

# This Calling

*“Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”*

**1 Peter 2:18-21, ESV**

The word “this” occurs three times in this passage, and each time in an ever increasingly disagreeable manner with the last being the worst of all. To what are we called? Are we called to fame, luxury or even solace? No, we are called to suffering. Who wants to answer *this* calling? Servants are nice to have but not to be. How is it “a gracious thing” to be subject to unjust masters or to suffer unjustly? How is it “a gracious thing” to endure suffering for doing the right thing? Why should we endure spiteful people who clearly have no intention of honoring God at any stretch? Were James and John so far wrong when they wished to rain down fire from heaven when a Samaritan village treated Jesus and his disciples so spitefully (Luke 9:51-56)? I sometimes wonder if not just a little flame strike from above might not have been “a gracious thing”? However, I suppose this is why I am not God for I cannot see as he does nor do I look for what he looks after.

Jesus left an example, a standard, a model that necessitates our following even when it becomes difficult—difficult to understand and difficult to do. Still, domination looks fun and being on top fashionable at the very least, but Jesus calls us to be the least. It is the call to go the second mile even the person forcing you has stolen your cloak. Where is the justice? “Be mindful of God,” Peter tells us. Here “to be mindful of God” means to be God conscious, sensitive to God or aware of him. The human master we face is not in power but our God. Our obedience to our human master even in the face of injustice forces him to see that someone else compels our allegiance. Our masters do not control us—our God does. A wise master realizes that abusing his servants unjustly depletes the gold from his pocket. However, the foolish master will never see what he is doing as he forces his domination over others.

We live in a world where corporations wish to dominate the marketplace. They are unmindful of what damage pushing others brands from the marketplace may do. Sometimes the best products never make it to market not to a lack of quality but for a lack of corporate muscle. This is the world’s way, but it is not God’s way. We are not called to be like the world; we are called from the world to change the world by the change Jesus has made in our lives and continues to make. The world’s strategy does work quickly but so did Hitler’s *blitzkrieg* (and I hope we do wish to emulate his strategy). For my part, I do not particularly care for “this calling” on God’s part. I wish he had left it out, but to do so would be to undo the cross and all of God’s grace.

We must choose between what is easy and what is right. Evil always seeks a quick, painless route to whatever end it seeks. Over time, governments often identify pet groups to save at the cost of others. God calls us to leave no one behind—to tread on no other soul along the way. While we bask in God’s grace, we must remember that God calls us to be full of grace. Our response to harsh treatment must be “a gracious thing” for to this is what God calls to be. We are as Joseph so long ago. We live to God’s glory in a godless society. We do not live for glory or personal comfort but for what is always good and right. We change the world by being changed by being ever aware of God. He lives in me now—I am his, and he is mine.

*Steve Davis*