

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

May 30, 2021

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Between Two Worlds

PART

8

TITLE

Good King, Bad King

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 2:13-17



© 2021 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well, Providence family is great to see you. I hope you've had a great week. And hope this is a special weekend. If you are a guest with us, we're glad that you've joined us. And I pray this time will be encouraging to you. If you have in your hand a Bible, if you want to turn with me to I Peter chapter two, we're walking through the book, and on a weekend, when we pause and to recall and remember and honor those individuals who gave their life for our own freedom so that we could be here, so that we could enjoy this, so that we could open up the Bible, I could speak into a microphone, we can sing to the Lord and a number of other freedoms that we enjoy.

It's not ironic, it's sovereign, that the Lord would lead us to the passage in I Peter on this weekend on civil duty and responsibility. Anytime we talk about civil responsibility, we get to this arena, and it's mixed with things such as politics and political parties and presidents. And suddenly, all of a sudden, it grows, it becomes more emotional. We begin to care a little bit more, because we're kind of all over the map with this. And the fact is, is that as a church family, we care a whole lot about these things. And yet, we don't all care in the same direction.

We have different ideas and different ideologies, different perspectives, different hopes. So when we come to these kinds of moments, it's natural for us to root, meaning root for. Some of you are rooting that I'm going to agree with your ideology.

And what I want to encourage us to do today is instead of rooting for Biblical support for your ideology or mine, that we would root for Biblical transformation of our heart, and that we would allow the Bible the room that it deserves as the Word of God to critique every single part of the human experience, including our political perspective.

You see, there's things on the screen right now, two of them. One of them is a flag, every single person was born on this earth, has a place they live, and there's a flag that represents that place. And you also see a Bible. And the reality is that we can get so confused on the earth that we begin to interpret the Bible on the basis of our political perspective, our flag, instead of allowing the Bible to critique and give perspective to how we're supposed to live as a people. We want to give the Lord the opportunity. When I say give Him the opportunity, he's going to take it, whether we give it or not. But that we would open our hearts to Him and say, "God more than anything else, I want to be in agreement with you. And if in any issue, I'm not, then I want to change."

So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we look to You in faith asking that You would speak through weakness to us at a moment like this. I pray in particular for those individuals and families who are mourning the loss, the death of a loved one on this weekend, a life that was given that we could be free to enjoy the freedoms that we do, to enjoy the place where we live. We are thankful and we ask that You would help those families to grieve as those who have hoped, that You would help them or would You comfort them?

God, we ask that You would speak your weakness and that you would address our hearts wherever we are, off center, when it comes to civil responsibility, I ask that You would correct our course. So we look to You in faith, believing that You're for us and not against us. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

So I Peter was written by Peter, the follower of Jesus Christ, who on a low point of his life, he denied Jesus when he was isolated. And now he knows that these Christians, it's important to know this, I Peter, its first readers were not unbelievers who were considering, "Hey, let's let Peter tell us who Jesus is and what he did, so that we can consider whether or not we want to follow him." He's writing specifically to Christians. He calls them exiles, the citizens of heaven who are living on the earth who are being persecuted in the Roman Empire and scattered and therefore isolated and vulnerable to the farthest reaches of the Roman Empire.

He's writing to them in order to protect them, to provide for them, to encourage them, to instruct them, to help them. So for a chapter and a half we've looked at Peter seek to describe what Jesus did for us. And then for those who have trusted him who we are in Him, what is our new identity that we are born again, that we are ransomed by precious blood, that we are chosen, that we are exiles, we're citizens of heaven. He says in verse nine in chapter two, we're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation of people for his own possession.

He's given us a new identity. And with that new identity, there's a calling. There's a reason that we have. There's a behavior, there's a behavior that God has in mind that we would do that corresponds with the identity that he gives us when we trust Christ. So after giving us this identity, what he does is he makes an appeal. It's in chapter two, verse 12. And this is what it says. It says, "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles that would be unbelievers, people who don't know Christ. Keep it honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God."

In other words, Peter is saying to them and to us, the world, your neighbors, your co workers who don't know Christ, they're going to read you more than they're going to read the Bible. And so in the way that you live your life and the way that you lead your relationships, and the way that you love people, and the way that you do excellent work and the way that you live with margin and balance, so that you can give your heart to priorities, he says live in such a way so that people can see Christ, and they can see that walking with Christ is the ultimate trade up in life.

The rest of I Peter is his explanation of what this verse looks like in a few different arenas. And the first one is civil responsibility. In the area of civil responsibility, what would it look like for Christians to keep our conduct honorable? This is what he says, starting in verse 13, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the Emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover up for evil but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the Emperor. Word

emperor, the word King, it's the same word, king, honor the king, honor Caesar.

Somebody will say, "Well, you don't understand how bad we have it here in America." These readers, many of them were hiding for their life, so not to be burned at the stake for their faith in Christ. And Peter says, "Honor the one who is instituting that edict." So for those of us who would say, "We have it harder than the rest, that these things make it more difficult.," Peter is writing to people that we should sympathize with.

And he tells us three very important truths, and then he's going to give a number of instructions on how we're supposed to behave. The first truth that he gives us something that is the overriding principle of the entire book of the Bible, and that is that Christ is the eternally good king, with all authority.

The sermon title is Good King, Bad King. What we're talking about is Jesus and the rest. Okay, Jesus and every other human, Jesus and every other person who has any authority whatsoever, whether as a boss, a parent, a principal, a pastor, whatever it is, Jesus is good and right. And then there's humanity that has fallen at the core of who we are. Jesus is this eternal, good king, and he has all authority.

And when you open up the Bible, you find that it says that Jesus is the king of the ages, that he's the king of righteousness. He's the king of glory. He's the king of heaven. He's the king of kings. That's why the book of Revelation says that Jesus is the ruler of the kings on Earth. That's why the book of Colossians says he is the head of all rule and authority. It's why Peter will say when we get to chapter five, "To Him be the dominion forever."

You see, the most gracious thing that Peter does for us is he reestablishes Jesus as the integration point or the reference point for life. I want you to see how he does it. If you look at the words of the text, I couldn't get them all on one. And so I had to take a few words out, but so that you get the point. The reference point that he's laying down, he lays down four different times, and it's the Lord. He says, "Be subject for the Lord's sake." It's not just be subject. There's a reason for it, there's a motivation for it, there's a person behind it. He says, "This is the will of God." He says, "There's certain things we're supposed to do. And the reason we do it is because we're servants of God. We're supposed to honor different people." And the reason we do it is because we fear God. He's the reference point for all things. You take God, you take these words out of the text, and try reading it. And what you find is the instructions still make sense, but there's no motivation to do it. There's no authority behind it. There's no source of fuel to help you accomplish it.

You see, the Bible tells us that we were created by God. We were created for God, to live in our relationship with God, and be held accountable to God. If you're created by someone, for someone, to live with someone, to be held accountable to someone and you lose that someone, you're lost. You don't know where you came from, what you're supposed to do in the meantime, and where you're going when you leave. Origin, purpose, destiny it becomes lost. And this is precisely what the Bible tells us is that when we lose our reference point to life, it's as though the compass of our life utterly breaks and it doesn't point north any longer.

Many of us in the room, all of us, I assume, at some point in time, we've been lost. I mean, really lost. You look around, and there's not a single restaurant, there's not a marker, there's not a tree, there's not a rock, there's not a road sign, there's nothing that looks familiar. You're not sure if you should keep going or turn back or turn right or left, nothing, you're just lost. This is what the Bible says that we are apart from Christ. And when we sinned against God, we broke fellowship, we severed from Him. And we lost to Him, meaning we lost the reference point of our origin, our purpose, our destiny.

And so what Peter does, he's going to do it in each of these arenas is he's going to say, "Hey, don't forget, there's a reference point." Most of us, we have a phone, there's an app, we talked about this two weeks ago to where, wherever you're at in the city, you open up the app. And if you ever put home in there, there's a red dot that just kind of falls and it's there. Now you know where home is. It doesn't matter where you're at within the city or within the state or anywhere else. You can just say go home and you hit a button and suddenly it's going to map exactly how to get there. And the reason is because there's a reference point.

When we sinned against God, we lost a reference point. It's as if the map, the red dot just went away. And so what did God do? He reestablished the red dot. How did he do it? He laid a stone in Zion. Isaiah promised it would happen hundreds of years before Christ. And now Peter, in chapter two, verse six, he's telling what happened 30 years after it happened. He says, "I am laying in Zion." That's Jerusalem, a stone, a cornerstone. A cornerstone is the one that you lay first, so that the rest of the stones can be placed upon it, and they are plumb and straight and upright.

He says this one is chosen, He's precious, and everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame. So you understand what he's doing. And this is what he's saying. He's saying, "Look, when we were utterly lost, this king of kings, He came to the earth. He lived without sin, and yet He died for our sin, and then He rose from the dead in order to give eternal life to everyone who would believe in Him.

Here's my question for you. I know we're talking about civil authority and civil responsibility. But life does not make sense and can't make sense unless Christ is at the center of your life. And so have you trusted Him? Have you admitted and come to the place in your life that you know you have a spiritual need, you have a debt before God you cannot pay? That's what the Bible says. That's what God says. God looks at you and He goes, "You have a debt you can't pay." But I love you so much. I sent Christ to pay that debt for you.

Have you gotten to the place that you've believed in Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection was in your place if you confess Him as Lord? You can do that right now. And what happens is this, is that when Christ becomes the center of our life, suddenly, we have a possibility for something we all long for, and that's balance. How many of you wish you could just find a little bit more balance in life, a little bit more margins, where you're not always on the extremes of just exhaustion and feeling overwhelmed? See, every arena of life, there's extremes. When Christ is Lord in our heart of that arena, when we have a reference point, suddenly what happens is you not only have the possibility for balance, you actually have the power to become

balanced.

And this is how. When it comes to civil responsibility, what does balance look like? Watch this. It means that we avoid two deadly extremes. One of them is apathy. Some of us we say, “You know what? I trust Christ. I’m a citizen of heaven, who cares about this place? I’m not going to vote, I’m not going to be responsible. I don’t care about justice for others. I’m not going to work towards fair laws.” Yet Jesus comes to us and He says, “Yeah, but I told you, one of the things you’re supposed to do is to pray for this place that you live, and pray that the values of heaven would come and it would begin to work in his place.” And then we open up the Bible in Jeremiah and he says, “Look, wherever you happen to live is in exile.” He says, “Seek it’s good. Pray for it, serve it, serve those people, serve the city;”, and you know why? He goes, “His benefit is your benefit.”

So the extreme of apathy would go away if Christ is in our heart, and the reason is because Christ comes to us and He says, “Hey, I care about this place. There’s people here.” But there’s another extreme. And that extreme is idolatry. That is when we formed a supreme epic desire that tends to surface every election. And suddenly, for months before the election, we put so much stock on who’s going to be elected that what happens is we live in perpetual anxiety. We watch tons of talk shows, and we listen to talk radio, and we get more worked up and more worked up about the political process throughout the whole thing. And then all of a sudden, there’s an election, and we are either elated or devastated.

The Bible says if Jesus is the ultimate king of your heart, you can care about this place, but you can rest on election night. And the reason is because you remember that you live under a divine monarchy. Jesus is king. He’s king forever and ever and ever. So the first thing he does is he establishes who is the good king. Second thing, Christ entrusts a portion, just a portion of His authority to people. You see, when He rose from the dead, He comes to us and He says, “All authority in heaven on earth has been given to me.” You know what that means? If you have any authority in any area, it’s entrusted, it’s given to you.

You showed up here naked. So if you have any authority over anyone, it means Jesus says, “I trust you with this authority.” In your home, if you’re a parent, God says, “I trust you.” Your school, your workplace, the community, the church, wherever it is, if you have any authority whatsoever, it’s yours for a time. It was entrusted to you, for you to steward. And He’s going to take it back. The Bible tells us He’s going to take it back whenever he wants. And when He does, we will then be held accountable for our management.

You see, the word stewardship really gets a bad rap within the church, because it’s been used so many times in order to build a building, that everyone just says, “Oh, that’s the money talk.” A steward is somebody that is trusted by the owner of everything. So when the owner leaves, and the owner says, “Look, you work for me the farm. I’m going away for a long time. So what I’m going to do is I’m going to entrust the management of this place to you.” And the key of success and management is if I was not going away, how would I manage this farm and your management so long as it’s in alignment with how I would manage it is faithful management. Otherwise, it’s unfaithful management.

So think about this. Whatever relationships you have, we're supposed to think of all of life, everything. You came naked, that means everything in your life, every person in your life, they weren't there. God gave those to you. See the friend, if you have a wife, you have kids, you have parents, you have money, you have time, you have whatever it is you have, what you're saying is this. Okay in this setting, if Christ was in my shoes. See there's a stewardship in marriage. Okay, God, if you were me right now, how would you respond to her?

The proximity of my behavior to how Christ would respond to her is faithful management of trust. And this is true for every arena in life. And so as stewards, we need to know that when he wills, He can return. And He'll take it all back. Which is why Daniel says he removes kings, and he sets up kings. You know what that means? He says, "Hey, you King, you're no longer King. Hey you, you're the king."

That's God. Now, why does He do this? Why does God entrust authority to human government in particular, when human government is a hot mess? It always has been. I mean, just find a country in all of history who had a good king. What you'll find is the only one is in heaven. So why does He do it? What's their responsibility? What are they going to be held accountable towards? Well, Peter tells us, Paul reinforces this in Romans 13, we won't read it. But if you want to read it, you can read it there. This is what he says. He goes look, for the emperors and for the governors, this is what they're supposed to do. Punish those who do evil and praise those who do good.

In other words, government is entrusted with the responsibility to agree with what God says is true and right. And after agreeing, they commend and praise people who are living in accord with what God says is right. And they're punishing people when they disobey what God says is right. And the reason they do this is to keep anarchy and the flood of human sin from literally just washing over cultures. This is what they're supposed to do. And for this reason, if you can imagine, this is why it's so imperative for us to pray for the salvation of our leaders. And the reason is, because they simply cannot do this if they have no reference point of Christ, even know what is right and what is wrong.

To praise and to punish, this is not what Nero did. This is what he was supposed to do. It's not what Pilate did as the governor, but it's what he's supposed to do. It's not what leaders there all time and all countries, including our own, have done but it is what they are supposed to do. And we need to remember that with trust always comes accountability, which is why Daniel, when he was in the court of the king of Babylon, he was close enough to the king, and he's looking how the king of Babylon is just absolutely out of sorts. He's not walking with the Lord. And so he's disagreeing with God about what is true and right, lovely. And as a result of that, he grows so greedy that what the king is doing, the edicts that he's putting forth, that Daniel finally took enough courage, and in chapter four, he goes to the king and he says, "King, you need to break off your sins by practicing righteousness. And similarly, you need to break off your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed."



You see what he's saying? He said, "You need to agree with God, what He says is right. And you need to do so for the weak, for people who are oppressed, people who are being hurt because of what you're saying and doing because you're in violation of God." Now, we come to this kind of a message, this kind of a moment, it's only natural for us to go, "Okay, so let's evaluate our leaders. Are our leaders in agreement with what God has said is true and right? Are they looking at what God says, 'You know what? God says that we should punish people who don't agree with that. And we should praise people who do.'"

Is that what our leaders are doing? That's what we normally do is we go hey, and so what we do is we point a lot. And we condemn a lot, and we judge a lot. And there will be an evaluation of their life by the good king. Their stewardship will be judged as managers of that authority. But before we just spend all our time judging others, we should pray for our leaders. And then we should remember something very important. And that is that when we live in a government system of the people, by the people, for the people, we are not just the governed, we are part of the governing. And what that means is that we should vote and we should pursue just laws, as though we will be held accountable for the stewardship of freedom in electing leaders and instituting laws that praise what God says is good and that punish what God says is evil. And so He is the eternally good king with all authority and He entrusts a portion of his authority to people.

Friends, I hope you recognize. We can't just look at this and go, "Yeah, those people." Unlike so many people who are alive in the world today you actually have, it may feel so small, it may feel irrelevant, but you will be held accountable, and so will I, for how we managed our stewardship of freedom. In other words, every time we go to vote, we're supposed to ask this question, "Okay, this is, I'm a steward of this vote. How would Jesus vote?" And when our vote aligns with His vote, He's going to go, "That's being faithful." And so we should consider what He cares about, we should consider what He says is right, what is true, what He says is wrong. So that we can be faithful.

The third thing, Christ gives us orders in responding to human authorities. He gives us orders in responding to our human authorities. And this is really where He goes. He's going to tell us to do for specific things to our human authorities in response to these human authorities in our life. Before we do that, we need to ask something or search out something I think is really important. And that is, how do we balance this world between God, who is king, and authorities who are the kings of the earth when they're not in alignment? Where does precedent priority come in?

One day, two groups of people who were not sympathetic in the sense of their own political ideologies, meaning one was for Roman rule, one was against Roman rule, but they both hated Jesus. And so they said, "Hey, let's work together and trap Him." So they come to Jesus and they say, "Jesus, should we pay taxes or not?" One of them was hoping that He was going to say, "No, you shouldn't pay taxes," because they were going to call out treason. The other group was hoping that He would say, "Yes, you should pay taxes. And the reason is, because zero, Nero Caesar, he claimed to be God." And so they could have called out idolatry. You're worshiping the Emperor.



And so you would think that that He had a little problem, but of course, He was in total control and authority. And so he goes, Well, let me ask you something. Anyone have a coin I can borrow? A coin? Anyone have a coin? I can see it. He is the king of everything. Anyone have a coin I could borrow? He goes, "I got a coin." He goes, "No, this isn't going to work great." He goes, "Whose face is on that coin right there?" They say well, "Zero, Zero." I will say that again, "Caesar, Caesar Nero." And then what does he say? He says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Now what is due God? Everything. Right? His clear rights, He's the king over everything. What are we supposed to give to Him? what belongs to God? Everything belongs to God. What's left for Caesar? So you say nothing, no more taxes. No. What's left for Caesar is everything God told us to give him. And our text tells us we're supposed to give four things. So what are they? What are we supposed to do? First, let's submit to our authorities as unto the Lord. If you're wondering what that word submit looks like in human form, when Jesus looked at the cross, and He says, "Man that I don't know." But then He says, "Not my will. But your will be done."

That's submission. The word submit, it's not even a nice word, isn't it? There's no softness to it, submit. It sounds cold and harsh, doesn't it? That's why we don't have cups for our coffee that just say submit on it. It's not the warm moment in the morning that we're looking for, just submit. You're not going to come over to our house one day, and you're going to see throw pillows that just say submit on them. It would be harsh. It's a harsh word to us. We don't like the idea of submission. Nobody here is a big fan. There's a reason for it.

First of all, we're all children of Adam and Eve. They rebelled against God, the one true living King. They're like hey, God says, "Hey, all this is for you. There's only one thing." We're like, "Well, we want that one thing and we're not going to let you tell us how to live." Well, that's where we came from. All right, so we got some pretty strong rebellion DNA running through us. And then many of us who were here were children of the American Revolution, and so as Americans, there's just the flavor of insubordination. We're just saying, "Yeah, I think we're going to do it anyway."

We like that insubordination so much that we gave ourselves a freedom of speech. We can say anything we want about anybody we want. Did you know there's countries in the world today that you can get killed if you speak against the leader? That's why I don't live there. Well, that's great. And then add to all of this, we're not only children of Adam and Eve, we're children of a revolution, we have free speech. But there's probably like 10% of us who are from Texas, and it's just like yeah, well, I mean their whole state motto is like, "No."

Rebellion is the air that we breathe, but let me tell you something. Rebellion is a human thing. Rebellion is an American thing. But it is not a Christian thing. And that's what he says. He says, "Be subject, submit, for the Lord's sake to every human institution." Somebody say, "I submit all the time." Let me just flavor submission. Submission is what you do when you don't agree, not when you do. When someone has authority, if you agree with the speed limit, and keep the speed limit, you're not submitting, you're just agreeing.

But it's when I don't agree. Now all of a sudden, we're in submission to every human institution, our parents, boss, our government. When he talks about the fact that this is the emperor, this is Nero, he's burning Christians. What he's saying there by default is that authority does not have to be godly to be legitimate. Why should we submit? Is it because we're just such a compliant bunch? No. Is it because the power of coercion from the government is going to hold us down? He says no. That's not the ultimate fuel either. What's the ultimate fuel? We're doing it for the Lord's sake.

In other words, when he's saying, "Look, instead of being known for lawlessness, like that's our reputation in the community, let's submit to just laws and keep our conduct honorable for the Lord's sake." Now, are there limits to this? Of course there are. It was Peter himself after receiving the command from Jesus, go and make disciples that when the authorities came in and said, "You must stop preaching the resurrection." It was Peter who said in Acts, chapter five, verse 29, "We must obey God rather than man." And what this means is that if man's laws ever require us to break Christ's laws, then we disobey man's laws peaceably, and submit to the consequence. For Peter, he continued to preach until the consequence of his rebellion to human authorities landed him on a cross like Christ.

And so I would encourage us to do a heart check. The first question is, are you submissive to Christ? What's the last thing you remember him telling you, inspiring you? You know what you should do this? May I ask you, did you do it? When's the last thing that what you thought was in disagreement with what you read did you change your heart? Did you change your mind? Are we submissive to Christ?

And second is are we submissive to authority? Kids, are you submitting in obedience to your parents? Are we submitting to things we don't agree with regarding instructions from our boss, when those are just instructions and we just don't agree with them? Are we submitting? All of this is one of his ways to say this is how we keep our conduct honorable.

The second thing, let's do what is good as unto the Lord. Christ desires that we keep our conduct so honorable, that those who slander us will one day join us. That's what He says in verse 15. He says, "This is the will of God that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people." This is an echo of verse 12 really. In other words, he's saying, "Live in such a way that when people look at your life as Christians, they say, 'You know what, I don't understand them. I don't understand what they believe. But this is what I know. When I look at their life. They're just so full of love. And when I look at their relationships, they're so full of health. And when I listen to them talk, there's so much grace and truth that comes out. When I watch them when they're healthy, they thank God. And when I watch them when they're dying, they keep hoping in God.'"

That our conduct will be so honorable that those who slander us would one day join us. The third thing he tells us to do is let's live in freedom as unto the Lord. Then you got to remember where they're at. We hear the word freedom, and we think, "Oh, I get to say what I want. I can go where I want.", and that is a measure

of freedom. He's talking to people who are persecuted for their faith. You should ask this question when you think about this verse, when he says, "Hey, live as free man." How would a Christian in North Korea be obedient to this text? What he's saying is, as citizens of heaven under the rule of Christ, we are absolutely free. We're free in our heart. And so what does He tell us to do? He says, "Live as people who are free." And then He knows, He knows that some of us, because we got a heart that still need a lot of growth left, we're like, "All right, well if I'm free, then I'm not paying any more taxes. And I'm going to quit my job, I'm going to live off the system. I'm going to break rules. That's what I'm going to do."

We're not in that free. He says, "Not using your freedom as a cover up for evil, but living as servants of God." So we got to ask the question, what does it mean for Peter when he says, "Live as people who are free?" Well, one day, he's at the temple in a town called Capernaum. And the tax collectors come up and they say, "Hey, Peter, has Jesus paid the two drachma temple tax?" Two coins, the temple tax. Peter's like, "Oh, yeah." I don't know if he knew because he kind of waited a little bit. But he says, "Yeah, he has."

Well, later that night, Jesus takes Peter aside and goes, "Hey, let's talk for a little bit. I know something happened today, you got to ask this question." And so he goes, "Let me ask you a question, Peter." He goes, "From whom do the kings of the earth take toll and tax? From their sons or from others?" In other words, when a king wants to build an army or a palace, does he tax his kids or does he tax his citizens?" He's like, "Well, of course not the sons. It would be others." He goes, "That's right. Because then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself." But what's happening, Jesus came to the earth He created. He was the son. Jesus went into a temple, they were supposed to be worshiping Him and He's the son of God, shouldn't have to pay tax in His own temple. But being free, he chose honor ability. It would be kind of cool to pay your taxes like that. Hey, I'm going to go fishing. Let me get what I need.

But do you know why people break just laws? Somebody says, "Well, it's because we're free. We do what we want." No. Do you know why people break just laws? Do you know why they steal? Why they assault people? Hurt people? Why they drive too fast? Do you know why? It's because although we are free socially, we're in bondage spiritually. Our heart is still in shackles. We think, my thirst for pleasure is simply too strong. My thirst for retaliation is too strong. My anxiety over being late is too strong. So I must drive faster. As a free man, Jesus resisted temptation. He submitted to His parents and He obeyed just laws. And so can we.

Fourth and last, let's honor everyone as unto the Lord. When you go to Disney or when you go to a hotel, and you come in and they start calling you, call me sir, and they're extending by titles and things to serve in order to confer honor, you know why they do that? Because they want money. That's what they want. They know that if we have a good experience, we probably come back and so that's good for business to be honorable to people. That's not what he's talking about. He's telling us to be honorable to people because people are made in the image of God, not because we can get something out of them. But notice what he says. He starts wide.

He says, "Honor everyone. Honor everyone."

In other words, Christians find a way to honor everyone, even scoundrels. Somebody says, "I can't honor that person because they're just terrible." You could say, "You know what? That person is a human being." You don't have to say more than that. That person is made in the image of God. There's things that I don't agree with. But if I say anything else, I'm not honoring, so I don't have to say anything else. I don't have to post anything else. Honor everyone. Then he narrows it. He goes, "You know what? Love the brotherhood. That's brothers and sisters in Christ, the family of faith." He says, "We're in this together, there's a special affection of honor that we should have for one another. And then he narrows it all the way down. He says, "Fear God, because there's only one. Fear God, He has the highest honor, we have the highest regard for him." And it's interesting. He goes, you know what, let me circle back to somebody else that you might be interested in knowing what you're supposed to do with him. Honor the emperor, the king Nero.

Why? Why would he say this? Honor the emperor, when the emperor fits into honor everyone? I think this is why. Because when leaders are impersonal to us, meaning they're not family, they're not people we know and love, and when leaders are distant from us, maybe we can talk about them, we're not going to get in trouble because they're too far away to hear us. And when they're ungodly, and they violate our own statement of faith and our own belief, and what God has said. And when all of their blunders when they walk up the stairs to Air Force One, and they trip a couple times, we're like, "Oh, that's funny. Let me post that 10 times." And their decisions affect us, it's really easy for us to give ourselves a license to dishonor the king.

If this is true, then Providence, we have a responsibility before God Almighty to honor President Biden, to find a way. For some of you, that may be easier than others. This doesn't say when he's worthy, when he has a good day, when he passes something that I agree with. He just says honor. We have to find a way. And I just admit, it's not just him. There's been many presidents that this is true of. In 100 ways, within 100 days, I'm out of tune with him. There's things that he's doing, things that he's for that I just look at, and I think he has no idea how destructive that's going to be to people. But God tells me that I must find a way to express my dismay, while still respecting and honoring him and his office. Do you know why? Because nobody sees the goodness of Christ, and is moved to glorify Him, by listening to Christians mock their leaders.

No one looks at your post and worships Jesus when that post is mocking a leader. And so we should all be very careful. So before we sing to Christ, we should do what Christ tells us to do. And that is to pray for kings, and all who are in high positions. So I'm going to give you a moment right now, silence just to pray. Just to pray. And the first thing I would encourage you to do is to take a moment right now and simply ask God to give our leaders wisdom, help and faith in Jesus so they have a reference point of right and wrong. So let's pause. Let's pray.

Now let's take a moment to simply do what should come so natural to us as believers. Let's praise Jesus for being the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.



© 2021 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)  
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.  
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.