

Sunday, June 6th, 2010

Living Hope EFC

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The Christian's Responsibility to Governing Authorities. (Rom.13:1-7)

INTRO: What is the Christian's responsibility to Government?

- Are anti-government movements – God's will? Ever?
- (*Arabs*, living in Israel? *Hispanics*, protesting Arizona law?)
- Go back to 1760, the American Revolution. Many living in America immigrated to Canada rather than live under a new government established by revolution.
- If you lived in Germany in 1939, would you join the military?
- (What was the responsibility of *the Church* to Hitler?)
- It's 1975, you live in Russia – a Christian. Someone contacted you about helping him smuggle Bibles into the country?
- Are we obligated to pay taxes when the gov't misuses them?

ILLUS: Ravi Zacharias' friend that escaped Viet Nam. 191

Rom.12:9-21 - What loving God looks like applied to relationships.

- 12:9-13 = Loving those within the church.
- **Last Week:** How are we to respond to those who hurt us?
- 12:14-21 = Love your enemy. Do good to him.
 - VERSE 17: Don't repay anyone evil for evil.
- **When someone does something bad to you, resist the natural tendency to get even.** Rather, think about a response that would be consistent with Jesus Christ's response to sinners.

VERSE 19: Don't take revenge. Leave that up to God!

TODAY: The Christian responsibility to governing authorities.

SETTING:

Paul is writing to the church that exists in Rome, the hub of the Empire. There may be several reasons he mentions submission to government:

1. The Jews were particularly reluctant to submitting to Gentile authorities. Gentile domination = God's discipline, Dt.17:15, Neh.9:37
2. The Jews had a tendency of rebellion against Gentile rulers.
 - Acts 5:36-37; Acts 18:2 (Maybe 5 years before Romans is written.)
3. Paul reminded them that they (we) have a dual-citizenship.
 - While we are citizens of heaven, we're also citizens of earth.
 - **Jn.18:36** – "My K'dom is not of this world." **Mk.12:17** "Give to Caesar
 - The Christian must not think himself above man's laws.
4. To remind the church that Gov't is God's means of protecting them from those who would harm them (**12:19, 13:4**).

ARGUMENT: the Christian is to live in loyalty to those given governing authority without compromising his greater loyalty to God.

Seven principles that instruct our responsibility to government.

1. Vs1 Every person is to be in submission to governing authority

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

- Jew, Gentile, Christian, non-Christian – all are to submit to authorities

QUOTE: Leon Morris, This is the general duty of a citizen.

- Paul writes in general terms, he doesn't address every situation.

2. Government is an institution established for man by God.

- Paul is saying that absolute authority belongs to God, and he delegates authority to man. Man's authority is derived from God.
- *Governing authority is God's idea! Not merely a human concept.*

Why did God establish this system? Where did it begin? – **Gen.9:5,6**

⁴ "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵ And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made man.

⁷ As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

- God initiated Gov't because man's nature is sinful & man will act in ways that harm others, and to preserve the dignity of mankind.
- **If man does not control himself internally, he must be controlled externally.** LAW & PUNISHMENT – help inhibit & control crime, while they remind mankind of God's eternal standard of justice.
- Anarchy is Satan's plan of rebellion. Order is God's plan for creation!

POINT: Christians are to recognize government as God's appointment.

Q: What about Evil Governments? Are we to submit to these?

1: God places whom He wills in positions of authority. It is the responsibility of those appointed, to carry out their tasks, use their power justly.

2: There are times we are told to be submissive even to ungodly gov't.

EXAMPLES:

1- Jesus said of Pilate: "You have no authority except that given you."

2- Paul is writing during the time of Roman Caesars who don't know God

3- **Jer.27:4-8,11.** God gives ruling power to whomever He chooses.

⁴ 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "...⁵ With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁶ Now

I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. ⁷ All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes...¹¹ But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD."

4- Is.44:28-45:7. God even uses unbelieving rulers for His purposes.

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."' ¹ "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, ⁴ **For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, *though you do not acknowledge me.*** ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, *though you have not acknowledged me,* ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.

5- Dan.4:17,25; 5:26-28; 7:26-27. God controls all nations, human gov't.

¹⁷ "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and *gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.*" O king ²⁵ You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and *gives them to anyone he wishes.*

POINT: Political power is in God's hands. He gives it to whom He wills.

Both good & bad. Those appointed are responsible to rule as under God's appointment. Either way...they will fulfill His purposes!

- **WW.** "This does not mean God is responsible for the sins of tyrants, but that authority to rule originates from God."
- Citizens must submit, in general, even to ungodly governments.

3. (Vs.2) To rebel against Gov't is to rebel against God.

²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority *is rebelling against what God has instituted*, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Paul contrasts υποτασσω (vs.1) with αντιτασσω (vs.2)

- To place oneself under, submit - VS - to place oneself against, resist.
- Gov't is not a matter of human invention, it is a moral issue of obedience to God. **To resist gov't is to take a stand against God's order.**
- Those who do so will receive judgment to themselves.

POINT: Submission is not rooted in the character of the leader but in God's sovereign ordinance/ appointment. Gov't is a divine institution.

Q: What if Gov't should persecute Christians?

- **1 Pet.2:13-23, 3:13-17,4:12-16,19.**

¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

¹⁸Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain

of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

1 Peter 3

¹³Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed.

"Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened." ¹⁵But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.* But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

POINT: If it is God's will for us to suffer unjustly, we are to submit to it. Christ, our Example, and many others – have gone before us.

- We are to be ready to give an answer for the hope we have.

SUMMARIZE

the Christian is to live in loyalty to those given governing authority without compromising his greater loyalty to God.

God's view of Government & our relationship to it:

- 1- Gov't exists and is appointed by God.
- 2- Citizens of a country are to respect and submit to governing authorities
- 3- LAW & PUNISHMENT – help inhibit & control crime, while they remind mankind of God's eternal standard of justice.
- 4- To resist or stand against authorities, is to stand against God.