

SESSION 8: TO THIS YOU WERE CALLED

FROM THE LAST SESSION:

In Ch3 v15 of Peter's letter, we are told that we must 'set apart Christ as Lord'.

Imagine everything in your life had to be put in one of two columns. 'Setting apart' here means putting the Lord in a column on His own. We can call this Column One.

Everything else in our lives goes in Column Two. But notice, we are to set apart Christ *as Lord*. This means everything in Column Two is there for His use and pleasure. However, we must never allow *anything* in Column Two to become so important to us that we would ever consider moving it into Column One. To set apart Christ as LORD means never allowing anything to interfere or challenge His will or command. Everything has to be given over to His pleasure.

What are the things that we as a church, a community and as individuals find most difficult to keep out of column one? How does this relate to our 'Aah that I must leave all this' list from Session 5?



READ

As he discusses salvation and sanctification, Peter explains to his readers how these two great truths must be revealed in their daily lives.

Again and again, Peter reminds these early disciples of the hope and joy that come from the assurance that we have been chosen by God for salvation and sanctification. He goes on to remind them that this heavenly hope and joy cannot be disturbed by earthly hardships and trials.

Peter also instructs his readers that, as a royal priesthood and a holy nation, they should live lives that are blameless before God, one another, and non-believers, even those who would accuse and condemn them.

If we are to live such lives as Peter instructs us, this will involve the three remaining 'S's: submission, service and sacrifice.

Submission

READ

None of these calls to discipleship fits comfortably into our society's values. Perhaps submission is the one we find hardest to accept. However, as we study Peter's teaching in more detail, it begins to

make sense.

The word Peter uses could be heard in everyday conversation but its origins came from military usage. In Matthew 8: 5-10 a Roman centurion explains how it worked in practice. Submission, then, involves the recognition of the superior authority of others to exercise their will at the expense of our own.

The way of the cross was and is the way of submission, even submission to those who had no authority to demand it. The Lord Himself submitted to the indignities of crucifixion for the sake of the Gospel. This is the way Peter now calls us to follow.

Peter instructs his readers to focus on their own attitudes and behaviour, *regardless* of the treatment they receive from those to whom they are submitting. The emphasis here is on us adopting an attitude of submission, it is not on the worthiness of those to whom we are called to submit. How we need the Holy Spirit if we are to truly follow the Lord!

In Ch 2 v13-25 and Ch 3 v1-7, Peter instructs the believers to submit in three different areas of their lives, in Ch5 v5 he adds a fourth.

Discussion: What challenges does each of these present us with? How can we help one another to overcome them?

How does Peter use the Lord's example to encourage his readers?

Leaders: Resist the temptation to discuss reasons why those in authority should not be submitted to. This is not the focus of Peter's teaching here; he is teaching us how to follow the Lord's example, not to judge the motives and actions of those who have authority over us.

Having said this, it is worth pointing out that Peter himself was unwilling to submit to human authority when instructed to disobey the Lord's commands. Acts Ch 4 v1-20 is a good example of this.

Discussion: If we accept that wherever possible we should submit to those in authority, how do we know when NOT to submit?

Nevertheless, Peter's instructions around submission are quite clear. Put at its simplest, he expects us to follow the Lord's example: wherever and whenever possible, we should submit to those around us. In choosing the way set before us, we

will reveal to others the love, joy and hope with which the Lord has filled our hearts.

These are not easy teachings. However, Peter is clear that if we are to grow into our salvation, submission must be a key characteristic of our lives.

FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

Throughout his letter, Peter honours and lifts up the name of the Lord above all things that were, that are and that are to come. Yet he continues to point out the Lord's example of submission, service and sacrifice.

What is the difference between our heavenly status and value on one hand and the earthly roles we are called to fulfil on the other?

How does our fulfilment of our earthly roles affect our heavenly standing?

