



# Beyond the Ballot

*SUBMITTING TO YOUR LEADERS*

# A Necessary Battle?

- Church buses homeless men and women to its campus.
- Problems arose around the neighborhood as a result.
- City officials intervened, and the church fought.
- City and church reached a settlement.



# The Church in the Roman Empire

- Roman occupation of Israel constantly reminded the Jews they were a conquered people.
- Broader culture increasingly mocked Christians for worshipping as God a man who died on a cross, etc.
- Pockets of persecution from the 30s – 50s A.D. as various officials harmed Christians.
- Political leaders protected Roman religion. They were cult leaders who led public ceremonies/sacrifices.

# The Church in the Roman Empire

- Empire-wide persecution during the 60s A.D. as the government *actively* worked to destroy Christians. (Caesar Nero blamed Christians for burning Rome)

“If the Tiber rises too high for the walls, or the Nile too low for the fields, if the heavens do not open, or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, instantly the howl is, ‘The Christians to the lion!’”

— Tertullian, ~200 A.D.

# The Church in the Roman Empire

- The Book of Romans was written in the mid-50s A.D.
  - Society mocked Christians.
  - Government sometimes protected; other times didn't.
  - Scattered persecutions, not organized.
- First Peter was written in the mid-60s A.D.
  - Organized persecution.
  - “Fiery trials” indicates martyrdom (1 Pet 4:12).

# The Church in the Roman Empire

- Romans 13:1-7 & 1 Peter 2:13-17
  - Key texts on responding to a wayward government.
  - Thrust of both passages: Submit
  - All else in these passages modifies this main verb.
- Government opposed the early church. Yet, the apostles urged not to repay evil with evil.
  - Submission has the idea of going with the flow of things.
  - Submission is the normal Christian life.

# Romans 13:1-7

<sup>1</sup> Let 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.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

<sup>3</sup> For 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,

## Romans 13:1-7

<sup>4</sup> for 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.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

<sup>6</sup> For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.



# Romans 13:1-7

<sup>7</sup> Pay 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.

- Why submit to secular authority? Two reasons...

The first is theological: God establishes all authority.

The second is practical: Submission doesn't provoke.

# Romans 13:1-7

“Be Subject” (v. 1a)

**WHY?**

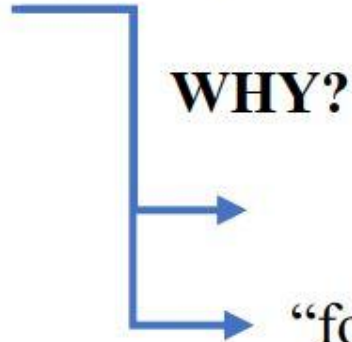
“for there is no authority except from God” (v. 1b)

*Theological*

- God gives authority to secular, pagan, even evil men.
- Submit not because the leader is honorable or deserving.
- Submit because God is sovereign... *and I trust Him.*

# Romans 13:1-7

“Be Subject” (v. 1a)



“for rulers are not a terror to good conduct” (v. 3a)

*Practical*

- Paul encourages us not to view government as an enemy who is always out to get us.
- Why not? Because of the general principle that “rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.”

# Romans 13:1-7

*Government officials were...*

“Instituted by God”

“Appointed”

“God’s servants for your good”

“Ministers of God”

“Avengers who carry out God’s wrath”

- Roman officials grew anti-Christian, and yet Paul still believed their authority was from God and overall good.
- *Nero... God’s servant for my good!?* Yes.  
Ex: King of Assyria, “rod of My anger” (Isaiah 10:5-6).

“It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the history of the interpretation of Romans 13:1-7 is the history of attempts to avoid what seems to be its plain meaning”  
— Douglas Moo.

- Specific application that Paul gives...  
Submission → Pay your taxes (13:7).

# 1 Peter 2:13-17

<sup>13</sup> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

<sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

<sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

# 1 Peter 2:13-17

<sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

<sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- Why submit? “for this is the will of God” (2:15a)
- What might result? “put to silence the ignorance of foolish people” (2:15b)

# 1 Peter 2:13-17

“Be Subject” (v. 13)

**WHY?**

→ “for this is the will of God” (v. 15a)

**WHAT MIGHT RESULT?**

→ “you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people” (v. 15b)

- Motivation of submission → “for the Lord’s sake”
- Submission involves “doing good”  
...seeks to bless leaders who are, at times, not worthy.



# 1 Peter 2:13-17

- What might result?

“silence the ignorance of foolish people.”

“muzzles” the slander against us.

“Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation”  
— 1 Peter 2:12.

- Submission may convict and lead to someone’s salvation

# Submission to Authorities

The application given by the apostles...

- Paul → Pay your taxes.
- Peter → Honor the emperor.

Nero seemed to tax the people unfairly, but Paul said it doesn't matter → *Pay your taxes.*

Nero's policies against the church led to the deaths of Peter and Paul, but regardless → *Show honor.*

# Government: God's Tool

“Government is more than a nuisance to be put up with; it is an institution established by God to accomplish some of His purposes on earth”

— Douglas Moo.

*Do I believe that God is sovereign to do as He pleases?*

*Will I trust God and submit to the authorities He has established in my life?*

# Putting it into Practice

See curriculum, page 6.

- I encouraged you to circle two lawmakers last week to commit to praying.
- Make contact with those two lawmakers this week. Send a card or letter, leave a message w/staff person, or even visit in person, schedule a time to meet.
- Share you are praying for him or her on behalf of our church, Southern View Chapel.