

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 19TH-20TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

HONOR LEADERSHIP (ROMANS 13:1-7)

SUBMIT YOURSELF OR BE JUDGED

God has ordered human history to operate according to a **system of covenants**. Husbands as the head of their **wives**, parents as the head of their **children**, elders as the head of their **congregations**, and the **government** as the head of its **citizens**. **These heads are not to be dictatorial or to "lord over" those whom God has placed under their authority.**

- **These headships are to exercise leadership for the good of those who submit to their legitimate authority.** Since God has placed governmental rulers over us, we should submit to the governing authorities, recognizing them as God's agents. Still, Paul offers a radical statement in saying that our **governments stand under another authority – God.**
- Paul's statement that even governments are under God's authority, **applies to individuals and governments equally. The one who resists the authority of God**, whether that's a person rebelling against the government or the government rebelling against God, **is opposing God's command and will bring judgment on themselves.**
- Here's a definition and summary of the role of civil government in verse 3: **resist evil and promote good. The issue is defining evil and good. Much of the time**, what the government promotes as good **aligns with the Bible**. But **when it doesn't, we must do what is good before God and trust Him with the results.**

LET GOD BE GOD

Twice in verse 4 Paul calls the governing authorities God's servants, which reinforces their role. **But whenever God is removed from government**, a vacuum is created in which government seeks to be God and when this happens, **we must allow God to judge those He put into place.**

- Avoiding punishment is always a good motivation for submitting to an authority, **but for a believer a higher motivation to submit to authority is a clear conscience.** Paul speaks of this in verse 5. **Even with having a clear conscience**, Paul says in 1 Cor. 4:4 – "it still does not make me innocent" the Lord still judges me.

GIVING HONOR

Paul closes this section on government by **intentionally repeating the words of Jesus**. Paul commands us: **Pay taxes to those you owe taxes and give honor to those you owe honor.** Jesus said, "Give then to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (**Matt. 22:21**).

- We owe government leaders our taxes and we owe them our earthly honor. **But Paul and Jesus both reminded us that we must never give them our hearts. They cannot have our ultimate allegiance**, since we are created in the image of God and not in the image of government leaders. **God is above all and He deserves all the honor.**

LOVE EACH OTHER (ROMANS 13:8-10)

LOVE IS JUST THAT SERIOUS

All our debts should be repaid, all but one. **The debt that can never be fully paid is our debt to love one another.** **Biblical love**, as Paul showed in chapter 12, is the decision to compassionately and righteously seek the benefit and well-being of another. We owe that to others because that kind of love **is the underlying factor in God's commandments.**

- Therefore Paul, again echoing Jesus, calls **the command to love your neighbor as yourself... the fulfillment of the law.** Jesus put it this way: **"all the Law and Prophets depend" on two commands:** (1) love God with all of your heart, soul, and mind; (2) love your neighbor as yourself (**Matt. 22:37**).

PLEASING GOD (ROMANS 13:11-14)

THE TIME IS NOW

We must live in light of Jesus's return, which is nearer than when we first believed. Doing so means we wake up from sleep: the **spiritual tiredness that plagues so many people in our churches.** It's time to wake up and experience salvation. **A salvation that spares us from the consequences of our sins.**

- **Many Christians trust God enough to take them to heaven, but not enough to guide their daily lives. Peoples' lives look like the darkness around them.** Paul reminds us that when Jesus returns, **both the darkness and the deeds of darkness will be judged without mercy.** So, stop being spiritually asleep, **wake up, and put on the armor of light.**

"CHURCH" CLOTHES

We put on the armor of light in two ways – one positive and one negative. Positively, we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, **living by faith in Him, studying His Word, and seeking to reflect Him in our actions.** Negatively, **we don't make plans to gratify the desires of the flesh, which could counteract being clothed in Christ.**

- Imagine you just put on your best suit or dress for church. As you're walking to church, you notice a shortcut – but it's through a back alley and involves climbing through two dumpsters. **Do you take the route? No! That dirty environment would mess up your good church clothes. Put on the purity of Christ and don't climb through dumpsters of sin.**

TAKING INVENTORY...

There is a cost to following Jesus!

- Humble ourselves, acknowledge God's word and submit to it. Let's check our hearts.
- No one said submission was easy.
- Are we living a life that honors God?