

Revolutionary Disciple Week #5: The World Sphere

This is one of the most anxious times in our country. We are living through historic times. What we need are people who live more and more like Jesus. To do that we need to learn humility from the one who brought it into the world, Jesus. It will be revolutionary if we live this way while others are screaming at each other and losing their minds.

Jesus wants to teach us how to walk humbly in a world that needs his presence.

What does God's presence bring? Peace or **shalom**, a sense of being complete. It brings **hope**. The **kingdom** of God is fine. The **ability to love** even those who are unlovable, like our enemies. All of this comes out of a sense of **being secure in my relationship** with the one who created me. The opposite of all of that security brings a sense of being always unsure. **People who are always unsure of where they stand or if they are loved, are anxious**. This is an anxious world and we are called to walk through it, bringing his presence.

That brings us to our definition of humility. **Humility is knowing who you are in relation to God and choosing to go lower by...** These are the actions of a **humble person**, the way Jesus wants us to be. **It begins with the foundation** of knowing who you are in relationship to God. **If you have trusted in Jesus** and decided that he is who he said he was and that you will **align your life** with his, then **you can risk** choosing to go lower. You no longer have anything to prove or earn. You have received grace. God has **chosen you and brought you close**, through Jesus.

Serving...Submitting: These first two are more **directly dealt** with in some of the scriptures we have read. We know **"Jesus came to serve and not be served** and gave his life as a ransom for many." **Last week, we learned about submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ**. Two weeks ago, we learned about submitting in the church **to our spiritual leaders**.

Listening...Confessing:

Listening and confessing are **not quite as obvious**, but they still put us in a **humble posture** in relationship to others. To listen is to make what you are saying and feeling more important than what I want to say. Confessing is admitting our brokenness, and sin in relationship with one another. These are humble actions because we **may not like what someone says** and we may not want someone to know the rotten stuff we have done. That stuff flies against **the image we are trying to portray**.

This past week, we challenged one another to try to act humbly within our families by doing these four things.

Diagram

Where is the one place we spend more time at than any other place other than home? That is work. If you are a student, then school is your primary work.

To learn how to walk humbly in a world that needs his presence, we have to begin here. We have to have a **proper view of work** or we will never be able to truly practice humility, or serving, submitting, listening, or confessing. It begins with...**Redefining the purpose of work.**

When we have a prideful view of our work, a self-absorbed view, then work is only about what it gives me or provides for me. This makes it impossible to walk humbly at work. Why? Because work is about me, not those I work with or for.

This morning's scripture from Ephesians may sound strange. It may sound as if it could have nothing to do with us and, even worse, sounds like it is **promoting injustice.** Paul deals with **how to live humbly at work,** by looking at one major part of the work force at that time in history, slaves.

⁵ Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. ⁶ Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. ⁷ Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁸ Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free. ⁹ Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. Ephesians 6:5-9

Keep in mind that slavery was a given in that culture. It was not yet time for God to attack this sinful institution. In this culture, it wasn't simply about a race of people, it could be simply someone was taken captive in a war and sold as a slave. Paul was not called by God to bring down this institution that was woven through the fabric of the culture. It was Paul calling to send disciples into all parts of the present culture who were living humbly before God by following Jesus. They were to announce his kingdom in all parts of culture.

It may sound as if Paul is supporting slavery or treating a person as property and not one created in the image of God. In that culture, to even refer to a slave was to humanize them. He spoke directly to people who others did not. This was to treat a slave as someone; one of eternal value

and not some a **dumb animal** like an ox. You wouldn't try to speak to an oxen or even a shovel like this. Those **tools** don't warrant being spoken to as if you have the **ability to determine how you live**. You simply do what you are told.

Also keep in mind that Paul views slaves who have believed in Jesus **as a part of the church**, the **same church their owners** were a part of. Get the picture? Paul, writing these things, means that there were most likely slaves in a church with their owners. And **if you think republicans and democrats in the same church is tricky**, then this is on a different level.

Let's look at each of these commands given and how it would redefine work if we were to operate this way.

Respect and Fear for the boss...this is to treat your boss with respect. The fear part is not quivering in a corner, waiting to get yelled at or fired. No, this is **acknowledging the authority** that this person has.

Serve sincerely, as if you were serving Christ...This is pretty self-explanatory. This is to do your work for your boss as if you were doing that task for your Lord and savior. This is about **knowing who your real boss is** and, yes, he is allowing this other person to have some bit of authority over you.

Try to please all the time...This is wanting to do good work in order to make this person look good. Do bosses sometimes take credit for what you have done? Yes.

Work enthusiastically...Act like you want to be there. How can I do that if **I'm not passionate** about my work? Simple, go back to doing it as if it were for Jesus.

Let's say you have a boss, but you are also a boss. This is one of the most important verses in the Bible on authority. **But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."** Matthew 20:25-28

Your work is where you are being sent. It is your mission field. Would God view the place where you spend most of your time **as simply a means to an end?** Your job is **simply for money to do the things you need and want to do.** Your school is **simply a way to get an education** so that you can **get**

the job you want to be fulfilled and get money for the things you need and want. It's like God is up there in heaven, just waiting for you to get out of work so that you can be with your family or do something really spiritual at church. Then the really important stuff starts.

Maybe this will help us see work correctly as a mission field. ²² **And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,** ²³ **which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Ephesians 1:22 NIV**

You are a part of the church and the church is the fullness of God that fills everything in every way. That's like us being poured out like water into this world, desperate for God's presence and the water fills every crack and crevice in culture. We take it there when we are poured out or sent to places like work or school.

Let's add another layer onto this. When we walk humbly into our work and everywhere we go, we take the fullness of God. What does that kind of life look like?

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. John 10:10

How can you have a full life if where you spend most of your time is separate from your purpose?

Back to doing it as if you are doing it for Jesus. What is a word that describes offering something to God that is for God from you? That word is worship!

To learn how to walk humbly in a world that needs his presence, we must have a proper view of work, or we will never be able to truly practice humility, or serving, submitting, listening, or confessing. This next part should clear the room and have people jumping off the live-stream feed. If we are to learn how to walk humbly in a world that needs God's presence it's about...How we respond to governmental authority.

And here is the verse that American Christians love to quote when their party is in power, but can't seem to remember it exists when their person loses the white house. Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. ² They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. Titus 3:1-2

Verse 2 just described much of what Christians are posting on social media. There's a lot of slander and constant quarreling. Keep in mind, submitting is not the same as agreeing.

And then he goes and says, **"show true humility to all the people who love you and agree with you and who make it easy for you to be humble."** Oh, right it didn't say that, it said **"show true humility to everyone."**

Ok, now that we see who is left in the room, let's start with the **only one who can teach true humility, Jesus.** When Jesus was **arrested and paraded** in front of the authorities, he said this to the governmental authorities.

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36

Jesus had a way of obeying the government, but still keeping the kingdom first. 185

We are going to read verses that seem to **describe two opposing responses** that early Christ followers had to governmental authority.

The first response is that...**Sometimes we must stand up.**

For me, this is a **pulse raising**, courageous moment. ¹⁹ **But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?"** ²⁰ **We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."** Acts 4:19-20

What is the context of this statement? Peter and John have been arrested for healing a **crippled man** in the name of Jesus. After sitting in jail for the night, they were brought before the judge. The judge was going to release them under the condition that they stop preaching in the name of Jesus.

Why is it in this case ok for them to disobey the government? Simple, they are being told to do something that is expressly stated in scripture. It's called **The Great Commission.** I don't think we need to put it up on the screen do we?

Sometimes we must disobey if we are being told to stop doing something that is **expressly stated** in scripture or start doing that is **expressly prohibited** by scripture. And we need to be **willing to accept the punishment** that comes our way. They were willing to risk jail again.

Let's say the government says that I have to do any wedding or event that is requested. The elders and I would clearly have to disobey the government. What if we lose our non-tax status? Then we get to suffer for Christ.

"Humble disciples of Jesus say no only when people are asking us to do something that is clearly contrary to God's expressed commands in Scripture. Peter and John, they had been commanded to preach the gospel, so preach they did...Now, non-believers may villainize Christians no matter what we do, as they have for millennia. But we seek to bring glory to Jesus by honoring him, his Word, and by being led by his Spirit to love others—even our enemies. Here's the key: **we should never fight like the devil for the things of God.** 190-191

My hero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, defied the Nazi's first through the arena of ideas. He taught and presented truth that the rest of the German church would not. Then he **became actively involved** in trying to bring down the government because it was evil at its core, not because he disagreed with the policies. He had to stand up because they were lying and murdering. And he paid the ultimate price by being hanged spitefully on Easter morning.

Yes, in relation to government, sometimes you need to stand up and say no. But it is also true that...**Sometimes we must sit down.**

Warning, a culturally insensitive verse is about to be read. If you are easily offended by God, then you should probably cover your ears. **It's very popular right now in Christian circles to stand up to the government and say, "Not so fast."** To yell on social media about how we will be chased into caves if we agree with anything the government tells us to do.

Everyone must **submit** to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. **2 So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.** Romans 13:1-2

Did you hear that? It's pretty straightforward. If you are rebelling against the government, then you are rebelling against God! I don't believe a Christian should fly a Confederate flag/Rebel flag. I understand that this flag has historical value. This is rightfully offensive to black folks. **These are signs of an attitude of rebellion a predisposition to be anti-government.**

Many Christians are more familiar with the second amendment to the constitution than they are with this verse. Before lead starts flying, I don't have any problem with the second amendment. I would own guns, but I'm practicing mutual submission to my wife, who won't have it. That's not

the issue. The issue is, do you hold the constitution and the bill of rights above God's anointed, inspired word?

Sometimes we act like the most powerful thing we can do is disagree with the government on social media and make as much noise as possible. **That's not our real power. Here it is. I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 1 Timothy 2:1-2 (193)**

Can you see how the sentiment toward government is different from rebellion? It clearly says that we ought to pray for all people, because God wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. And then there's that phrase that is so completely counter to the culture right now concerning government, that we are to pray for those in authority, "so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity." Watch the news, go on facebook or any social media and tell me if Christians are characterized as peaceful, quiet, godly and dignified.

Make a list of laws that don't expressly go against scripture.

- Break the speed limit.
- Take illegal drugs.
- Pirate media.
- Cheat on taxes.
- Neglect construction regulations.
- Keep an illegally caught fish (or too many).
- Drink alcohol underage.

"God ordained governance, not governments. Christians generally want an all or nothing approach to this God and government dynamic, but it's not that simple. We want either an 'I reject the government' approach or an 'I'm always for government' approach. But God's Word doesn't support either of those."

We have to keep these two responses in tension with one another. If we ignore one of these sides then we will be bound to go to some extreme. It can go either direction. **It's the tension between the two that keeps us safe and helps us walk humbly in a world that needs his presence.** After all, they are both in the Bible and, therefore, from God. God in his wisdom wanted us to keep our eyes on both.

We can disagree with non-Christian worldviews and ideologies that are promoted by government. And we should. We disagree clearly, we vote

accordingly, we respectfully present our counter arguments, but we don't fight and rebel against the government because they aren't making it easier for us to follow Jesus. Who said it was supposed to be easy?

Here's the word for the church. "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity." Rupertus Meldenius

Remember your rights are not as important as relationships.

Learning Humility

Pray for your boss or teacher

Ask how you can respond more humbly

Pray for Government leaders

Ask how you can respond more humbly