by His stripes, you were healed." Now, I could preach a whole sermon on that statement there. But I'm going to say something that may make some of you mad, and you may disagree with me, but I believe that this is what the Bible teaches. I don't believe that healing—physical healing—is *carte blanche* or guaranteed in the cross. I believe God is sovereign, and He can heal any time, any place, any way He wants to heal. I believe in physical healing. I believe God can touch you and heal you. But it's not guaranteed, and it's not promised. It's not a guarantee in the atonement.

You say, "Well, what makes you say that?" Notice in verse 24, Peter is very clear that He "bore our..."—what?—"...sins on the cross." The whole passage is about Him being the sin bearer. Isn't it interesting that when the Word-faith teachers and those that are healers and believe that healing is guaranteed in the atonement, they'll quote from Isaiah, "By His stripes you were healed," thinking that it's guaranteed. But they don't go to Peter to see how Peter used the text; that He's forgiven our sins. Can God heal? Yes. Does God always heal? No. Why? Because it's not guaranteed in the cross. The only guarantee that we have for healing in the cross is that when I die and go to heaven, I'm going to have a new body. I can guarantee every one of you healing, but it's not going to happen until you're glorified. You're going to have to wait. God may heal you now; God may not heal you now. So don't misinterpret the statement.

How do we interpret it then? He's healed us. Did Jesus not heal you?—Forgive your sins? Make you whole? Give you a new life? Put you on the path of righteousness? Help you to walk? The things you used to love, you hate? The things you used to hate you now love?—Did Jesus not heal you? Yes, He did. Now we may go through life kind of decrepit and worn and sick, and the older you get, the more decrepit you get. But you old folks out there, there's a new body coming. Amen? No more sickness. No more sin. No more sorrow. No more suffering. The Bible even says no more tears, for all the former things will be washed away. God does heal us. And one day He's going to glorify us and give us a new body. And that's a glorious thing.

And then Jesus, lastly, verse 25, died to bring us to Himself, Who is our "Shepherd and the Bishop of our souls." We were "like sheep going astray. We turned everyone to our own way," Isaiah 53:6. Isn't it funny that the Bible likens us unto sheep? When I was in high school, I had an agriculture class. Do I look like a farmer? And we had to raise sheep. I had a steer; I had a black angus. And I had to raise it. And I had sheep and all that stuff. Those sheep were so stupid. You know, "Pastor John, don't cap on sheep. I like sheep. I'm into sheep." They're stinky. They're dirty. They're dumb. And they're rebellious. That's my commentary on sheep. But guess what? You're a sheep. I just thought I'd encourage you. But God is the Shepherd. Shepherds love sheep. And God loves you. And He sent His Son to die on the cross for you. Amen? And if you're a sheep that—you know, sheep have no natural defenses. They don't have fangs or horns. They can't run that quick. They can just go "baa." They freak out.

And we need a shepherd. We need His protection. We need His provision. That's why David

said in Psalm 23—we love it so much—“The Lord is my Shepherd. I have everything I need. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet streams. He restores my soul. He leads me through the path of righteousness for His Name's sake. Even in the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for God is with me. His rod and His staff, they comfort me. He anoints my head with oil. My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” And because the Lord is my Shepherd, I’m going to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” My eternal home is secure.

My question in closing to you this morning that are here is, “Is the Lord your Shepherd?” Have you trusted Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross and took your sin?” When Jesus died on the cross, He took your place, and He took your sin. And He was buried and He rose from the dead. And He says, “Whoever believes on Me will never perish but have everlasting life.” And if you’re here this morning, I don’t believe you’re here by accident. But God brought you here to hear the conclusion of this message, that the Bible says, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “There’s no one righteous; no, not one.” But Jesus took your sin. And the Bible says, “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.” You can turn from your sin, and you can trust Jesus today as your Savior. And He will forgive you, and He will give you a brand-new heart, and He will make you His child and He becomes your Bishop and Shepherd to lead you and guide you and to take you to heaven when you die.

But the problem today might be that you’ve hardened your heart, and you’ve resisted God. You want to go your own way. You’re like a sheep that is stubborn and lost. And today God brought you here to hear this message, that you need to turn around, and you need to come back to Jesus Christ, the Shepherd, Who gave His life for the sheep so that we can be forgiven and have an eternal hope.

Let’s bow our heads in a word of prayer.