

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Romans -13

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through Romans

A letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to believers in Rome – and it is all about God’s amazing grace.

That our justification, sanctification and glorification is all a work that God does.

We simply receive it by faith.

We embrace it

We live it

Those who have put their faith and trust in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ upon the cross – we grasp that we cannot do anything to earn God’s love any more than He already loves us –

So we respond to His grace –

This is the application portion of the letter -

This is the section that we have been on over the last couple of months – when we started chapter 12 – this is what a genuine believer living by grace looks like –

And from the beginning – Paul addressed our relationship with God – that was verse 1 and 2 of chapter 12. Presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice – allowing God to transform us by the renewing of our mind.

Then Paul addressed our relationship with one another – we are one in Christ – a family - we are to use the spiritual giftings that God has given to us to serve one another – love without hypocrisy

And we spent a few weeks on that

Then Paul addressed our relationship toward our enemies – those that reject grace and reject Jesus – **[Mat 5:43 NKJV] 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'**

And Jesus says - we are to love them and we are to pray blessing upon them and we are to meet their needs – heaping coals of fire on their head – allowing the Holy Spirit to use our response to bring them to a relationship with Jesus

But starting in Chapter 13 – Paul is going to challenge the believer – and for some of us – this is going to be harder pill to swallow than how we deal with our enemies.

Because in our text this morning – we come to a very timely instruction as Paul is going to address our relationship towards government.

Perfect timing, right? – as we are two weeks from our national elections.

And my prayer is that we may have ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is going to speak to us on this matter.

Let's pray...

Read Text -

One of the things that the Lord has impressed upon my heart over the last couple of years –

Is that for the believer - we don't find our hope in any election.

On November 6th – for this fellowship – nothing is going to change

Our heart is still going to be know Him and make Him known – no matter who wins.

Our hope is not in a candidate

Our hope is not in laws being passed

We are to find our hope in Jesus Christ – and Him alone.

He will forever be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

We are citizens of the Kingdom of God.

“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done”

Not our will / not our kingdom – His kingdom

As such – we have both rights and responsibilities

Jesus is our King to Whom we owe unconditional loyalty & obedience.

But at the same time – we also have to understand that we are citizens of the United States, we are citizens of Nogales, Rio Rico and so on

And therefore - This earthly citizenship carries its own rights and responsibilities.

And because of our dual citizenship – there is going to be tension

There is going to be times when the loyalty to one is going to conflict with the loyalty to the other

And there will be conflict because the two realms have different agendas.

Here is what we have to understand loved ones -

The main reason for our earthly citizenship – is to preach the Good News, to share about Jesus, to tell people about Jesus Christ so that they may be rescued from their sin.

And many times – we lose sight of that – we get distracted

Our loyalty sways from the spiritual to the political –

Think about the Jews during the ministry of Jesus – they were burdened – they were oppressed – they were desperately looking for a Messiah that was going to deliver

them politically – the one who was going to give them temporary relief - and in the process, lost sight of Jesus who promised eternal relief

So we must make sure to get our priorities straight between what is spiritual and what is earthly.

There is room for both – but our priorities have to be in order.

Let's look at our text -

[Rom 13:1-7 NKJV] 1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Keep in mind that Paul writes this letter to believers in Rome –

And even though Rome was tolerant of many of the traditional religions –

- They had adopted many of the Greek gods into their religion
- By the time that Paul writes this – there were many Jews that were living in Rome

But for the most part – they were very suspicious of Christians –

They oppressed Christians

They blamed Christians

They tortured Christians

They put to death Christians – simply for being Christians.

But notice Paul writes –

Let every soul – BTW, who does that include – everyone!

We are to be subject –

It is a military term – it means to stay in rank.

There is a rank and file

There is an officer and those who are subject to his orders.

They are in submission to his orders.

That is the picture that Paul is giving to us.

- And so Paul wants us to understand that part of the plan in the will of God is to submit ourselves to the government authorities that God has allowed over us – in Jesus' name.

Notice that Paul doesn't simply say that we are to be obedient to government authority – he says we are to submit.

There is a difference

Obedience means to simply follow the commands – willingly or unwillingly

To submit - it is an attitude – it is a heart issue

Turn to 1 Peter 2

[1Pe 2:13-16 NKJV] 13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and [for the] praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

The scriptures say – we must be subject to them

The only exception – when we are asked or commanded to do something that goes against God's will.

That is where the line is drawn

Submission to governmental authorities goes up to a line

If by obeying a command from those in authority means disobedience to God – we choose obedience to God every time.

We have an example of this in the early church –

Turn to Acts 5

Peter and John – in ch 4 – were beaten, threatened and commanded by the Sanhedrin – those in authority - to stop preaching Jesus.

[Act 5:27-29 NKJV] 27 And when they had brought them, they set [them] before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" 29 But Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

Peter and John and the other apostles were no longer subject to the Sanhedrin because they crossed the line.

And this is something we see over and over again in scriptures –

In the beginning of Exodus – Pharaoh tells the Hebrew midwives to kill the Hebrew males – they disobeyed

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were told to bow down to the image of Nebuchadnezzar – they said – no

Daniel was told – you can't pray. What was the first thing he did – he went upstairs and opened the window to pray.

So – why are we supposed to submit ourselves to them?

Because there is no authority except from God

Think about when Jesus is brought before Pilate –

Jesus has been scourged at this point – He is about to be crucified

Jesus has been silent the entire time – like a sheep going to the slaughter

And Pilate tells Jesus – you are not going to speak to me? Do you know how powerful I am? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?”

[Jhn 19:11 NKJV] 11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.

Jesus recognized Pilate’s authority

And what did Jesus – do, He submitted to it.

Jesus could have taken Pilate out

He could have done what the Jews wanted Him to do

This is exactly what Paul is saying here in Romans 13:1

We submit ourselves to governmental authority because just like Pilate – it was given to them by God

God is the one that “appoints” authority. It is our job to line up “under” (“be subject”) what God has appointed.

Until that line is crossed

2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

To go against the authorities God's ordained is to resist God because they're His agents, even if they don't recognize it.

Turn to Matthew 22

Here in Matthew 22 – the Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus – they want Him to chose a side. Whether or not to pay taxes

Again – Rome was placing a huge burden on the Jews regarding taxation –

17 "Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, [you] hypocrites? 19 "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription [is] this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

I want you to consider the following –

Who mined the gold - Caesar

Who ordered it melted down – Caesar

Who hired the die engraver – Caesar

Who was given the right to coin the money – Caesar

Whose image is on the coin? Caesar

It belongs to him

Now -

In whose image is Caesar made? God

In whose image is any human ruler made? God

One of the problems we have with submission is when we are called to submit to an ungodly, wicked person.

The problem we have is in seeing how it could be right to have a bad person telling us what to do.

In reality though, sometimes the things that God brings about in our life aren't going to seem all pretty and nice. They are not going to go according to our will.

There are times when we will question what God is doing in our life.

The trouble is that we don't see the bigger picture. We don't see the kinds of things that God is trying to do, all we see is the immediate situation.

It is important to learn submission, even in difficult times, so that we can stay true to what God is wanting to do in us and through us.

Paul argues that resisting authority is resisting God – since God has established the authority

And notice – those who resist will bring judgment on themselves – referring to hostility of those earthly authorities.

We are to be good godly citizens understanding that our priorities are the souls of men and the propagation of the Word of God.

Remember – the line that is drawn is that when the government mandates something that is contrary to the will of God or something contrary to the Word of God – we disobey.

But what if they do something we don't like – are we to submit to them then – yes!!!!

And that is the trap that we sometimes fall into – I don't agree with this – I don't agree with that – I am not going to submit.

God desires

God deserves and God is to get our supreme obedience

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

Summary – do good

Because when we are doing good – we don't need to worry about getting into trouble with people who are in authority.

Now some people might – there are many times when I do good and I still get into trouble

There are many people around the world – who are doing good – standing up for righteousness, who still find themselves persecuted and imprisoned

[Mat 5:10 NKJV] 10 Blessed [are] those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Bad things are going to happen – even when we make the right decision – even when we do good.

But the thing that Pau is telling us is that even though bad things might happen – we still make the right decision.

When we do good – we don't have to look over our shoulder and think authorities are looking over us.

4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to [execute] wrath on him who practices evil.

Those that are in authority are God's ministers or God's servants – whether they know it or not.

Whether they are saved or unsaved

Remember – God is working all things together for the good.

That means that God uses godly governments and ungodly governments

God uses those that have a relationship with Him and God uses those that don't have a relationship with Him and rebel against Him in positions of authority

God uses the government to promote good, restrain evil, and protect citizens.

Therefore we need to pray for them –

We need to thank God for them

I had you make a note of the phrase - for he does not bear the sword in vain

This is speaking of capital punishment –

Last week we looked at Romans 12:19 –

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

One of the ways that God brings His “vengeance” is through the government.

It comes down to personal responsibility versus government responsibility.

Personally, as a Christian I am to not take vengeance.

But the government does have the authority to be the “avenger”

The very first mention of the thought of government in the scriptures – is after the flood

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**[Gen 9:6 NKJV] 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed;
For in the image of God He made man.**

This is why God appointed government.

The founding premise for all human government is the sanctity of life.

Life is so special, God grants to people the duty to remove from among them those who deny and defy that sacredness by killing the innocent.

Think of Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane –

Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss – he brings those who are going to arrest Jesus.

What did Peter do – instead of going after one of the guards – he goes after the smallest dude – and he takes his sword out and cuts Malchus' ear off -

And Jesus picks it up and heals him.

And tells Peter

[Mat 26:52 NKJV] 52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Translation – Peter – you almost committed a capital offense – and if you commit a capital offense, you can expect capital punishment.

Notice -

Two times Paul refers to government officials as God's ministers.

Like any other servant, they must give account to God for how they've used the authority and power God gives them.

5 Therefore [you] must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

Again it is all about attitude -

Our submission must not be based just on a fear of government's power,

But because as believers we have an understanding of what authority and submission are all about.

For the believer, defying civil authority isn't just breaking man's law, it's a violation of the moral law of God.

Our own conscious should be telling us that it is wrong to disobey.

So we honor God in our obedience

Billy Graham: "Most of us follow our conscience as we follow a wheelbarrow. We push it in front of us in the direction we want it to go."

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes [are due], customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Christians are supposed to pay their taxes

But what if we are overtaxed?

But what if our taxes are misspent?

The Word of God is clear – we are to pay our taxes

In the Roman empire – there was heavy taxation –

Income tax, import duties, export duties, ground tax – 1/5 of the crops, poll tax – a tax for breathing,

We pay our taxes –

For the believer – we were bought with a price

We belong to Jesus

And because we belong to Him, because we are born again, because we are citizens of a heavenly kingdom – our life should be different from those of this world

Our life should be submissive in subjection, respecting authority, appreciating authority, praying for authority, and allowing God to sort out all the other things in our lives.

Submitting to government is part of submitting to God

Again

We only have one purpose – to preach the gospel

To proclaim – “that all who call upon the Lord shall be saved”

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, “I am a sinner.”

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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