

Series: Community and Diversity

Sermon: **The Responsibilities of a Faithful Community in a Secular Society**

Delivered by: **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; Date: **November 6, 2016**

Bible text explored: Romans 13:1–7

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. [ESV]

Review and application:

In this application section of Romans, Paul illustrates the way the doctrine of God he has presented should influence our everyday lives. This section also reflects Jesus teachings. Romans 12:9-21, for instance, reflected Jesus' sermon-on-the-mountain words about love, while today's passage reflects his teaching (Matt. 22:15-21) on relating to authorities.

1. What (v. 1a) is the general principle about how Christians should relate to authority structures?
What (v. 1b) is the primary reason for this?
2. In noting the current prevalence of suspiciousness of governing authority, Pastor Moody quoted Winston Churchill: "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others." What was the authority structure when Paul wrote this epistle?
3. If you resist legitimate authority (vv. 2-4), whom are you ultimately resisting? What will be the result of resisting the ruler called "God's servant"?
4. How (v. 5) are the actions of a ruling regime intended to be an expression of, and warning about, God's final judgment?
Why should breaking the laws of the established order result in a guilty conscience?
5. Why (vv. 6-7) is authority a good thing that Christians should be united in obeying, even if they may feel it is being abused?
To what dire results would an authority breakdown lead?
6. Is there any biblical precedent for disobeying the demands of authorities who no longer in any sense represent God's moral authority?
(See Acts 5:27-29; Exod. 1:15-17.)
7. How should we be prepared to pray for whomever prevails in this week's elections? (See 1 Tim. 2:1-4.)