

## 4 **Defending Hope in the midst of our Possibly Antagonistic Relationships.**

### 4.1 **Background: Seeking Peace in Pagan Lands:**

**Jeremiah 29:1-7** “These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ... 29:4 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 29:5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 29:6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 29:7 **But seek the welfare [peace, *shalom*] of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare [peace, *shalom*] you will find your welfare. ... ”**

...“For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, *I will visit you*, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. 29:12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. 29:13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. 29:14 I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.” [ESV]

### 4.2 **Living Under the “Powers that be”**

» **1Peter 2:13-25** “**Be subject** for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 2:14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 2:16 *Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.* 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

#### 4.3 **Living Under our Masters**

» **1Peter 2:18** Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 2:19 *For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.* 2:20 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. 2:21 **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.**

► Suffering Unjustly

#### 4.4 **Considering Christ's Example**

» **1Peter 2:22** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.** 2:25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”

► The Power of “Power under” rather than “Authority over.”

“... the contrast between the “power over” kingdom of the world and the “power under” kingdom of God is “Lion power” versus “Lamb power.” The Kingdom of God advances by people lovingly placing themselves *under* others, in service to others, at cost to themselves. This “coming under” doesn’t mean that followers of Jesus conform to other people’s wishes, but it does mean that we always interact with others with their best interests in mind....

... in truth there is no greater power on the planet than self-sacrificial love. Coming under others has a power to do what laws and bullets and bombs can never do—namely, bring about transformation in an enemy’s heart. This is the unique “Lamb power” of the Kingdom of God, and indeed, this is the power of God Almighty. When God flexes his omnipotent muscle, it doesn’t look like Rambo or the Terminator—it looks like Calvary! And living in this Calvary-like love moment by moment, in all circumstances and in relation to all people, is the sole calling of those who are aligned with the kingdom that Jesus came to bring.” (Greg A Boyd, *The Myth of A Christian Nation*, 32-33)

4.5 **Living Under our Spouses...**

- » **1 Peter 3:1-8** Likewise, **wives**, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if they do not obey the Word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct...

7 Likewise, **husbands**, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” [ESV]

4.6 **Living Under One Another in Righteousness...**

- » **1 Peter 3:8-12** “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 3:9 Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, *but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.* 3:10 For

“Whoever desires to love life

and see good days,

let him keep his tongue from evil

and his lips from speaking deceit;

3:11 let him turn away from evil and do good;

**let him seek peace and pursue it.**

3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

4.7 **Doing Good in Hope**

- » **1 Peter 3:13-17** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 3:15 **but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;** yet do it with gentleness and respect, 3:16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 3:17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.

► The Core Conflict:

What is True?

What is Good? (Just, Righteous)

What is Glorious? (Worthy of praise, beautiful)

► In the Background: Isaiah 8:12-13

**Isaiah 8:12-13** “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. 8:13 But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.” [ESV]

#### 4.7.1 **Christ is our Example and the Final Authority**

» **1Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ... 3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

#### 4.7.2 **Our Suffering brings Holy Focus.**

» **1Peter 4:1-6** Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, *for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*, 4:2 so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. 4:3 For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 4:4 With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; 4:5 but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 4:6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.

► Suffering and ceasing from sin...

#### 4.7.3 **The Reality of our Future keeps us focused in the present.**

» **1Peter 4:7-11** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 4:9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: 4:11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” [4:11 ESV]

► All to the Glory of God in Christ