Group Chat

SUMMARY

The Church and the State

Jesus is Lord over every earthly authority, but he has given different responsibilities to different institutions. The church and the state both serve under Christ, but neither possesses unlimited authority. Christians therefore need wisdom to recognize proper authority, resist illegitimate claims, and wisely exercise the freedom of conscience that belongs to those ruled ultimately by God's word.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about churches you have been part of. How much did politics come up, and in what ways? Did it feel ignored, overemphasized, or addressed helpfully?

2. Read Matthew 22:15-21 and Psalm 2:10-12. Separation of church and state means that church and civil government are distinct institutions with different God-given callings. How is that different from separating religion from politics? Why is the first necessary, while the second is impossible?

3. Read Romans 14:1-6, 12 and Acts 17:10-11. Liberty of conscience means that God alone ultimately binds the conscience. How does the church use its authority to shape our consciences, and how does our responsibility before God shape how we receive the church's teaching?