

1. *We reject lawlessness.* If you haven't heard, Cities Church had their worship service interrupted this past week by a mob of about 30–40 protesters. We are united with Cities in worshipping Jesus. That act was not boldness or courage; it was lawlessness. And we know the presence of lawlessness is not limited to citizens and protestors. Remembering our study of Ecclesiastes, it can (and does) exist in places of authority. So, as Christians, we should reject — in our own hearts and in our culture — those practices that contradict God's will.

2. *We affirm our submission to governing authorities.* Titus 3:1 says, "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities . . ." So I am reminding you. Our greatest allegiance belongs to Jesus Christ, and one way we submit to him is by submitting to governing authorities. We must possess a default attitude of respect to every rightful authority. This does not mean earthly authorities are infallible. From that submissive disposition there may be times where we say, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and hold authorities accountable for their actions. But we will not be agitators, obstructors, or instigators. (David and Saul)

3. *We uphold a heart for sojourners.* God made clear provision for sojourners in Israel and also expected them to abide by Israel's laws. "There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you" (Exod 12:49). We, like the ancient people of Israel, know the heart of a sojourner. We were foreigners to God's kingdom and our naturalization came through the blood of Christ. So let us show compassion, and remember that we don't have to choose between mercy and law. As one pastor put it, "we can reflect God's mercy and compassion towards individuals . . . while also expecting lawful process to unfold in our country."

4. *We underscore the need for sound judgment.* "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him" (Prov 18:17). Judge by the Bible you read and the evidence you see, not by the intentions that you assume.

5. *We confess that Jesus is Lord.* This is our fundamental, unifying reality. Because Christ is the head of the church we can keep our heads when controversies arise. He alone is the ransom for sinners, and only through his gospel will the nations be healed. Man will never have peace with his fellow man so long as he does not have peace with God, and the only way to have peace with God is through the gospel. So we confess Jesus is Lord. He has not changed and neither has our mission.