

Series: 1 Peter

Sermon #6: Good Citizenship

1 Peter 2:13-17

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- May 16, 2021

Lord, we lift up our time with You today, that You would open our hearts, that You would excite our minds; that we would be open to Your teaching and then have the power and the courage to fulfill what You've commanded us to do, that we might enjoy the fullness of what You have in our lives, sometimes by doing the things that we don't want to do, so that we could please You and enjoy what You have for our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction: Historical Context of 1 Peter

I read a commentary this week and it was the cultural context of 1 Peter. And when I read it, I thought, *Wow, this is good.* Here's the audience Peter was writing:

“When the Apostle Peter wrote his first letter, times were troubling. Political upheaval; moral digression; philosophical and religious confusion; government corruption; rising taxation and economic burdens and a lowering of the value of human life; and for Christians, the clouds of persecution were gathering.

“Christians were misunderstood, mistreated, maligned, and rejected even by family members. They were singled out by employers ... some of them were even experiencing imprisonment, abuse, and even death.

“In addition to that, they were living under the reign of an emperor who was growing increasingly insane.”

I don't know how we're going to be able to relate this book to our times. It just seems like it's so far away from our own experience, right? I'm going to try and teach this in a way to make it apply for today. We'll see what happens.

Peter is telling us this: “Beloved children of God,” he says, “I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, this is not your home.” *It's not supposed to make sense. Become men and women of*

consequence. Make Yahweh famous when you're on call, ready to do His will, all in the context of living in a hostile world. That's what Peter's talking about.

Now he's getting into the actual application of how you should then live your life. And he starts with one of the most difficult parts in his experience, and maybe in ours as well. He talks about submitting to the government.

So, here we are. Let's talk about religion and politics this morning. If we had a drunk uncle in here to stir things up, it would be just like Thanksgiving. It would be awesome, right? Yeah, that's what is happening.

1 Peter 2:11-12

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles ... ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

So, let me ramp up with some passages that precede this one, and then we'll start with chapter 2, verses 13 through 17, which is our passage of study. He says, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of the final judgment."

1 Peter 2:13-17

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Now here's our passage: "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do

evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”

So, that’s the passage today. And when you read that, you might be jolted, thinking, *How are we supposed to do that? Have you looked at our government and many of the people involved in leadership and running our country? You say, Their beliefs are unbelievable, their personal lives are shameful, their policies ... these days, it looks like it’s a game of Wreck-It Ralph—how can we destroy a civilization as fast as possible?*

Be Subject to All Authority

How are we supposed to do this? Here’s what he says. “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human authority, whether it be to the emperor as supreme ...” It’s for the Lord’s sake—we do it for the Lord’s sake, we do it for Him. We submit to the government and authority because we’re doing what we’re told. It’s an act of obedience. He told us, we’re doing it.

Which authority? Those that we agree with ... those who we voted for ... those who we would like to be friends with ... as long as they don’t make fun of us or call us names, we have to submit to them. That’s not what this says. “.... all authority, whether it’s the emperor supreme or the governors as sent by Him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.”

You’re thinking, *Peter, do you know—look what we live with here? Have you seen the last decade or so? This is the way we live our lives. How are we supposed to submit ourselves to these men and women?*

If he knew the way we were living, then he’d say, *You know what? I don’t. I can’t fully comprehend the modern twenty-first century American Austin experience.*

But he would say, *Here’s my experience. Here’s my family heritage. Let’s just go three Caesars, three emperors back, and let me tell you how we rolled up to where we are.*

There was Caligula; you wouldn’t leave your cat with Caligula. As emperor, he was crazy. One of the first things he did as emperor was he killed his mother and his brother because they might be a threat to him. What about his sisters? Oh, he kept them around. He was openly involved in an incestuous relationship with his three sisters. He was power-hungry, crazy, so

much so that he appointed his horse to be one of the senators, and then promoted him to be on his consul.

When I read this a couple of weeks ago, I thought, *He put a horse in the Senate! That is ridiculous, the most idiotic idea ever.* And then I was thinking of some of our senators, and I thought, *You know what? A golden retriever could probably do better, right?*

Anyway, he had all these statues of the gods and he had the heads removed and put his bust on them. He was the only god to rule Rome. That actually sounds close to some things, too.

Anyway, Claudius took over from him. And Claudius was just as cruel. He wasn't there long before there was a transition to who Peter is writing about at this time, the emperor Nero. And when Nero was handed the throne --- and by "handed over"—the way it worked back then—Nero became the emperor because Nero's mother killed Claudius while he was sleeping. And so, I guess you would call that a peaceful transition of power. Claudius never had a problem. It was very quiet for him.

Nero was the worst of the three in Peter's experience. He was the cruelest, the most sadistic, and wanted to kill all the Christians. It is that context; that is Peter's experience when he says this: Submit to every human authority. *Honor the emperor. That's his story.*

God Ordains Government for a Purpose

And why? Why would we do that? Because God says so. But also because of the point of government.

1 Peter 2:13-14

Be subject for the Lord's sake ... ¹⁴ to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

He says in verses 13 and 14, "Be subject for the Lord's sake ... to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good." Punish those who do evil and praise those who do good ... that is the purpose of government, to civilize the wild souls of collective humans. From the moment that Noah gets off the ark—this is when government is given to us by

God—and He says, *You are given this power and authority for a purpose, and you will be held accountable for that power and that purpose.* The purpose is to punish evil and to reward good.

And you're going to answer for that--your use and abuse of power--and if you're under authority, your ability to submit to authority or rebel against it.

And for me, personally, in what you would call the compartments of faith, for me, this is the one that's the most difficult. This value of submitting to government authority is the place in my faith life that I have the most evidence that I don't believe this is true.

Let's talk about faith. What's the definition of faith? It's when you're living like you're certain of things that you hope for. It's when you're convinced and you live like you're convinced of things that you can't see. That's what faith means.

So, in salvation—it's probably true for you, but for me, these are truths, but the way you respond to those—in salvation, God says that I have the righteousness of Jesus. I don't see that. But it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if I believe that completely or not, because it's true based on the promise of God. God said I have the righteousness of Jesus, so I do. I have the honor of the King. I don't feel like I'm all that honorable. God says, *I don't care how you feel. The facts aren't influenced by your feelings here.* It's a promise of God that I have the honor of Jesus, and that's why I have it.

So, all of my beliefs are built on faith in the promises of God, and, even more, one more back, on the character of God fulfilling the promises that He made. Honestly, if you look at the Bible, it is the story of God making promises and God being a promise keeper. That's the definition of faith. I know what His promises are. Is He going to do it? Yes, He is. So, that's where my faith is.

Application

Now, because of that, in salvation, I should rest and be at peace and not doubt whether or not God loves me or likes me. Boom. That's what faith-filled living looks like in salvation.

But when it comes to submission to authority, this is where I personally get very riled up. God promises this: that every position of authority will answer directly to Him for the use and the abuse of that authority, people in government, teachers, police, parents, marriage ... every expression of authority is a gift from God. And we do good with that. We use that authority to

serve others and glorify God. Or we abuse that and use that power to get what we want. And we answer for that.

In the context of authority, if we're under authority, we will answer to God whether we submit or rebel. And that's a promise. And I have to have faith in that promise. And so, an accurate reflection of faith in that promise would mean my soul should have a deep respect for authority--in our lives, when we have authority, and towards people with authority. Because if we choose to use the authority that we're given, whatever that might be, and we're going to use that to bully people and manipulate and connive and get what we want out of it because we can, we're not going to get away with it. There's no one getting away with the abuse of authority or the appropriate use of authority.

So, again, this is me. When I look at people in power, whether it's a political office or in the media, and they're using that authority, and they're getting rich because they can, and they're making things work for their own personal gain, and then when I watch them live quiet, peaceful lives, undeterred by the laws that everyone else has to live by, and they die quietly, peacefully, on a private island, my soul burns, because I don't have faith—I don't have faith in His promise that they're going to answer for every one of those decisions. In my salvation faith, I am at rest and peace and I am calm; when it comes to authority figures, I should say that I'm going to be at rest and be calm because I know there's a day coming.

I have a friend bring this up. He said, "You know, if you really believe that, wouldn't you actually have pity towards them?"

And I thought, *Oh, I would.* Every time they step up to the microphone or pass some sort of thing or have an underhanded deal, I would think, *You're going to have to hear about that later. On judgment day I'm going to turn and look away, because this is going to be ugly.*

That's what it means to live by faith in the promise keeper—that it's all going to be okay. I can relax. I just need to do what I am told to do.

So, in the context of authority, when you're in a place of authority, when you're a judge or a teacher or a police officer or a mother or a father, and you use that to serve, you use that to civilize, and you're projecting making God famous in that, you'll be blessed. The whole world will be blessed.

1 Peter 2:15

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

And when you're under authority and you show that by submitting and showing honor, beautiful things happen. When we use authority appropriately and we submit to authority ... and then ... and then ... the next verse. "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people." We just get to silence people. They're ignorant and don't know that the sovereignty of God can even use corrupt governments to get His will done.

Exceptions

Now let me just say, because I'm sure you might be thinking this, are there exceptions? Absolutely there are exceptions. We're never going to disobey the obvious commands of God to submit to authority. So, here we're going to teach that Jesus is the only way of salvation, and not only that, but that it's by grace alone. And if the government says, "You can't do that," we'll say, "We will." And we'll see what happens. We're not going to deviate from teaching that every human life has value in the eyes of God—the sanctity of human life. We'll teach on the sanctity of marriage. And if the government says, "You can't do that," we will respectfully do it anyway, and we'll pay the fine and we'll go to jail if we have to. It won't be the first time one of our elders has been sent to jail for holding some of these values. We'll do what we have to.

Now, it gets especially complicated if you live in Austin. I mean that. So many people are new to Austin. Even if you're from Texas--Dallas or something-- Austin is a very crazy ... we're weird, right? Keep Austin weird. Sometimes that means submitting to authority is complicated and difficult. I've lived here forty years. Decades ago, about every five years the state government would have to come in and pop the chain of the local government here in Austin, because we passed laws that are dumb—so dumb that the state has to say, "You can't do that."

That was decades ago, every five years that the state would come in and save the city from itself. In the last two or three years, it's been every month. During this COVID experience, we're trying to submit to the authority, and the city says, "You can't do that," and then the

governor comes and says, “No, you can do that.” Okay. Then the city says, “You have to do this.” And then we wait, and hear, “No, you don’t have to do that.”

I’m just acknowledging that living in Austin, if you’re new, is like a kid with two parents with two completely different set of standards. And we have to submit to the authorities, whatever that means.

Christians Can Get Involved in Change

Here’s a big difference between the culture when Peter writes and the culture that we’re experiencing now. Peter’s audience had very limited ability to influence the government that they had to submit to. And in some respects, it made it a little bit easier, because they just did what they could do, and that was just submit.

But we, in a national, constitutional republic, have the power to influence change. And so, we have a responsibility to be involved in that change. We can get involved. We can speak out against evil. And actually, you could even do that in Peter’s time—that was John the Baptist, who was willing to pay the price. And he paid, didn’t he?

We can get involved in peaceful protesting and make our values known, that we’re against something that’s going on. We can put something up on the ballot for a vote. We can recall someone that we think is doing harm to our culture and our society.

But the bigger point is that we can get involved in the political process, and we should. And some men and women are actually called to that. They are called to get involved, sometimes in a political party, but sometimes actually as a candidate. And may God bless you to do that. If you get involved in the politics of America, let’s help you as much as we can.

But here’s the thing: anyone that has a calling or a passion—it’s not just politics—every calling, every passion—you have to make sure you get priorities in order. It’s easy to make a good thing an ultimate thing. And it’s easy to make a passion or a calling your identity.

Watch these other examples. Athletes: you can see a person who is an extreme athlete, and they might be a Christian who’s an athlete. But they’re a Christian first who just happens to be an athlete. Then you see guys and gals that are athletes that just happen to be a Christian. And so, if there’s ever a conflict, then they’re going to choose where their identity is. Sometimes, when everyone on the team has to do this, and he’s an athlete first, then he’s going to do it. If he’s a Christian first and then an athlete, he says, “No, I can’t do that, so I guess I won’t be an

athlete.” Their identity is not lost because their identity was Christ. If their identity was as an athlete, they’ll put Jesus over here and ask for forgiveness later.

Culturally or ethnically or whatever—I’m Irish. And if I’m Irish first—an Irish Catholic—and Christian second, I’m going to side with things that are part of my family heritage. If I’m a Christian first and Irish second, I’m willing to give and take.

So, all of that is leading up to, in politics, if you’re involved in politics, if you’re going to run for office, if we’re going to support someone who’s running for office, you have to be a Christian first that happens to be involved in politics. Because if you’re involved in politics first, that whole business is about compromising. And if you’re a Christian first---here’s how to test and see--can you be critical towards the party that you’re involved in, or towards the candidate you’re trying to help?

Because if a Christian athlete is first a Christian, they can be critical towards their sport or towards the people involved in it, because they have objectivity. I can be that way with my own heritage if I’m a Christian first. If you’re a Christian first in politics, you can walk away. You can walk away. But if it’s your identity, you’ll stay and sacrifice too much. The road to hell is gradual. It’s a very vague slope. So, you have to be a Christian first. And if you are, may God bless you.

St. Augustine said this: A Christian in government was “a blessing bestowed upon mankind.” Because getting in government, being involved in political change, is a way of loving your neighbor, because you’re trying to civilize it. But, to be clear—we talk about tribes—when it comes to tribes, we’re not a tribe of elephants, we’re not in the tribe of the donkey, we’re in the tribe of the Lion, the King of Kings. That’s who we serve. And we don’t deviate from that.

A Summary: Four Injunctions

So, back to the passage. We talked about submission to the government for all people and all positions of authority, and then he goes to verse 17. And what we’re going to see here is a pattern of New Testament writers, where they start banging out lists. And he’s going to have four commands in couplets. And they’re fundamentally a review of what Jesus has said.

The first two are going to be talking about how to love your neighbor. The second two are going to be talking about rendering unto Caesar what belongs to Caesar and rendering unto God what belongs to God.

1 Peter 2:17

**Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God.
Honor the emperor.**

Now, with that in mind, let's look at verse 17: "Honor everyone. Love your neighbor. Fear God. Honor the emperor."

Let's look at the first couple here. "Honor everyone. Love your neighbor."

1. Honor Everyone

Honor everyone—*everyone*. Everyone gets honor because every human soul is in the image of Yahweh. And by being human, they deserve honor. They are worthy of honor. And listen, if you look at the history of the Church, when everyone is honored without prejudice or discretion—when the Church does this, it makes God famous. And not only that, it civilizes the rage and rebellion of the human collective. It's a beautiful thing.

When the Church doesn't love everyone and they are selective in who they get, God is shamed and the people that are left out are embittered. It doesn't go well.

Everyone is honored; honor everyone—every single one, every man, every woman, is to be honored. If you wear a mask, you're to be honored. If you don't wear a mask, you're to be honored. If you get vaccinated, be honored. If you're not going to get vaccinated, be honored. If you're whatever culture or color—"Red and yellow, black and white, we are precious in God's sight"—we're all His kids, everyone. Everyone is honored.

Longhorns are honored. Baylor Bears are honored. Everyone ... expecting something else, huh? Everyone is honored.

When the Church of Jesus Christ honors everyone and fights for the justice of everyone, all of creation worships. That's the point.

There's a good book—it's 600 pages, be careful—it's by Dr. Wayne Grudem. If you've been to seminary or studied theology, you've studied Wayne Grudem's systematic theology book. It's a beautiful piece of literature. He wrote one book on politics. This is what it's called: *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture*. It's a beautiful work.

In that work, he does a survey of the Church's influence in the East and the West as he displays what happens in cultures when people take charge and, whatever they're part of, they don't honor everyone, that other group, and life is cheap. If you're on the outside—if you look at human history—that group, that life is expendable.

When a Christian group comes in and they honor everyone, everyone is blessed. I want to survey quickly some of the influences of Christianity over humanity honoring all people. Look what it says: "Outlawing infanticide, child abandonment and abortion in the Roman empire." This is disgusting. In the Roman Empire, gender reveal day—if it's a girl, they didn't want a girl. They would go place these babies on a rock and then the wild dogs would come and devour them. The Christian church invented adoption agencies, because they would get to those children before the dogs did. And then they did things in politics to make that illegal—child infanticide, abandonment, and abortion.

Let me continue. They outlawed the brutal battles to death of the gladiators.

They outlawed the punishment of branding the faces of criminals.

They did prison reform that included segregating male and female prisoners. Can you imagine males and females living together in that setting? That does not do well for the weaker of the two. They changed that.

Christians changed the practice of human sacrifice among the Irish and the Prussians. (We are a crazy people!)

They argued against and eventually outlawed pedophilia.

Christians were the primary reason behind the granting of property rights and protections for women; they prohibited the burning alive of widows in India, which is a cultural and religious expression.

When Christians enter the room and they love and honor all people, this is what happens.

A lot of you probably know the name William Wilberforce. He was involved in the politics of England. He was this slow, plodding turtle that got things done over time. And one of

the ways he did that was that he met weekly with other men and women of great Christian faith, of wealth, and who had power. And those men and women knew that those things were granted to them by God and that they had a responsibility with those things. They knew they could help bring honor to all people. And Wilberforce and these people, in their weekly meetings, were mocked and called “the Saints.” He and his friends said, *Fine, call us ‘saints,’ we don’t care.*

And they promoted and instituted various societies for goodness for the glory of God: The Society for the Education of Africans. They ended slave trade in 1840 throughout Great Britain, and then said, *Let’s start a society for educating these Africans.*

Then the Society for Bettering the Conditions of the Poor; they had a Society for the relief of Debtors. In those days, if you were in extreme debt or even mild debt, you went to prison for that. But you couldn’t do anything about paying the debt back. And so, they started laws to free these people that were in debt—14,000 people over five years—and let them get jobs, and they paid their debts back. It sounds reasonable, but it wasn’t until they came along.

They established hospitals for the poor and the blind. They helped war widows and veterans that needed medical and psychological help.

That’s what happens when God-fearing Christians understand our place in the culture and the society. We can change the culture and society.

Here’s a concluding paragraph from Wayne Grudem in his book: “... the mission of individuals within the Church is to accept their post”—they’re on call, right? Every believer is a minister. “... where God has placed them—to bring their Christian character and conscience and biblical convictions to bear upon their world of education and medicine and science and law and government.” That’s what it looks like. Honor everyone.

2. Love the Brotherhood

The next command says, “Honor everyone. Love the brethren.” Love your brothers and your sisters. We’re family. It’s the fourth time he said it, so it must be an issue. We need to love each other unconditionally.

Maybe you’ve heard the saying that blood is thicker than water? It actually might be a misremembering of a better proverb that says, “The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb.” That means something completely different, right? The blood of the covenant that we have amongst ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ—that’s the blood

covenant—that's thicker than the depth of the relationship and the commitment that we have with our own family, the water of the womb. Our family, my brothers and sisters, is for eternity. Love each other. Honor God by loving each other.

3. & 4. Fear God. Honor the Emperor.

Honor all men. Love each other. Now verse 17, the rest of it: "Fear God. Honor the emperor." Look what it says everybody gets. Fear God; He deserves that. Honor the emperor; he has that title. Do not fear the emperor. You fear God. Just honor the emperor. And I think he puts "Honor the emperor" at the end because that's a jagged pill we have to swallow. But look, if you take fear away from the government, if you take fear away from authority, and in this case, if you take fear away from Nero, he has nothing. Fear and anger are what this culture ran on. And Christianity defeated it by fearing God first and only.

Look at what another scholar wrote: "The victory of the Church over (corrupt Roman power) did not come by seizing the levers of power: it was won when the victims knelt down in the Colosseum and prayed in the name of Jesus for the Emperor ... in so doing, the entire mystique of the Empire, its spiritual power over the people, was unmasked, disarmed, and rendered powerless." (Lesslie Newbigin)

The beloved by God, exiles, foreigners ... don't give into the fear and the anger of our culture. That's the fuel the whole machine runs on. If you fear God and trust in His promises of ultimate judgment, then they have no power. And now we can live in community, honoring other people.

Hey, this passage does apply to us today.

There's a beautiful story from a mission organization called Open Doors Ministry. In about 1990, the mid-nineties, in Yunnan province of China—that would be like a large state in China—it was particularly attacked by the opium epidemic that we're seeing around the world, but particularly there. And it was devastating the small little towns, because so much opium was affecting so many people's lives. Their addiction was causing them to give up on any kind of ambition of having a career. They just did their drugs, so they ran out of money, so then the lawlessness starts. They're stealing and robbing from one another. Now they're losing their lives because of their addiction.

And it was so pervasive that China realized that the government, the atheistic Chinese government, said, *We have to do something about this*. So, they investigated and they found that in the context of this state, there were a couple of little communities that were healthy—extremely healthy. And so, they went into those and they investigated and they said, *What's different about these?*

And it turned out that there were a percentage of people who were different and they were affecting and influencing their entire community. What did they have in common? Jesus Christ. They wanted to honor all people and they wanted to love their brothers and they wanted to submit to authority.

So, in 1998—because China was so desperate, they said, *We're going to try this radical experiment. We're going to go to the worst village*. There were 240 people, and 107 of them were opium addicts unto death. *We're going to bus in these Christians*.

They said, *We'd be happy to do it*.

They bussed in these Christians, and in this community, they required everyone to attend this Christian meeting where the Chinese Christians would give their testimonies about what God had done in their lives, how maybe they were addicted to opium but aren't anymore. The power of the resurrection lives in their souls now, and the gift of salvation that came.

This is Celebrate Recovery. The Chinese invented this. They bring it in to this community that was the worst village in the epidemic of opium addiction. And in one year there were seventeen new Christians. And because of those seventeen Christians who sincerely believed and had faith in the promises of God, they started recovering in their addiction and they started getting back into the industry of their lives and understood why God made them. A couple of them bought sewing machines and started small businesses. Civilization started coming back to this village. In 2002, there were eighty-three Christians. It had completely transformed the whole village at this point. There were enough to infect the entire village with Christendom.

What happened is the gospel has the power of change in a culture. It changed the culture in a village known for its opium addiction, and now it's known for its prosperity. Lawbreakers have become civilized human beings. Families were restored.

How does that happen? For the Lord's sake. Submit to all authority. Just obey. Honor everyone. Love your brothers and sisters. You fear Yahweh. And then give honor to the emperor.

And I love this: “For this is the will of God, that by doing so, it silences the foolish and ignorant people.”

Can we do that? Let the God things be God things, and let’s just do what we can do. What a church we could become.

Let’s pray. Would you pray with me? Let’s pray for that.

Lord, I admit that this is so against my soul to just submit to authority that I don’t respect or I don’t believe that they’re going in the right direction. I am a rebel. I’m a rebel from Adam and I’m an American that rebelled against the King, I’m a Texan that doesn’t even like being part of the country, and I’m an Austinite that doesn’t even like being part of Texas. And among 2,000 denominations from which to pick, we’re going to start our own, because we’re cowboys. And I acknowledge the rebellion in my heart and that I am looking for opportunities to find a way not to submit to authority. And that’s a sin, a grievous sin. So, Lord, I’d ask that You would help me help us learn to be under authority; learn to enjoy trusting in Your final judgment and leaving that to You, Your time and Your place.

God, I’d ask that we would be a church that gets to play a part in influencing the culture by jumping in and honoring all humans and loving our brothers and sisters and fearing You and You alone. God, let us be a church like that. Let us express that in our enjoyment of one another, especially when we have different views and different perspectives, different values. We have the same King. We’re the tribe of the Lion. Help us be that. Let us make You famous.

And all God’s people said ... Amen.

Louder than that ... And all God’s people said ... Amen.

There it is! Let’s stand and sing.