

Submission In The Workplace

1 Peter 2:18-25

Pastor John Miller

I'm going to read all of these verses because I want you to hear them without any interruption. Then, we're going to go back and unpack them verse by verse. Begin with me in 1 Peter 2:18. Peter starts speaking to, "Servants"—or slaves—"be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who"—again, still referring to Jesus—"his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree"—which is the cross—"that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness"—he's referring to this first epistle. He said, "I wrote it to you that you would know this is God's grace in which you stand." Peter is writing to suffering Christians, and he wants them to stand in the grace of God.

Peter wants us to stand first of all in salvation, that's 1 Peter 1 through 1 Peter 2:10. Peter knew that there was a danger in this new found freedom of salvation through Christ, that they would actually be discouraged in being persecuted and turn away from Christ. Secondly, Peter moves to exhort them to live exemplary lives before the unbelieving world. I want you to go back to 1 Peter 2:12, and this is where this theme starts. He says, "Having your conversation"—that word means the way you live—"honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers,"—see, there's that persecution, that opposition. You're believers now, you're living lives of holiness, and the Gentiles will, ". . . speak against you as evildoers, they may by"—if you live lives that are exemplary—"your good works"—notice that—"which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." That sets the theme for the section we're in. First, we stand in salvation; secondly, we stand in submission.

Submission breaks down into four areas: submission to governmental authorities, we saw that many weeks ago in 1 Peter 2:13; secondly, submission in the workplace, that we're going to cover tonight beginning in verse 18; and then we have submission in the home, when we get to 1 Peter 3:1, wives submitting to their husbands; husbands loving their wives, husbands ". . . giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel;" then, in 1 Peter 3:8, submission in the church.

Our text today is a call to submission and obedience in the workplace. Even if we are being treated unfairly and harshly, we are to be submitted to those who have authority over us. We are to submit obediently and humbly. You might already be saying, "Boy, I wish I hadn't come tonight because I don't like my employer, I don't like my job, and I don't want to do what the boss tells me to do," but I'm glad you're here. We need to hear the Word of God. Amen? The

Bible tells us that we are to be living exemplary lives by submitting to those who have authority over us. Now, the focus is winning them to Christ so that by our “. . . good works . . . glorify God in the day of visitation,” when the Lord comes to them and they become believers. It's the best way to win the lost. Being a good witness is more important than getting your rights or getting what you want on the job, being a witness for the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's not about you, it's about Jesus, His glory, and His Kingdom. Amen?

There are three main points that I want to draw your attention to in looking at this passage. The first is in verse 18, if you're taking notes, we see the mandate to submit. This is actually an imperative or a command for slaves or servants to submit. Look at verse 18, “Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear”—or reverence—“not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.” The word “servants” in verse 18 literally is a word that's used for the household servant. There is a Greek word used for slaves, it's the Greek word *doûlos* which is a bondsman. This is a different variation of that word, and it was used for more of a domestic servant in the home. It is indeed talking about slaves.

Now, the minute you come to a text like this, the tendency is, “What does that have to do with me?” Maybe you do feel like a slave, and you think it maybe applies, but you think, We don't have slavery in our world today, and we condemn slavery, so what does it really have to do with me? Let me address just the issue with a couple of questions about slavery and the Bible. Why doesn't the Bible condemn slavery? The Bible gets a bad rap, and a lot of people attack the Bible saying that it condones or it endorses slavery. It does not. It does not condone or endorse slavery.

It may not overtly or directly or clearly condemn it, but what it does do, the Bible does not in so many words condemn slavery, but it doesn't commend it either. In Bible days, slavery was not so much a situation of race, it was an issue of social status; and many slaves were actually highly educated and professional people. It's believed that doctors and some lawyers and also medical people were servants to people in their homes and were considered slaves in that sense. But a lot of the Roman Empire had slaves. So, it doesn't condemn it, it doesn't condone it, but it does seek to modify it and regulate it so as to eventually destroy it through the preaching of the gospel. But it was part of the fiber and the structure of the first century.

In the Roman Empire there were actually more slaves than there were free men, and you could become a slave if you were born children to a slave or if you had a debt—you had to sell yourself as a slave to pay off your debt—or sometimes slaves were apprehended by conquering other nations, and they would bring them in and subjugate them and make them slaves. It was a different issue than just enslaving a certain race of people.

In the New Testament we have the book called Philemon. It's a little one-chapter, New Testament book that was actually Paul writing to a believer named Philemon who had a slave named Onesimus, and Onesimus actually ran away from his master, Philemon, and ended up in Rome. There in Rome, he encountered Paul the apostle as God orchestrated providentially that situation, and he became a Christian. Then, he told Paul saying, “Look, I'm a slave. I'm a

runaway slave. I'm from the city of Colossae, and I ran from my master, Philemon." Paul said, "Well, I happen to know Philemon. He's a brother in Christ. He's a friend of mine, and I also led him to the Lord, so I'll write a letter on your behalf to Philemon, asking him to forgive you, and accept you back as a brother in Christ, and that he owes me because I led him to the Lord." So, when you read that little epistle of Philemon, it sheds a whole lot of light on slavery in the first century.

It's a passage like this that regulates it today, that we see that we are to be serving the Lord even on our jobs. I believe the application for us today is not just to pass over it and say, "Well, it has no application to me," but the application to us tonight would be employee/employer relationships. I realize that's not slave and master, but it still applies, the idea that God has placed authority over us. If slaves were to submit to their masters, even harsh masters, how much more should we submit today in the workplace to those who are our superiors.

Now, notice in verse 18, let's get into the text, it says, "Servants, be subject," literally submit yourselves voluntarily. How do you do it? Verse 18, ". . . with all fear." I believe that in context here this "fear" is a reverence for God. A respect for God should lead us to be submissive to those who are our authority, so out of fear to God, out of respect for God, or a consciousness of God in your life.

Note also in verse 18 that there are two kinds of masters that they were to submit to, ". . . good and gentle" in my King James Bible, which actually means considerate; and then the harsh and those that are harsh, which in the King James Bible is ". . . froward." That means that they are crooked or hard to deal with. The word literally was the idea of they were bent or twisted or crooked. You say, "That's me. That's my boss. He's bent and he's crooked, and I want a job at the church. I don't want to work with heathens. I work with just pagans." I get people all the time, "Everyone in my workplace is a full-on heathen. I'm the only Christian, and I need to work at a Christian place."

You know that God placed you there as a missionary to be light in the darkness? I know it's hard. I know it's difficult. I know it's not enjoyable, but it's a mission field. You know, if you're a Christian, all of life is sacred. There's no dividing of the secular and the sacred. "Well, I just have a truck driving job," or "I'm just a plumber," or "I just do work in an office cubicle." Everything that we do is a sacred service to God, and we're all missionaries for the Lord, so we need to do it with a reverence for God out of a desire to honor God in the way we work and the way we conduct ourselves so that people won't be hindered from coming to Christ. There are people that say, "Well, I would never be a Christian. I worked with one and they were the worst workers I've ever seen. They goofed off. They weren't disciplined and hard-working." We ought to be the best workers —Amen?—the most conscientious workers, and we ought to be working for even those that are bent or crooked or awkward or harsh to deal with so that we might reach them for the Lord. That's the goal—to be a witness and win them to Christ.

How are you doing in that area? Maybe you're here tonight and you're saying, "I don't like my job. I don't like my boss. I don't like the people that I'm working with. If they're not saved, then

that's fine. I don't care. I just want to get outta here." May God give you a heart to win them to Christ. So, the mandate is that we be subject to those who are in authority over us.

I want to move secondly, verses 19-21, to the motive. What motivates us to submit in the workplace? Notice verse 19, "For this is thankworthy"—or praiseworthy or gracious—"if a man for conscience toward God"—you're wanting to obey God and glorify God—"endure grief, suffering wrongfully"—you're being wrongfully persecuted and hassled. Verse 20, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted"—that word "buffeted" literally means to be struck with the fist or to hit something. These people were literally being buffeted and persecuted, but if you're persecuted " . . . for your faults"—you've done something wrong—"ye shall take it patiently"—that's not praiseworthy—"but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God,"—or you might say brings God glory. Verse 21, this is interesting, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."

Now, I want to give you three motives for submission on the job. First, it pleases God. Notice verse 19, "For this is thankworthy." That word "thankworthy" is an interesting Greek word. It's a Greek word *cháris*. We get our word charismatic from it, but we also get our word grace from it. It's usually used for God's grace in saving sinners in our conversion. Here, it's talking about our lifestyle is praiseworthy or gracious and it brings glory to God. It's a quality of grace " . . . for conscience toward God," the NIV reads "consciousness of God." It's living a life that's God-focused.

Remember when Joseph was taken to Egypt and worked for a master as a slave? He was "conscience toward God" and worked diligently. He worked hard, and God exalted him and moved him up the ladder and eventually I know he went through prison and so forth, but he ended up being second to Pharaoh. He was always focused on God, not the evils done to him or how people treated him or what was happening to him. He was also thinking about the glory of God. So, it's " . . . conscience toward God," a pleasing desire to bless the Lord. Notice in verse 19, we " . . . endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

In verse 20, we have a rhetorical question. He says, "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" If you're doing something that's wrong, and you get in trouble or you get reprimanded, you can't, "Praise the Lord, I'm being persecuted." If you're late for work, and your boss tells you you're in trouble, "Oh, thank You, Jesus. Praise the Lord." No. Get to work on time. If you're goofing off, you take a break to go to the bathroom, and you take your New Testament with you...I had a guy one time said, "My boss was upset with me because I was reading John in the john." He took his Bible and was reading the gospel of John in the john, and I said, "Well, you shouldn't be doing that. They're not paying you to read your Bible, they're paying you to work. You have to be a good witness." If you do wrong, and you suffer, that's not praiseworthy. Verse 20, " . . . but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable"—or pleasing—"with God." The same word *cháris*, it's gracious, it's praiseworthy. It brings honor and glory to God.

Let me give you the second thing that should motivate you. Not only a desire to please and glorify God, but secondly, it's your calling from God. This is where it gets pretty radical, verse 21, the first part of it, "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." He's actually saying that we have been like Christ, this is why the text is going to transition into Christ our example of being unjustly treated and suffering and how He responded. He's going to actually say, "We, too, were called to suffer." But you don't really hear that preached a lot today, "Give your life to Jesus and suffer for His sake." I can't wait. Sign me up. It's usually, "Give your life to Jesus and be blessed and be happy and drive a nice car, have a nice watch, and be prosperous." That's not what Peter is saying here. You were called to follow Christ. Jesus was crucified. Jesus was rejected. Jesus was hated. Jesus was despised. Jesus said, "If they hate Me, they're going to hate you. If they persecuted Me, they're going to persecute you." But if you're being so identified with Christ that people persecute you, you ought to praise God and glorify God in your behalf. So, it's great to know your calling.

It's interesting that God calls us to salvation, we saw that in verse 21, we're going to see that there, that we are called to salvation. We're also called out of darkness into light in 1 Peter 2:9; and we're also called into an inheritance of a blessing, 1 Peter 3:9; and God calls us to eternal glory, we'll see that in 1 Peter 5:10 when we get there. But you were called to patient endurance in undeserved suffering. When you were called by God, you were called to salvation, you're called out of darkness, you're called to a spiritual inheritance, you're called to eternal glory, but you're also called, in the context of this verse, to suffer.

One of my favorite poems is written by a woman named Amy Carmichael. She wrote this poem called "No Scar." Let me read it to you. It says:

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?

Yet I was wounded by the archers; spent,

Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned.

Has 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 hast no wound or scar?

You know, the Bible says, “. . . all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” That verse really troubles me. I wonder, “Am I living truly a godly life in this dark world? If I’m not being persecuted, is it because I’m not being salt and light and a witness to the good news of Jesus Christ?” What an important thing that is. I want to do it because I’m called.

Here’s number three, I’m following Christ’s example, verse 21, “. . . because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” The word “follow” in verse 21 means to follow closely, so we should follow Christ’s steps which means footprints. If Jesus was suffering and persecuted, then we should follow in His steps and follow Him very closely. It’s so very important. Here’s the motive: First, pleasing to God; secondly, it’s your calling from God; and thirdly, it’s your following Christ’s example, Jesus Christ our example. Now, we move from the mandate to submit on the job, even to bosses that are harsh or cruel or unfair, from the motives to submission, verses 19-21, to the model of submission, Jesus our example. We’re to copy His example.

Notice in verses 22-25, that Jesus is our model, that He died as an example for us to follow. I didn’t mention it, but back in verse 21, the word “example” literally means a copy piece. Remember when you were in elementary school, sometimes it’s hard to think back that long ago, many, many, many, many years ago, or in grade school and you were learning to write, maybe in cursive, or you were learning to print letters or learning your numbers, and the teacher would give you a page with the alphabet across the top of the page, and that you were actually in the lines to just follow the letters, A - B - C - D, and you just followed the way you were to write the letters? That’s exactly what this word “example” is in the Greek. It means a copy that we’re to follow. It means a copy piece. So, Jesus is our example.

Not only is Jesus our example, but Jesus is actually our substitute who died on the cross for our sins. What Peter does, he takes this very practical teaching for slaves, to be obedient to their masters, and he ends it with theology—how Jesus obediently suffered in the will of God the Father on the cross for our sins. So, it’s an example, now He’s our substitute.

How did Jesus suffer? How did Jesus respond to His sufferings? Well, let me break it down for you. Jesus suffered blamelessly. If you’re taking notes, write that down, verse 22, Jesus suffered blamelessly, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.” No deceit was found in His mouth. Now, he’s quoting from Isaiah 53:9, but the overall point in that verse is that Jesus did not sin. This is a great verse to show you that Jesus Christ was sinless. When He

went to the cross, He was the One, “. . . who knew no sin,” but He would become sin for us, “. . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “Who did no sin,” as I said, this is taken from Isaiah 53:9.

A little footnote there is that Isaiah 53, described in the Old Testament long before Christ was ever born, that it's a prophecy about Jesus is clear in Peter's writings. If you read Isaiah, you wonder who is this? It's definitely Jesus Christ who was “. . . wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our iniquities . . . [by] his stripes we are healed,” Isaiah 53. Here he's quoting from Isaiah 53:9. So, Jesus did not sin.

If we're going to suffer, we should be suffering for righteousness' sake, living holy lives. Now, we're not sinless like Jesus, but Jesus was impeccable. He did not sin. He could not sin. He was the holy, sinless, Son of God. There was no “. . . deceit in his mouth.”

Secondly, He suffered graciously. Look at verse 23, “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.” That's hard, right? When someone reviles you, what do you want to do? Revile back. Someone honks at you...pray for me. I don't know what it is. When people honk at me, I just don't like that. I feel like putting it in park, getting out of the car, going back and saying, “What's your problem?” I'm afraid they'll say, “Oh, hi, Pastor John. I just want to say, ‘hi.’ I come to your church.” Okay, great. But when I'm at a red light, and it turns green, and I don't even have time to get my foot off the brake to the gas, HONK! it's like, “What's your hurry?” And, I'm so tempted in the flesh to honk back— right?—in anger. So, we need to be careful. When someone reviles you, our response isn't to revile back. Jesus didn't do that. He was gracious as He hung on the cross.

Verse 23, “. . . when he suffered, he threatened not,” so He didn't yell, He didn't scream. Can you imagine Jesus hanging on the cross, “I'm gonna get you when I come back in My Second Coming!! You're going to rule the day that you crucified Me! Wait till you see Me coming back as King of kings and Lord of lords!” He didn't do that. He did say, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” right? So, if you're having a hard time on the job and you're being persecuted for righteousness' sake, then you can say, “Lord, I'm not going to revile back. I'm not going to fight fire with fire. I'm going to trust You.”

So, He suffered blamelessly; He suffered graciously; and thirdly, He suffered trustfully. I love this. This is one of my favorite verses. Look at verse 23, at the end of that verse, “. . . but committed himself”—speaking of Jesus on the cross—“to him that judgeth righteously.” He said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” He didn't revile back, He prayed for their forgiveness, and He said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” He trusted Himself to the Father. Commit your way unto the Lord, He shall bring it to pass. I love the concept that Jesus actually submitted Himself to the Father. He placed Himself in the Father's hands.

If you're being persecuted, if you're being lied about and abused or harshly treated, you should just say, “Lord, I put it in Your hands. Take care of it.” If you're being lied about, you don't have to say, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay,” you just say, “Lord, You take care of it.” You know, if

you let God defend you, He will; but if you try to defend yourself, He won't defend you. You don't need to defend yourself, you just need to live a life of godliness and true holiness and let God fight your battles, let God defend you. Jesus said in Matthew 5, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." He said, " . . . for great is your reward in heaven," so we need to keep that eternal perspective.

Peter knew that Christ's example cannot save us, so as I said in this text, he moves to the fact that Jesus died for our sins as our Savior. Jesus is not only a model, but He was the Savior.

Here's the fourth, Jesus suffered vicariously. This segues right into our Communion service. I'm so glad that this was our text tonight, the night we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Look at verses 24 and 25. By the way, verse 22 starts with "Who," and it takes us back to verse 21, referring to Christ; so from verses 22-25 it's all about Jesus, "Who," verse 22. Look at verse 23, "Who," verse 24, "Who." In verse 23, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 Who his own self," this word "own self" then again it says, " . . . his own body," are emphatic in the Greek. That means that they're there for emphasis.

The focus is the fact that in His physical body, while on earth, Jesus actually bore our sins. So, he takes us deeply into the essence of the cross and Christ being the substitute for our sins, and that He died in our place. "Who his own self bare," which means to carry away, "our sins." He bore them in His body to carry them away. What? Our sins. " . . . in his own body,"—again, for emphasis—"on the tree,"—which is the cross—"that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." This "righteousness" is practical righteousness, living righteous lives. " . . . by whose stripes"—which is the concept of wounds that would bleed—"ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd"—which is the word "pastor"—"and Bishop"—which is the concept of to oversee—"of your souls."

I love these verses as Peter closes this second chapter. Jesus took our sin, verse 24, "Who . . . bare our sins in his own body." This is why I quite often will refer to the cross as a substitution, that's the heart of the cross. Jesus, who was sinless, took your sin and my sin, and He paid it in full on the cross by it being placed on Him. Our sins were actually placed on the sinless, Son of God. He buried, or carried away, as John the Baptist said, the sin of the world by burying it in His own body on the cross. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ took your sin, paid its penalty in full, the actual wrath of God. This is being denied today in even some Evangelical churches. It's called the "New Perspective on Paul." They don't believe in the penal substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, which is what the Bible teaches—that God the Father actually punished God the Son in my place, took my sins. Now, if that doesn't really fill you with love and devotion and appreciation and thankfulness for your salvation, I don't know what will. To think that Jesus Christ, sent by God the Father, voluntarily came to vicariously take my sin, take my punishment, take my wrath.

Remember when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, " . . . if it be possible, let this cup

pass from me,” and He was sweating great drops of blood in agony. He realized what He was about to do, and He said, “Father, if there is any possible way to redeem man without Me taking their sin and going to the cross, let it be.” But there was no way. Jesus was the perfect sin substitute. He actually took our sin as the penal substitutionary atonement, God’s wrath meted out on Jesus Christ, so that I could have His righteousness.

Verse 24, He also died to set us free from sin’s penalty when He says that we would be, “. . . dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.” What Jesus did when He died on the cross is not only wanted to save us from sin’s penalty, He wanted to save us from sin’s power. It’s called sanctification. He wants to make us holy. Justification is the act of God where He declares a believing sinner in Jesus Christ to be righteous based on the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Sanctification is where God makes you actually righteous by the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart transforming you into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, and then one day, if you’ve been justified and you have been sanctified, you will be glorified. What begins with grace ends in glory. That’s the work of salvation. Jesus paid for my sins on the cross. He took my sins in His own body to bare them away. He took my penalty, He wants to give me His Spirit to give me power so that we might live lives of righteousness, verse 24.

Notice this end statement of verse 24, “. . . by whose stripes ye were healed.” I’d like to go into this in more depth, maybe I’ll do it in introducing my study next Wednesday, but there are those that say that in the cross of Christ, when Jesus died, that He actually guarantees in the atonement physical healing. I believe this verse teaches otherwise. Now, I believe that God can heal. I believe that God does heal, and I believe that we should and can pray for healing. But let me warn you about a danger, and that danger is that you believe that it’s your right to be healed carte blanche in your salvation in the atonement. Those who teach that, and I know a lot about it because I was raised in a church that had that as a central tenet, believing that healing is in the atonement, believed that if you’re sick as a Christian, it’s because you have not by faith reached out and claimed what Jesus purchased for you on the cross. Unfortunately, that’s not what the Bible teaches. When Jesus died on the cross, He died for your salvation. He died to save you from sin.

I want you to notice, even in the text, in verse 24 it mentions “sins” twice. It’s a quotation from Isaiah 53:3. Then, in verse 25, when he says, “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls,” that the salvation, the healing there, is moral spiritual healing, not physical. Again, that doesn’t mean He can’t heal us. It doesn’t mean He might heal us, but you can’t demand or command or just confess that God is going to heal you because you’re a Christian or you’re in Christ because of the work of Christ on the cross. Everything in this text is speaking about the healing of our souls, “. . . returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” It’s all spiritual healing.

You may be a Christian and your body not be healed. You know, sooner or later, I don’t care how much faith you have, I don’t know how many positive confessions you make, sooner or later your body will deteriorate. All the old people say, “Amen.” All you have to do is live long enough. “. . . it is appointed unto men once to die,” so we have unredeemed bodies. I have a

soul and spirit that's been redeemed, but my body won't be redeemed until I'm glorified. Now, once you're glorified, you will never be sick again, you'll never have a runny nose again, you'll never have the sniffles again. You'll never have a sore back. You'll never have high blood pressure. No more cancer. No more sin, no more sickness, no more sorrow, no more pain. He'll even wipe away every tear from your eyes, " . . . the former things are passed away." But until that day comes, we live in a fallen world. We're light in a dark world. We'll be opposed, we'll be persecuted, we'll suffer, and our body will get old and get weaker and weaker until the Lord takes us home. But what a marvelous, marvelous text this is how by His stripes we are healed. I believe that this is the work of Christ in our salvation.

Notice this closing verse, "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." You know, sheep are pretty dumb, did you know that? We're like sheep. That's not very flattering. This Sunday is the Super Bowl. Everybody's getting all psyched up for the Super Bowl. Have you ever heard of an NFL team named "The Sheep"? No. It doesn't speak of strength. It doesn't speak of power. Not very many NFL teams called "The Sheep." "The Sheep," baaa baaa! We're weak, we're frail, no sense of direction. We need a Shepherd. Amen? So, I love this picture of, " . . . returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." Again, he's quoting from Isaiah 53:5, and Jesus died to bring us to Himself.

In verse 25, Jesus died on the cross to bring us, to return us, back to Him as our " . . . Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." I love that picture. The One who watches over us, that's what a bishop does. A shepherd is a pastor who oversees our souls, and that Shepherd is Jesus Christ.

In Psalm 23, David said, "The LORD is my shepherd, I have [everything] that I need." When the Lord is your Shepherd, you have everything you need. You'll not want for this life or eternity, you'll dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Let's pray.