

Romans 13

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us. We're continuing our verse-by-verse study in the book of Romans, so would you please turn in your Bibles to Romans 13?

After declaring that each Christian is to present themselves a living sacrifice, then explaining how that actually happens in chapter 12, Chapter 13 now addresses every Christian's role in society.

After all, given the wicked world in which we live, what social obligations do we as believers have in the society in which we find ourselves? Chapter 13 tells us how we, as believers, are to be engaged in our culture. And hint, we're probably not gonna like it!

The title of this morning's message is The Motivation

Let's pray

In the last few years, a seismic shift has occurred in many churches in our nation. Suddenly, pulpits are filled with folks who'd rather talk about politics more than they speak of God. Sadly, this shift has even infiltrated several Calvary Chapels, where the focus is no longer teaching the Word, but rather rallying Christians for political causes.

Please make no mistake, I'm not saying politics should never be discussed from the pulpit, but there's a very real danger of the church becoming politicized, which to the unbelieving world means the church looks like it take sides with a political party.

Folks I don't care if you vote democrat or a republican. I care if you surrender to the lordship of Jesus. Because when we're surrendered to Christ Jesus, then we'll know how to act towards government because we'll allow the Lord to shape our perspectives.

Whenever our social or political opinions, viewpoints and sentiments don't line up with the word of God, well we've got a problem don't we?

And we know the word of God isn't wrong, the Bible doesn't have to change, so that leaves us with the uncomfortable conclusion- that our views, our thoughts, and even our actions have to change to align with the scriptures.

Romans 13 is one of those chapters that just smacks us right in the face and confronts us with our conduct.

There are many wonderful institutions that have been started by men and women throughout history. Many institutions have noble causes, impressive mission statements, and notable achievements.

However, there are only three institutions that have begun under the express authority and plan of Almighty God. And not only that, the foundation and purpose of each of these institutions is found in the Bible.

SHOW PIC These three God-ordained institutions are the home, the government, and the church. They were instituted in that order. They each have a divine purpose, and many troubles begin to develop when they ignore their stated purpose. **CLOSE PIC**

In Genesis 2 God established marriage and family. In Acts 2 He birthed the church. And in Genesis 9 He originated government. Before the global flood, God saw enough anarchy and unbridled evil to decide that mankind needed a form of self-rule. As soon as Noah walked off the Ark, God instituted human government.

Trouble is always on the menu when either the home, the government, or the church tries to take on the clearly-stated responsibilities of one of the other institutions. Satan has been

very successful in blurring the lines of responsibilities of the home, the government, and the church. The result has been a staggering failure on the part of all three institutions nationwide.

But this morning, of these 3 institutions, Romans 13 address government.

It's important to remember that Jesus, with all of the power of God coursing through His veins, didn't overthrow the Roman government. In fact, Jesus affirmed the role of government. Jesus made the most remarkable and influential political statement in all of history in **Matthew 22:21**

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."

Jesus reiterated our dual responsibility. Our lives belong to God, but we also have a duty to earthly government.

Remember, God appoints a nation's leaders, but not always to bless the people. Sometimes it's to judge the people or to ripen the nation for judgment. This is why the Bible is crystal clear about our obligations under government

1 Peter 2:13 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. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

And **1 Timothy 2:1-2**

1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

And Titus 3:1

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men,

And

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. Shockingly, the rulers that currently exist are there as a result of God's determination.

We often think the president, governor, and congressman were elected, which is true, but we must remember that God is sovereign. He is behind the scenes pulling the strings.

God is the one who ultimately sets up and brings down administrations. This means that although He disapproves of their evil, God allows the Hitlers, and Stalins, and Saddams, as well as the Obamas, Trumps and Bidens to rise to power.

After Babylon's wicked dictator, Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed the holy city of Jerusalem, the Prophet Jeremiah still called Nebuchadnezzar, "God's Servant."

God uses the political stage for His eternal purposes. God knows that human government is imperfect, but apparently even a flawed government is better than no government at all.

Now it's critical to remember who was on the throne in Rome when Paul wrote the book of Romans. It was Caesar Nero who ruled, and he was an absolute madman. **SHOW PIC**

Nero set himself up as a god. He killed his wife and son to consolidate his power. He threw the Christians to the lions and burned them at the stake to light his drunken orgies. Nero set fire to downtown Rome to make room for his expansive building projects. **CLOSE PIC**

Yet the Bible is clear concerning God's command to us about government. No matter the character of the person holding the office, Christians need to respect and obey the governing authorities unless the command of the leader is in conflict with the command of God. I'll talk more about that in verse 2...

We may not respect the person who is in power, but we must realize the Lord has ordained him or her to be there—even if it's a person as brutal as Caesar Nero—or Adolf Hitler.

I don't know about you, but the thought of God allowing Hitler to be in power, to do what he did causes me to squirm in my theological seat!!

But what does history tell us? The nation of Israel would never have been reborn had not world sentiment, for a short period of time, been sympathetic toward the Jews because of Hitler's atrocities.

As World War II came to a close, newsreels showed the bodies of Jews being bulldozed into ditches, the mounds of glasses, false teeth, and shoes producing horror in the heart of humanity. And so it was, that, although it went right down to the wire, the League of Nations, including Russia!!!!, voted in favor of the establishment of the nation of Israel.

Let's read verse 1 again

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

This verse should shape our view of government. We can say “Lord, I might not like what’s happening, yet I realize ultimately that You are in control and that every power in place has been ordained by You. I acknowledge that it’s all part of Your plan.”

That’s why I don’t lose sleep over the political situation—for while I pray for those in authority over us, know God says all authority is ordained by Him.

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

Building Code Inspectors and Fire Marshals can seem tedious, and bothersome, but as long as a law isn’t unbiblical or immoral, even if I think the rule is just really dumb, I need to submit.

Does this verse mean we’re never to disobey those who are in authority over us? No. Acts 5 26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 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.”

But the issue was spiritual—not political.

We see another time of disobedience to government in

Daniel 3:18

But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”” The boys refused the mandated idol worship.

How about in Exodus?

Exodus 1:17 But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive.

Now in those rare cases where the law of the land conflicts with the laws of God, the Bible teaches that we must obey God rather than man. But that’s a rarity! Generally speaking, God uses government to keep civilization civil.

So, yes, there is a time when we are not to be subject to those in authority, and it’s when they tell us to do something that is directly contrary to the written Word of God.

But we need to ensure that if we take this course of civil disobedience, we have Scripture in context and rightly divided—not just a feeling for the justification of disobedience.

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. **SHOW PIC** You likely know the feeling—you’re cruising along, you see a patrol car, and your heart jumps. Your eyes dash to the speedometer, then quickly focus on the rearview mirror! Why is that? Because we’re breaking the law!!! **CLOSE PIC**

As long as I’m driving the speed limit, I’ve got nothing to worry about. We become terrified only when we break the law

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.

Generally speaking, the legislators who make laws, and the police who enforce them don't relish picking on good, law-abiding citizens. Laws are generally written to restrain bad guys, not hassle good guys.

Notice in verse 4 Paul calls the police officer, "God's minister." He "bears the sword" or in our day that might read, "packs a Glock."

One day Jesus will return to Earth to visibly rule the world and right all wrongs; but until then God restrains evil, punishes evildoers, and maintains an orderly society - through the means of government.

5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. Our motivation for observing the Law shouldn't be to just avoid punishment. The issue is us respecting the God-given authority the Law represents - whether that Law is a speed limit, or a building code.

If believers can't submit to the authorities we do see, how can we tell others to submit to God's authority - an authority we don't see?

Trust me, when a Jesus Fish bumper sticker goes flying down I-75 at 90 mph it's not a very good witness!

6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Have you ever viewed the IRS as "God's minister."?

Now I doubt anyone in this room would say our government or our police are perfect in this nation. Far from it! There is much that could be improved! But both are not only God's idea - it's God's will that we fund them...

Trust me, I don't celebrate paying taxes, but I do it; for God has commanded me to pay all the taxes that I owe. **Matthew 22:15 15**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. 16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 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." 22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

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. Notice, the two terms: "taxes" and "customs." The word translated "taxes" referred to an annual tax - similar to an income or real estate tax. While "customs" refer to a tax on goods - like a sales tax. The Bible says we're to pay them both!

Like you, my blood boils at wasteful spending. **SHOW PIC** Did you know \$440,000 is spent annually to have attendants push buttons on the fully automated Capitol Hill elevators used by Representatives and Senators? **CLOSE PIC**

SHOW PIC Did you know the Pentagon and CIA channeled some \$11 million to psychics who might provide special insights about various foreign threats. This was the disappointing "Stargate" program. **CLOSE PIC**

Dubious government spending schemes abound since bureaucrats play with other people's money. **SHOW PIC OF DENGU** For example, the National Institutes of Mental Health spent \$70,029 to see if the degu, a diurnal South American rodent, can help us better understand jet lag . . . **CLOSE PIC**

Our gov't spent \$77,826 to study "Coping with Change in Czechoslovakia" . . .

\$100,271 to see if volunteering is good for older people . . .

\$124,910 to reduce "School Phobia" in children . . .

\$161,913 to study "Israeli reactions to SCUD Attacks during the Gulf War" . . .

SHOW PIC OF HAWAII and my personal favorite \$187,042 to study the quality of life in Hawaii. **CLOSE PIC**

All that to say, our government often spends our tax money foolishly or immorally. So are we still suppose to pay the taxes?" And the answer is YES!

Don't think for a moment the taxes paid to Caesar Nero were used to open Christian schools, old folks' homes and benevolence funding!

The apostle Paul knew at least a portion of Rome's tax base was spent on wickedness and pagan idolatry. Paul knew their taxes paid for circuses and carnivals - yet he told them to pay the taxes anyway!

When I hit the submit button on my taxes, from then on God holds the politicians responsible for how that money is spent. I've done my duty. My God-given responsibility is to pay my taxes.

Second Century church leader, Tertullian, wrote, "What Romans lost by the Christians refusing to bestow gifts on their pagan temples, they gained by their conscientious payment of taxes.

Government is ordained by God and funded by us

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

There are those in the body of Christ who use these verses as a prohibition for Christians taking out loans. Although I do believe we should avoid going in debt, we must remember in Matthew 25 and Luke 19, when Jesus gave the parable of the talents. Jesus said the man who buried them should have put them in the bank to draw interest.

SHOW PIC OF BANK Jesus didn't condemn the banking system!
CLOSE PIC And, because the entire banking system is built upon loans, I personally disagree with those who command others saying you should never have a mortgage, car payment, or loan of any sort.

I absolutely believe we should try to be debt free, but I don't believe these verses are prohibiting taking out loans. We have to keep verse 8 in context-Paul is specifically talking about paying what we owe the government.

And what's to be the motivator for all of this? It's love!

Love must be the motivation for us in our obedience because without love, if I'm saying, "Okay, I gotta obey these government laws, pay these taxes, and submit to those in authority," without love I will find myself becoming bitter, cynical, confrontational and argumentative.

People often joke because I rarely watch TV. For those of you who do watch TV, or the news specifically, how do you feel after watching the news? **SHOW PIC**

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/columnist/2018/04/10/how-kicked-my-news-addiction/480157002/>

I bet your blood pressure rises, you want to start worrying, you want to clutch onto what you have while shaking your fist!!

And you know what's always missing in news casts-it's love!!!

CLOSE PIC

Why is it that Christian commentators and news broadcasters have no problem slandering our government, but yet you never hear them talk of praying and loving those in office? Anyone else see a problem there?

Please be careful when listening to those guys!!! Do they edify, or divide?

See verse 8 is a troubling verse. It offers a subtle reminder to us that we can pay all our taxes, be a fully obedient citizen, and almost think our obligation to others is done. But that's not so, for we can never love others enough. It's been said love is a permanent obligation which we can never discharge!

9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"[fn] "You shall not covet,"[fn] Here, Paul lists the second tablet of the Ten Commandments - how we're to treat others and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [fn]

10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. We must remember what Jesus said-Love fulfilled the Law. **Mark 12 28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving[fn] that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?"**

29 Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'^[fn] This is the first commandment.^[fn] 31 And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'^[fn] There is no other commandment greater than these.

See it's all about love!

Folks, how does the unbelieving world see us? Do we stand out because of our love for others? Are we known more for our love of others more than our political beliefs and social viewpoints?

11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. God intends for His Church to live in light of an overarching truth, Jesus is coming back!

SHOW PIC I read the story of a little boy who heard the grandfather clock malfunction. It chimed fifteen times. The boy shouted, "Mommy, mommy, it's later than it's ever been before." And that's certainly a truth we can say today! **CLOSE PIC**

We see signs of the end times all around us: a proliferation of natural disasters, the rebirth of Israel, globalism, Russian aggression, hostility toward Jews, a desire to build a third Temple in Jerusalem,

Israel and digital money....\$4,400

Apple controlling car systems...

But wherever we are on God's timeline, there's one certainty - it is later than it's ever been before. Because we know the danger of the times and we anticipate the soon return of Jesus, we should be all the more energetic and committed to a right walk with God.

So knowing the time, Romans 13 instructs us how to live out lives!

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

When you get dressed every day, you dress appropriately to who you are and what you plan to do. You don't wear a tuxedo to drive a dump truck.

Since we know the Lord is coming quickly, we ought to be dressed properly! Therefore, every day, we're to put on the Lord Jesus Christ!

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. To "put on Jesus" is to develop a new identity - a new mind-set. And we're to have zero tolerance for bad habits and sinful influences. This is how we live a life dead to sin and alive to God

In light of the fact that the kingdom is coming, what should we do? First, wake up (verse 11).

Second, dress up (verse 12). That is, put on the armor not of condemnation, not of judgment, but of light.

Third, clean up (verse 13). That is, put away drunkenness, envy, and everything else that pollutes and defiles.

Fourth, in light of the coming kingdom, we need to grow up, spiritually speaking. That is, we're not to make any provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

1 John 4 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this

the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.