

The Christian's Warfare Part 4: From Sinful Resistance to Joyful Submission

sermonaudio.com

The Christian's Warfare

By Ty Blackburn

Bible Text: 2 Corinthians 10:1-6
Preached on: Sunday, September 13, 2020

Providence Church
2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the second book of Corinthians, 10th chapter. 2 Corinthians 10, using this passage really as a framework for the entire series that we're looking at, not so much an exposition of this passage as really an application of this passage but I like to start here every week to remind us what we're trying to do. The title of the message is "The Christian's Warfare," and each week that's been the main title of the message and then we've had subtitles the last three Sundays and today the subtitle is "The Christian's Warfare: From Sinful Resistance to Joyful Submission." From sinful resistance to joyful submission. We look at this passage in a moment, we'll see again that it's talking about spiritual warfare, the Christian's spiritual warfare. You could say modern spiritual warfare is outlined in this text and it's seen really in the concepts that are laid out in the passage.

The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly or carnal but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, and so that the idea of spiritual warfare as we see as we read the passage, that these strongholds are actually thoughts, concepts, ideas, beliefs that we have in our minds that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, that is that we have formulated through this world, living in this world, living in a world that is filled with lies, everywhere you look, lies all the time lies. Truth is rare. It's a rare commodity in this world. It has always been a rare commodity since the fall because the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, 1 John 5:19. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says the god of this age, he blinds the eyes of unbelievers. He's the ruler of this present world, Jesus refers to Satan as that. And we know that Satan in his essential nature is a liar. He is a liar and the father of lies, Jesus says about him. It's from his nature to lie and that's how he murders. He kills through lies. He's been a murderer from the beginning and how did he bring death into the world upon Adam and Eve and upon all of us, the descendants of Adam? He lied and so the world is filled with lies and so we grow up in a world that is filled with lies and so we formulate beliefs, deeply held convictions that are unbiblical and wrong, and these wrong ways of thinking keep us captive, captive to sin, captive to defeated lives.

So we've been looking at areas where these big, we're looking at big kind of conceptual frameworks that tend to be amiss in the lives of believers and certainly in the world, but

they're amiss, they tend to be amiss in the lives of believers and the thought patterns of believers because they're common thematic lies that Satan is continually propagating through the world system. And so we looked at in previous weeks the issue of pride and the issue of prejudice, and then last Sunday preoccupation with this present world and the systems of this present world, and so today what we want to look at, we're looking at a concept that's somewhat related to the world system but it's unrelated in that it's really rooted in God and that is the word, the concept is authority and the question we want to ask is what is the Christian's relationship to authority? What is to be the Christian's attitude toward authority?

Contemporary attitudes we see in the world is the idea of throwing off all authority, throwing off all restraints to personal freedom and so what is the Christian's attitude? The Christian's attitude we're gonna see as we look at the Bible is really joyful submission but listen, carefully, it's not an unqualified submission. It is an unqualified submission to only one person, that is to Jesus Christ, and that's the essence of what it means to be a Christian. To come to understand the Gospel is to believe and to submit to the reign of a new King. It is to go from being in submission to sin and in submission to Satan to being in submission to a new King, Jesus Christ. And so at its very root, salvation is grounded in a change of authority and a glad submission to authority, and what we're gonna see is that God is the author of authority; that authority really is good. Now what we want to see is in a sinful world authority is often abused and misused and men, because they're evil, tend to use authority to oppress, but that the Christian's attitude, we're to think biblically, we're not to think like the world, and what we're gonna see is that the Bible presents a consistent picture of a God who is working even over and above and around and through sinful authorities. It's actually amazing. The picture that Scripture gives of God's sovereignty is so glorious, that he reigns and rules over everything that happens in this world, that nothing comes to pass except the Father ordain it to happen, and yet he does so with such amazing wisdom that he does not violate the will of his creatures. He does not ever tempt anyone to evil. It's unthinkable that God would do that and yet when he allows evil, he does so with a specific purpose which is ultimately his glory and the good of his people, and he works through ungodly people continually.

So we want to think biblically about this issue of authority and what I want to share with you, I'm going to try to summarize it and just kind of give you a little bit of where we're going with this. I believe that we, as sinners we tend to naturally reject authority. It's the essence of what sin really is. We're going to see that as we look at it in a moment. And what is wrong with us is that we are out from, this is what's wrong with every person that's born into this world since Adam sinned, we are out from under the authority of God and out from under the authority of Jesus Christ which is how we were made to live, and salvation is really a coming back under the headship of Jesus. In fact, the whole of history, the history of salvation essentially is paradise lost, paradise regained. Paradise was lost when man rebelled, joined in the rebellion of Satan. Paradise will be regained when King Jesus comes and destroys all of the enemies of his reign and his reign is fully realized and expressed without any opposition. That's where history's going and what's happening as you and I are going out on a daily basis, this is what witnessing really is, witnessing is the Gospel, actually the word for "Gospel" or "to evangelize," Euangelion is

the noun in Greek, "evangelism" comes from that. We transliterate the Greek letters into English. To evangelize, the word "Euangelion" means "a good message" but it's a good authoritative declaration. It is a proclamation from authority that is of good will. A Gospel message, the herald would come and proclaim this kind of message authoritatively in the name of the King, "I'm reading the King's decree and here is his decree. He expresses goodwill to you if you submit to him." That's essentially the root idea of the word "Gospel" itself, the way it's always used, and so witnessing is essentially you and I are doing the same thing. We are going to unbelievers who are living in rebellion against God and against his reign and we're saying, "We have good news. The King of Kings is offering freedom and offering pardon to you and offering life to you, though you like me have been living as a rebel against His righteous reign. He's made a way for you to come back into His peace and His blessing and the richness that He has for you, and it comes as you submit to His authority in Christ."

Well, what's gonna happen, so that's the way and so everything is, we were made to live under his authority and so one of the things I think that we can get messed up with is that Christians, what we're gonna see is ultimate, authorities in this world are a mess but that the general disposition of the Christian is to submit to authority except when that authority tells you to disobey the higher authority of God himself, and that Christians are not naturally rebellious people, that rebellion in itself is more of the character, is of the character of Satan. It's not an unqualified submission. Like I said, because your ultimate submission is to the King, you will not submit to something that is against the King's will, but that the basic disposition when it's, you know, especially when it's things that don't make that big a difference, I mean, well, they don't make an ultimate difference, we submit. It's one of the reasons that we are doing what we're doing as a church. We still are doing social distancing because the governor says so and we believe we should be disposed to do that unless he's telling us to sin. We've made a way to have church where basically everybody can be here. I know many of you are in other rooms looking at a tv screen, I appreciate your patience with that, but it's allowed us to gather as an entire church pretty much, I mean, not everybody's back, some are still because of their own particular needs and cautions are not able to join us or because of the people they're caring for and we understand that, those of you that are at home, we are glad you're joining us online, but there is something rich about being with the body and when you're able to come back, you need to come back. And if some of you are staying home because you're finding it more convenient and more enjoyable and I have to admit in my flesh I would rather sit and drink a cup of coffee at church myself, in fact, I have to keep myself from bringing one in because I would like to have one up there. I don't have one up there. I do have a water bottle. But anybody can bring water in, that's allowed, by the way, but sorry, I digress. Coffee has a way of distracting me into a whole different level. I'm so grateful to God for coffee, but anyway I'd rather sit at home and drink coffee myself but that's not what Jesus wants you to do. So I encourage you to evaluate and consider are you making, you may need to stay home because of your concerns about prudent wisdom about properly protecting yourself. I understand that. If that's what you're doing, that's fine but if you're not doing it for that reason, if you've gotten sloppy and the habit now of not going to church and you're staying home, you need to consider that that's not pleasing to the Lord. And I'm not judging your heart. You go to the Lord with that and each of us

knows what we have to do with our responsibilities and you answer to him, and this is where we in Romans 15 are told that we're not to judge, or Romans 14, not to judge another man's servant, he answers to his master. So we're gonna do that but we're also called to provoke one another to love and good works. So that's the balance intention.

Anyway, so the authority. We're calling people back under authority and we're to have a basic disposition to submit to authority because we know that authority is basically a good thing. Fundamentally it's a good thing. Evil people are often in authority and abuse it and oppress. Let's be clear on that, and when they do that, that is wicked and God will judge them, and there are even places where we are to oppose it in those certain circumstances but basically though we don't throw out the baby with the bathwater. Authority is good and as Christians we're to live lives in submission to authority in general to show that we're submitted to authority. I think one of the things that we don't realize is our basic attitude toward even governmental authority is like, well, actually this is an excellent point, there's Titus 2, Paul tells Titus, "Listen, tell slaves to obey their masters, that is servants to obey their masters," it's a different kind of slavery than American slavery, "tell them to obey their masters and to not do it as men pleasers but as those who are pleasing God, for in doing this we will adorn the doctrine of our God." That the way that you live even with, you know, bosses that are not kind but they're in authority over you, if you live humbly and you try to do what's right and you trust that God's working through even imperfect people and you submit like that, you're adorning the doctrine. The word there is "kosmeo," we get our word "cosmetic." You're beautifying the Gospel and I think this is really powerfully true in the sense of that you're beautifying the fact that submitting is a good thing because what everyone needs to do is submit to Jesus. They need to stop being their own god and their own master and their own lord and they need to submit to Jesus. And there is nothing more wonderful, there is nothing more delightful than living in submission to Jesus Christ, and so our lives can adorn that message and even the way we relate to imperfect authority in our lives shows that. The way we respect and honor our parents. The way we deal with government leaders. These things are ways we can show that authority is actually a good thing and begin to work against Satan's message which is always rebel.

Alright, let's read 2 Corinthians 10.

1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! 2 I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

So we are destroying these speculations. The word there pictures calculating, reflecting, counting up and then coming to a conclusion, a reasoned conclusion. We're destroying reasoned conclusions in our minds. We have sinful thought patterns. We have ungodly conceptual frameworks, things that have come into our thinking that are like, as we see here, the imagery is vivid military imagery. Powerful in picturing these thoughts, these beliefs that we have in our minds are like castles, they're like garrisoned castles, a castle with soldiers that can then go out and, you know, attack an invading army then retreat to the safety of the castle, and then come out attack again and then retreat to the safety of the castle. A castle can control a whole region around it. The people don't have to spread out to have a line, in the castle garrison and that's a stronghold that controls, and what he's saying here is we have strongholds of thought that are like a garrisoned castle that impede the advancement of here the army that's trying to advance in our lives is the truth of God. That's what he's saying here. We're destroying speculations and every lofty thing, every high castle raised up against the knowledge of God and so that's what we're trying to do here. These conceptual frameworks, these thought patterns that are wrong need to be rooted out, blown up by the truth, and that is spiritual warfare biblically.

What I want us to do now is to move to Romans 13. We're going to be moving around our Bibles quite a bit so just turn back over a couple books toward the front of your Bible toward Romans 13. I don't think we prayed. We did not pray, did we?

Let's pray.

Father, we need Your grace. Lord, just how much we need Your grace. We confess our weakness, our inability to think Your thoughts after You, our inability to love what You love, to hate what You hate, our inability, Lord, to joyfully submit to Jesus, and so we ask for Your Spirit to work through Your word and to transform us by the renewing of our minds, to make us look more and more like the beauty of Christ in the way that we live, the way that we respond, the way that we relate to people in a sinful world, that we might let our light shine in this dark world that people might see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. We pray that You would accomplish that this morning in Jesus' name. Amen.

So the Christian's warfare from sinful resistance to joyful submission, and we're talking about, it's kind of a double meaning. It's talking about our tendency to sinfully resist earthly authority and our need to joyfully submit, trusting God, but that ultimately, of course, the goal is to move from sinful resistance to Jesus' authority, to joyful submission to him and to see that happen in other people's lives. So with that said now, we're gonna have four points and we're gonna do the outline the way we've been doing it during this series most weeks. We're going to start with the design and just to see how God has designed us. I said this isn't an exposition of 2 Corinthians 10, 2 Corinthians 10 has laid out the framework. We're attacking thought patterns that are wrong and unbiblical and what we're doing is trying to go back and look at all that Scripture says about an issue and then think biblically about that, okay?

So how did God design us? I want you to look back at Genesis 1 and to first notice that God created man to be in authority. He created man to be in authority. This is the emphatic focus of these verses. Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'" Image and likeness of God. The image of God, the imago Dei. What does it consist in? Well, that's a big question. We're not gonna try to answer all of it but look what he says next. What is the image of God consist in? "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule." A key part of being in the image of God is to rule, to "rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

God created us to rule. In fact, he's going to say in this next part, he's gonna say, he's gonna give us the instruction to fill the earth, to subdue it and to rule. Fill, subdue and rule. Spread out over the whole earth, subdue it and rule in the name of God. This is a high calling God gave to man. This is why man can do some of the things he can do. I was thinking again as I think about this, I can't help but go back to like going to, have you been to Sea World or to, you don't have this I don't think, do they have this at the aquarium, do they have killer whales now? They don't have killer whales at the aquarium, do they? That's Sea World. But you see them, you know, people training killer whales. I mean, something's wrong with that picture. Killer whale, he's doing what a man tells him to do? Does not that make just your mind kind of boggle a little bit? The killer whale could easily eat the man or the woman any time he wanted to. I mean, but he does what the man does because God made us to rule. It's one of the evidences that we are made to rule over all the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky. You tell an eagle what to do and the eagle goes off and does it. I mean, none of us can do that but there are people who do that.

He made us to rule so we are made to be in authority. Authority was something God wanted to share with us. He makes us his co-regents, as it were, in his image, in his likeness to rule as he rules. He's going to rule through us. That's awesome, but this rule is going to happen only as we are submitted to his rule. We will be in authority if we are under his authority and you see this because right after he creates him, what does God do in verse 28? He speaks to him. And what does he do? He commands him. There are five imperative commands. The first thing God said to man when he made him was he said, "Here's what I want you to do. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Here are your commands, your instructions. You're gonna rule because you're under My rule." He said, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and over everything that creeps on the earth."

So we're created to rule, created to be in authority but we're created to be in authority by being under authority. You see this further in chapter 2, verse 16, when he creates the garden of Eden, he plants the garden, he puts man in it, and he puts a tree in there and he says, "Don't eat from that tree." Part of what's happening is the Lord's showing us we were made to be under authority. The reason he put that tree there wasn't accidental. "Oh no, I messed up. All these trees are great except this one tree I messed up on. Don't eat

from it." No, he put it there so he could give man a command and man could then choose to submit to his reign and rule even when he didn't fully understand.

That's a picture of what it means to love God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Loving God means obeying God and so he made us to obey him, to submit to him. In fact, this is interesting. Make a note of this passage. I'll just summarize it for you, Matthew 8:5-13. One of the first witnessing encounters Matthew records for us in his Gospel is of Jesus being encountered by a group of servants that have come from a Roman centurion. The Roman centurion has another servant who is ill who he loves very much and he's obviously a good man, he's a God-fearing man, we're going to find out he's a saved man even. The Lord's already working in his heart to bring him to faith through his understanding of the Old Testament apparently. He sends some servants to Jesus and they say, "Listen, my Master, a Roman centurion, has a servant who is ill and basically he needs you to heal him." And Jesus says, "Okay," and he starts to come with him and he says, "Wait a minute. No, You don't need to come." The centurion apparently catches up and now he's telling him himself when you put the Gospel accounts together you see it's like this. The servants get there first, the centurion comes later and the centurion says, "No, don't trouble Yourself to come to my house." He says, "For I too am a man under authority and I say to this man go and he goes, and to this man come and he comes. So I know You don't need to go to my house, You just need to speak the word and it will be done." And Jesus said, "Behold, I have not found such great faith in all of Israel." And his servant was healed at that moment.

Now what's interesting is the man when you look at it, he said, "I say to this man go and he goes, this man come and he comes." I would have expected the centurion to say, "I too am a man in authority." Don't you have to be in authority to have somebody say, "Hey, you go and now you come," and they do what you say? Isn't that in authority? Well, it is but he said, "I too am a man under authority." The reason you are in authority is because you are under authority and if you are not under authority, you are not in authority. It makes perfect sense. Think about this, when a Roman centurion tells his soldier to go because he's obeying his general who's obeying his governor, who's obeying his king, the emperor, it's as if the emperor is telling you go and the emperor is telling you come, and if you don't go or come, the wrath of the emperor will fall upon you. It's the chain of command.

So to be in authority you have to be under authority, but God made us to be in authority and to be under authority and authority is a good thing, and it's clear before sin entered the world there was the authority structure. In fact, the male/female marriage authority structure was pre-fall. You see this when you look at 1 Timothy 2:12 and following. Paul is basically teaching that, "Listen, it's not appropriate for women to teach or be in authority over men." And he goes on to say, "For it was Adam who was created first and not Eve." He's basically saying the reason there is male headship in the home and in the church is because God created Adam first and then he brought Eve to him. Now we're equal in one sense, equal in glory, equal in value. There are verses that say there is neither male nor female in Christ. That's true. In one sense we're metaphysically equal,

equal in being, but there is functional subordination in the marriage relationship and that is pre-fall. It's not a reflection of sin.

And Paul's argument if you look at 1 Timothy 2 and you do it with an open mind, just looking at what the Bible says, it's unmistakable. The only reason people don't like it is because they don't like authority and they understand that many men have abused their authority. There are many who proclaim to be Christians who abuse those who live under them and that is wicked and evil but it doesn't change the fact that God intends us to live under authority and authority is good. Listen, everybody in authority is accountable and there are places where if a man is abusing his wife, you appeal to another authority, you appeal to the government authority. In fact, if we find out as church leaders that someone's abusing, we go to the government because God has ordained that. He says that, submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

So you submit to authority and when authority is wrong, you don't, it's not authority is not always right. No. It's to be held accountable but not in a rebellious resistant way, but in a way that seeks a higher authority to deal with that. So in that sense, and in fact, when you, if a woman, a Christian woman lives and allows her husband to abuse her, she is not submitting to Christ in that. She's allowing her husband to sin and to multiply his sin and so she needs to come to the church leaders, she needs to come to the government and say, "Listen, this needs to stop." And it's actually appealing to the higher authority, it's what God wants but, you see, it's not this resistant, "No!" closed-fist kind of thing. It's a broken-hearted thing that's trusting in the goodness of God and his wisdom.

So the Lord made us to be under authority. In fact, I think that if Adam and Eve had not sinned, there would have been some kind of governmental structure set up. Now I know that's, I'm speculating a little bit here but let me just give you some things to think about. It's not the biggest deal in the world in this but just think about this. The angels have some kind of governmental structure. The godly angels, fallen angels apparently do too but godly angels do. You know, Michael is the Archangel, that's the lead angel. There are cherubim and seraphim and angels, you know, and there's apparently authority and responsibility because Michael is told, we're told in Jude and also in Daniel that Michael is apparently responsible for the nation of Israel. He's over somehow the angels who look after the nation of Israel. There's an authority structure. Those are not fallen angels so I think that begs the question, but more than that, I think the proof of the goodness of authority is actually seen in an unmistakable way when we look at the Trinity and this is what really makes a rebelliousness so ugly, is there is authority in the Triune Godhead. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the way we see the Bible as we look at all of Scripture and we look at what God is saying about himself, we see that there is one God, he's one in essence, he's three in person. There are three persons in this one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and within that that we see an economy of a division of labor and we see an authority structure.

We certainly see it in redemption vividly and I think we see it in creation. In redemption, just like here are some verses to look at. John 5:30, we see that Jesus though he's equal in power and glory to the Father, he submits to the Father. "I can do nothing," John 5:30,

listen to this, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." Jesus doesn't do anything without the Father's direction. Now this is true in his earthly ministry but I think we can infer from this even it's true in creation, and I'll show you that in just a moment. But he did nothing on his own initiative. He submitted to the Father.

That doesn't mean he's less in power and glory than the Father, that functional subordination does not mean metaphysical inequality, that is, if you're under someone's authority you must be less than them. We know that's not true. You have to submit to people that are much less than you and even, I'm talking about not in equality of being but maybe you have to submit to people who aren't as smart as you. In some areas that may be true. A lot of times you think you're smarter than you are and they're probably smarter than you think they are, and so you're really wrong anyway, but at least that's true for me. But it's not about who's the smartest, it's about who's in the authority position. Young people, you submit to your mother and father because God says so. Ephesians 6:1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right." The first commandment on the horizontal level, when you look at the first, the 10 Commandments, you have the four commandments that are about our relationship with God, "No other gods before Me. No idols. Don't take the name of the Lord in vain. Remember the Sabbath day." And then he gets on the horizontal, the first commandment on the horizontal I would have expected to be, "Thou shall not kill." It's not. The first commandment on the horizontal is, "Honor your father and your mother." And a promise is attached to it, "that it may go well with you and you may live long upon the earth." You see, God loves authority.

So we're to have this disposition and Jesus, we see that in his ministry. We see it also in chapter 14. He says, "The things that you've seen Me doing," chapter 14, verse 10, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works." The things you hear me saying, the things you see me doing, I'm doing at the direction of the Father. "He who sent Me." 32 times in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "The One who sent Me." The Father sent the Son into the world. You see, that's authority.

He sent him into the world and the way that we understand how the economy of the Trinity, that is, how the house works in the Trinity that we see in Scripture is the Father administers. He directs. He administers. The Son accomplishes. He does the will of the Father in accomplishing our salvation. And the Spirit applies. You're saved when the Spirit causes you to be born again, when the Spirit gives you a new heart and applies what Jesus accomplished which the Father sent him to do. This is the beauty of how God works, the one God in three persons works, and there is authority within that.

And I think you see it also in creation. Let me just kind of summarize this. You think about it, reflect on it, and check it out in the Scriptures and see if you agree. But basically in Genesis 1 you will see that how does God create? "And God said let there be light and there was light. And God said. And God said. And God said." When you compare that with John 1:1-4 we're told that the Word, "In the beginning was the Word." What's the Word? That which is spoken, but we find out the Word is Jesus Christ, the second person

of the Trinity is the Word, that's the designation for the Word. "Through Him all things were created and apart from Him nothing was created that has been created." The Father is directing creation and the Son, though, is mediating creation. He's accomplishing it. God said, the Father speaks to the Son and he sends the Son and the Son's doing it, and you also have in chapter 1, verse 2, the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters. All three persons of the Trinity there in Genesis 1 and you have the, "Let Us make man in Our image." What's that? "Let Us," that's a dialog among the Trinity. These little anticipations of the wonder of who God is, that he will be one God and yet three in person.

So if authority is in the essence of who God is, how can you say it is bad? Only Satan believes that and if we are believing that, we're believing a lie, and we could hear Jesus say to us in those moments just like he said to Peter, Peter was a believer. Peter had just given that, we read it today, James read it earlier, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Remember what Jesus said? "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but My Father who is in heaven." That is, "You have just now expressed something that you could not have expressed apart from the sovereign work of God in your life to open your spiritual eyes, to give you a new heart, and praise the Lord, you've seen it, Peter." And the next thing you know Jesus is looking, it says, "He said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'" So Peter was deceived and what did he say? "You have your mind set on the things of man, not on the things of God." So we need to get our mind off the things of man and onto the things of God.

So we were designed to be in authority, under authority, authority is good. It's a part of who God is. Now our condition. That's design, that was the first point, design. The second point is our condition. For the sake of time I'm gonna summarize some things and I'm gonna ask you to look them up and check me out. You should always do that with anybody you hear teach. But the essence of sin is a rejection and a repudiation of God's authority. That's what happened in the garden. Satan basically said, "God's lied to you. God cannot be trusted. Reject His rule and authority." He said in Genesis 3, "The reason that He's told you not to eat from that tree is because He knows that when you eat from it, you will be like Him, knowing good and evil." So at its essence the desire to sin, the packaging of sin was the desire to be like God, to determine for ourselves. We talked about this when we were talking about judging and prejudging, remember? We have this tendency to judge without all the facts because we want to make authoritative determinations and judgments on other people. It's the essence of what sin is. Now there is place for making right judgments. We are made to make judgments. We're made to rule. But we're made to make sound judgments, taking all the facts in that we can and knowing that sometimes our knowledge is limited and so our judgment is tentative even at times.

So the essence of sin is this desire to be like God, Genesis 3:5, and what you'll see, let's turn to Ezekiel 28. Where did this desire to be like God come from? There are two Old Testament passages that have a tremendous amount of information on this. The 28th chapter of Ezekiel is one of God's oracles against an ungodly kingdom and an ungodly king who was abusing his authority, the king of Tyre. Ezekiel 28. And the Lord calls Ezekiel to pronounce this oracle against him. Verse 2, "Son of man, say to the leader of

Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,'" he's actually talking to the king of Tyre who has this incredibly exalted opinion of himself. Look what he says, "Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods In the heart of the seas'; Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God." The king of Tyre is thinking he's a god like many of the ancient kings did, they wanted to be worshiped as gods, and this man did too. So he's going to go on and he's going to say some sarcastic things to him. The Lord is going to through his prophet call him to account but what's interesting in verses 1 to 10 he's talking to the king of Tyre and in verse 11 something interesting happens and what I want to suggest to you is this: he stops talking to the king of Tyre and he starts talking to the spiritual force of wickedness in the heavenly places that is animating the king of Tyre. He's talking to Satan himself.

Look at verse 11, "Again the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, "Thus says the Lord GOD.'"" So he's still talking, in a sense, in the vicinity of the king of Tyre, about the king of Tyre, but it seems he's got his eye behind it, and the reason I say that, look at what he says next, "Thus says the Lord GOD," because these things are not true of the king of Tyre what you're gonna read next, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond." Skip on down to verse 14, "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God." He's talking to Lucifer, to Satan. "You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty."

You see, Satan was lifted up because of his beauty and somehow exalted himself against God, and I want you to look at, we won't look at it right now, if you look at Isaiah 14, you'll see the same dynamic happening. It's a lamentation or an oracle of judgment against the king of Babylon, a different king, and the same thing I think is happening. He's describing the king of Babylon but he's also describing the heart that motivates him is the deception of the spiritual force behind him and he says there that the king of Babylon said, "I will lift up myself to the throne of God. I will inhabit the place of the Most High." And I think that's what Satan did, that's what Lucifer did when he fell. He wanted to be like God, equal to God, and isn't it amazing when he says to Adam and Eve, he says to Eve, "You will be like God."

So the essence of sin is this desire to be not under authority but in authority apart from God, and you see this just unfold as you read the Scriptures. You see Cain responding to God's authority by rebelling against it in chapter 4 when God comes and tells him, "Listen, just do what's right and you'll be received." But he in his murderous anger against God, he strikes out against the image of God and kills his brother Abel.

Or chapter 11, this is really interesting. Chapter 11, verses 1 to 4. One command, remember Genesis 1, the command was, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth." And then, of course, they get so bad that God destroys them, destroys mankind in a flood, chapters 6 to 8. Then chapter 9, Noah comes off the ark with his three sons and their wives, eight people saved. You know what God says to Noah? "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth." He echoes what he said in Genesis 1. This is why it's so significant in Genesis 11:1-4 you'll read the tower of Babel. What was it that they said? "Let us gather together and build a city and a tower and make a name for ourselves lest we be spread out over the face of the whole earth."

Do you see that, the defiance? That's the heart of man, to defy God and that's what in our sin nature. We want our authority. This is what sin really is. This is the ugly, evil underbelly of sin and only Jesus can deliver us from that and we have to submit to him, joyful submission to him. He roots that out. The condition is so grave that only Christ can cure it and that's the Gospel, so that we've looked at the design, we were made to be under authority and then in authority, our condition is we hate authority, we don't want to submit. We want to be in it without being under it. And then the environment. Third point, environment. I mentioned earlier 1 John 5:19, the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. The one who hates authority, who hates God, he is in control of this system. He's lying continually and everyone who's born into this world is born as a descendant of Adam with that same rebellious, evil heart that wants to be like God, that wants to rule, and so we see the ugliness all around us.

2 Timothy 3:1-4, Paul paints a picture of what the last days are like. He says, "But realize this, that in the last days," 2 Timothy 3:1, "realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money," listen to what comes next, "boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents." Isn't that amazing that made the list? You see, that's why it's the fifth commandment. You rebel against your parents, you're just acting out the evil of what Satan and sin are and you're cultivating in your heart a habit of rebelling against God. He goes on to say, "ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." This is what happens when man rebels against God and keeps running away from God, he becomes more and more unhuman.

This is what we see happening around us. I was listening to a sermon by John MacArthur a couple of months ago, who's responsible for the riots, and he was basically talking about sin, the evil of sin and his message was essentially if you allow people to sin, they will sin. If you allow people to murder, they will murder. But one of the things he made an interesting point is he pointed out that God has given in his gracious kindness in the fabric of how he's made the world, even the world is sinful and we are sinners, there's still elements of common grace that God has put in the world to protect us and to restrain evil and he mentions three. Just make a note of these: the conscience, the family, and government.

The conscience is basically an inner judge that Romans 2:14-15 makes clear, that God has written the law on the hearts of every human being in some way. It's a distant memory and many times they don't even think about it but it's in there and that's why their hearts condemn them when they do evil. The conscience, and if you listen to your conscience, you will be blessed but this world has basically told us, especially for the last 40 or 50 years in America, that your self-esteem is more important so don't listen to your conscience, suppress your conscience, reject your conscience, forget the rules that you think, that you somehow that basically, of course, the secular lie is that these things have been told to you from outside, the fact that you should, you know, one man, one woman for life. That's a construct of society, ungodly people say, but Jesus said it's from the beginning it was this way. "A man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh."

So conscience has been assaulted and is being just seared in the way people are living, so think about what that does, it means the inner judge that restrains evil is being thrown off. Now think about the family as a second line of defense. The family as Proverbs makes clear in a number of different places, you know, "Spare the rod, spoil the child." If you spare the rod, I mean, basically there's a verse that say, "Discipline your son, you know, strike him with the rod, do not desire his death." The idea is not that you strike the rod you're desiring his death, he's saying if you don't spank them, you're desiring their death. It says another place, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child, the rod of discipline will remove it." Read Proverbs and you'll see the picture. Now it's got to be done in love, of course, it's got to be done for their good, for God's glory, it's got to be done in a way that honors the Lord, but this is what the Bible says.

So the family is there and so people come into the world, they need a conscience, they need a family structure, and look what's happening: the family structure is completely under assault today. So think about it, you destroy the conscience, you destroy the family, and now government is there. Romans 13. We're told that we're to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Look at this Romans 13:1, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil." You see, God brings government to restrain evil and the assault on government, defunding the police. That's not a godly, I mean, police reform, there are things that need to be looked at, of course. There's not, remember, it's not unqualified submission. There are places to make reforms, to make changes, but in general the idea is that the person who stands in authority is God's minister. Three times in that passage it says God's minister or God's servant. That's the person in authority.

Now what that tells you is God can use imperfect people in imperfect systems, he still does his work, but think about in a society where the conscience is under assault, the

family is under assault, the government is under assault. We're on the verge of anarchy but as Christians we're not to be caught up in that. We're to be people who show a better way. No, the way to freedom is not to cast off all restraint. That is not the way to freedom, that is the way to total and complete bondage. You throw off the restraint of conscience and you become more in bondage to sin and to evil. You become less human. To throw off the restraint of family, to be a hater of your parents even if they're ungodly and they need to be disciplined, you may have to report your parents to the authorities, you go to the authorities. If they are abusing you, you do that, that's right but you do not hate them or despise them. That means stand in the way of what justice has to do, but you trust God. This is why it says, "Wives, submit to your husbands as unto the Lord." The reason you submit to your husband is not because he's worthy, because he's smart enough, because most of the time you're gonna think he's not, you do it because you trust God, a God who works through imperfect people to do perfect things.

So the environment is telling us. I've already jumped ahead to resources. My bad. Resources. Romans 13, we were supposed to, is part of resources, fourth point. We've looked at design, condition, environment, now resources. The word of God tells us to have a heart that puts ourselves in subjection to governing authorities because the authority exists from God. Proverbs 21:1 says that the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, like a water course he channels it wherever he wishes. You know, if you've ever flown and looked out and happened to see a river, you're on a window seat and you looked out and you saw a river, isn't it amazing to see a river from the air? Because if you're on the ground, the river looks like it's straight but when you're in the sky, a river looks just like this, it's going back and forth and God says in Proverbs 21:1, that he handles the heart of the king just like that. He turns the heart of the king on a dime whenever he wants to and therefore you can joyfully submit to governing authorities.

You see this beautifully in Daniel and this balance of qualified submission, not unqualified submission. No, you do not submit when authority calls you to dishonor God because your ultimate submission is to God. Daniel 1. Daniel does not eat the food. He and his three friends, remember they'd eat the food, they would be defiled. Read that. It's a great story of a godly appeal and they say, "We're not gonna eat the food. If we have to die, we're not gonna eat the food," because at that point in history the way God was revealing himself, a faithful follower of the one true God, Jehovah, Yahweh, was not to eat certain things. That was the dietary laws of the Old Testament. That's no longer true for us but at this time faithful following of God meant you had to do that and Daniel and his three friends would not eat the king's choice food. That would have been unclean food. Well, the Lord works a miracle and they do great. That is not a chapter that advocates veganism or vegetarianism, by the way, because they didn't eat meat. It's not telling you that. The point of the passage is in spite of that, in spite of the fact they ate no meat, they were still strong. It's really a powerful advocacy for maybe going out and getting a steak tonight because it's advocating, anyway, sorry about that.

Daniel 1. Daniel 3. They're told by Nebuchadnezzar, the three friends, Daniel's not there, the three friends are a part of a group that says, "Bow down and worship the idol." And Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego say, "No, we will not. O king, we will not bow down

to this idol which you have created. If you kill us, that's up, we know God's able to deliver us but if he does not, we will not bow down."

Then chapter 6, Daniel, there's an ungodly law passed that you cannot pray to anyone but the king. One of those the king is god kind of things. The opponents of Daniel cook up this scheme and Daniel's an old man. He goes home and he prays before an open window daily, I think twice a day or three times a day looking toward Jerusalem. He prays so they can see him. "I'm not going to listen to that command. I'm gonna worship God." But what's interesting, if you read Daniel carefully, you will see that Daniel actually seems to love and care about these ungodly kings. It's astounding. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar gets this dream that God is finally gonna get his. He's sitting up on the roof of Babylon looking at Babylon and he says, "Look at Babylon the great, the city I've made for my glory," and he has a dream. This is what's happening, he has a dream and he's saying this and he hears this voice out of heaven say these things, "The kingdom is removed from you." He tells Daniel the dream and Daniel says this, "O king, would that this were happening to your enemies and not to you." And Daniel is genuinely grieved over the fact that Nebuchadnezzar is gonna be judged by God and he urges him to avoid the judgment. In chapter 6 when you read even Darius who's been hoodwinked in this stupid law that he made, Daniel you can see when he comes out after the night in the lions' den, the king says, "Daniel, are you okay?" "O king, live forever," he says. There's this honor and respect because he knows that God's working through these ungodly people and so Christians are to be like that. We're to be people who will not yield anything of our worship and allegiance to Jesus Christ but who are people who realize that this world is passing away. So the stuff here is not as big a deal and we have a disposition to submit and in doing that we help the world see, unbelievers see that the most wonderful thing in the world is to be submitted to Jesus Christ.

Passage to look at this week would be to look at Psalm 2. I'm gonna tell you about what it says and then turn with me to Philippians 2. Make a note about Psalm 2. Psalm 2 pictures, shows you really the spiritual picture of the world and it shows the nations raging against God and against his anointed and that's really the spirit of this age and that's the spirit that animates people like even Nebuchadnezzar. They're raging against God but the message of the Gospel is submit to the Son, kiss the Son, submit to him before his wrath comes because you're gonna submit to him at one time or another, every single human being will submit to Jesus Christ. The question is will you submit now and live with him in paradise forever, or will you wait until the day of judgment and submit to him and be cast into hell.

Philippians 2, this beautiful picture of Jesus, verse 5, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." That is the one truth that every single human being at some point will agree to. Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father and the question is now will you submit now or will you harden yourself against him in the insanity of rebellion against his righteousness rule? Or will you submit to him? He says, "Come unto Me you who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest." You're weary and heavy-laden because you're resisting him. "Come unto Me," he says, "and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you." That's the yoke of actually like an ox, you're actually taking on his yoke of slavery, in a sense. You're becoming a servant of Jesus but in true service to him you find rest. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light and you will find rest for your souls."

Submit to him and then we go out into the world with that message that there's nothing more wonderful than submitting to Jesus Christ with the confidence that God who's reigning and ruling over all is reigning over the circumstances of our lives big and small. The Lord wants his people to be people who are joyfully submitted to Christ and have joy in the midst of a dark and depressed world because we know the one who is on the throne.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

Our Father, how grateful we are for the glory of the Gospel, Lord, that we can say as You said in the book of Isaiah, "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, who proclaims to Zion your God reigns." Lord, what good news that is, that even though we see evil raging all around us, we see injustice, we see evil and wickedness all over the world, we can see these things, yet we know that You reign. You reign over all. Nothing happens apart from Your sovereign purposes, Your good and kind and loving purposes in accordance with Your perfect wisdom. Lord, so often what You're letting happen is so that people will see the evil in the world and they will see the evil in themselves and they will run to Jesus. Lord, help everyone in this room to run to Jesus. Those who have not yet truly believed in a saving way, have not submitted themselves to You, may today be the day of their salvation. Lord, grant them hearts to fully surrender, to stop fighting, to stop rebelling and to bow the knee to Christ. And for those who belong to You, Lord, forgive us for our continued foolishness. Change our thinking. Make us people who joyfully follow in the train of our Savior, our Lord, our Master, that we find out is the train of triumph. We pray in His name. Amen.