

## Intro

- ~ We look at our political climate and state of the union and it's disturbing and frustrating
- ~ While we're frustrated with the direction of our country it's important we look to the word for direction and understanding in how to think about what we see
- ~ As Christians we're never excused from biblical living – regardless of what takes place around us
- ~ Paul and Peter ever excused the Christians from biblical living even during persecution
- ~ So, for our current situation we have Romans 13 to give us God's mind

## Outline

- 1 Show Honor (v1-7)
- 2 Show Love (v8-10)
- 3 Show Up (v11,12)
- 4 Show Christ (v12-14)

## Text

- 1 Show Honor (v1-7)
  - ~ Be subject = obey
  - ~ Paul teaches us to honor those in authority
  - ~ *Titus 3:1,2 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, 2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*
  - ~ *1 Peter 2:13-15 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*
  - ~ We must remember that Paul and Peter knew what it was to live under the rule of evil kings
  - ~ They were persecuted, beaten, imprisoned for preaching Christ yet they tell us to submit to authorities
  - ~ Paul is writing to the church in Rome
  - ~ We may not respect or like the person but we must respect the office they hold
  - ~ The law was put into place and established by God for the protection of the people
  - ~ Paul says in the text here they are the minister of God to you for good
  - ~ Now our problem comes in when we ask how were to do this when we those in authority not be good and not care for the people their supposed to be looking out for and protecting
  - ~ Though there is an abuse of power we must remember that Paul and Peter lived under much more difficult circumstances under which we live and they both tell us to honor them
  - ~ "We know, for instance, in the Book of Acts that frequently, as Gibbon had it, the tribunal of the pagan magistrate was often the safest refuge against the fury of the Jewish mob. Time and again we see Paul receiving protection at the hands of impartial Roman justice. But the interesting and the significant thing is that many years, and even centuries later, when persecution had begun to rage and Christians were regarded as outlaws, the Christian leaders were saying exactly the same thing." Barclay
  - ~ Justin Martyr <100-165> (Apology 1: 17) writes, "Everywhere, we, more readily than all men, endeavour to pay to those appointed by you the taxes, both ordinary and extraordinary, as we have been taught by Jesus. We worship only God, but in other things we will gladly serve you, acknowledging you as kings and rulers of men, and praying that, with your kingly power, you may be found to possess also sound judgment."
  - ~ Athenagoras <133-190>, pleading for peace for the Christians, writes (chapter 37): "We deserve favour because we pray for your government, that you may, as is most equitable, receive the kingdom, son from father, and that your empire may receive increase and addition, until all men become subject to your sway."
  - ~ Tertullian <155-240> (Apology 30) writes at length: "We offer prayer for the safety of our princes to the eternal, the true, the living God, whose favour, beyond all other things, they must themselves desire.... Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection for the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest--whatever, as man or Caesar, an emperor would wish." He goes on to say that the Christian cannot but look up to the emperor because he "is called by our Lord to his office." And he ends by saying that "Caesar is more ours than yours because our God appointed him."

~ Arnobius (4: 36) declares that in the Christian gatherings "peace and pardon are asked for all in authority."

~ The official teaching of the Christian Church that obedience must be given to, and prayers made for, the civil power, even when the wielder of that civil power was a Nero.

~ In Paul's case there was one immediate cause of his stressing of civil obedience. The Jews were notoriously rebellious. Palestine, especially Galilee, was constantly seething with insurrection. Above all there were the Zealots; they were convinced that there was no king for the Jews but God; and that no tribute must be paid to anyone except to God. Nor were they content with anything like a passive resistance. They believed that God would not be helping them unless they embarked on violent action to help themselves. Their aim was to make any civil government impossible. They were known as the dagger-bearers. They were fanatical nationalists sworn to terrorist methods. Not only did they use terrorism towards the Roman government; they also wrecked the houses and burned the crops and assassinated the families of their own fellow-Jews who paid tribute to the Roman government.

~ While our current condition is difficult God's people throughout history have had it much worse.

- For the Jews in Egypt things got worse and they became slaves when there arose another Pharaoh who knew not Joseph
- God ordained the captivities of his people at the hands of the Assyrians (Northern Kingdom) and the Babylonians (Southern Kingdom)
- Nebuchadnezzar put Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the fiery furnace (Dan 3)
- Daniel was thrown into the lions den (Dan 6)
- Jeremiah on several occasions was thrown into a pit
- Herod murdered all the male boys under 2 years old in (Matt 2)
- John the Baptist was beheaded for rebuking Herod and Herodias
- The apostle John was sentenced to the island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian commanded that the apostle John be boiled to death in oil
- Under Nero Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down
- It's believed Andrew was crucified in Greece
- It's believed Thomas was pierced with spears by four soldiers
- Philip was arrested and cruelly put to death
- It's believed Bartholomew was martyred for the gospel
- Josephus says James was stoned and clubbed to death

~ We get another sense of Paul's respect for authority in Acts 23:1-5

*And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. 3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*

~ We have freedom to voice our disagreement with politicians by contacting our representatives, gathering for peaceful protest

~ What we have to be careful of is when we disobey. When we see the early church and Paul disobeying authorities is when those authorities ingrain on their right to obey God and his word

~ Paul preached the word everywhere he went and it always got him into trouble

~ *1 Tim 2:1,2 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

~ Instead of complaining we should be praying for politicians and those in charge

~ If we would pray more it may help our attitude

~ Paul said to do this for conscience sake

~ For conscience sake means we can hold our life up to the word of God and be without reproach

~ Paul said to Agrippa he had lived in all good conscience before God

~ God has used men throughout history to be an instrument of blessing or discipline to his people (Nebuchadnezzar was discipline and Cyrus of blessing)

~ *Ps 75:7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

## 2 Show Love (v8-10)

- ~ The only thing we owe to another person is love
- ~ Love is what this world needs
- 1 obeys the word of God
- 2 works no ill to his neighbor
- ~ All the law is fulfilled in loving God first and your neighbor as yourself
- ~ Love is the unifier of people
- ~ Love is a fruit of the spirit
- ~ Jesus said men will know your my disciples if you love one another (Jn 13:35)

## 3 Show Up (v11,12)

- ~ Notice Paul's reference of time
  1. It's high time to awake out of sleep
  2. The night is far spent
  3. The day is at hand
- ~ The idea here is, "we're on borrowed time"
- ~ Paul gives the same thought in *Eph 5:14-16, Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*
- ~ When we're asleep we don't know what's going on around us
- ~ But Paul isn't speaking about physical sleep but about spiritually sleeping
- ~ He's telling the church in Rome and Ephesus to spiritually wake up
- ~ Perhaps one of the reasons we see our United States of America a spiritual mess is because of the body of Christ not obeying the bible
- ~ The church hasn't done a good job through the years. Preachers haven't held to accurately handling the word, the believers haven't live the word
- ~ Lest we start looking around and blaming the media and social media we need to look first at ourselves and ask have I obeyed all the word of God?
- ~ Paul says the time of Christ's coming is nearer than it's ever been
- ~ In light of Christ's coming show honor to authority, show love to all men and show up spiritually

## 4 Show Christ (v12-14)

- ~ We can show Christ by casting off the works of darkness and putting on the 1) armor of light and 2) Christ
- ~ There's something we put off – works of darkness
- ~ There's three "Let us's"
  1. Cast off works of darkness
  2. Walk honestly
  3. Put on Christ
- ~ If we put on Christ we'll make no provision (forethought or providential care for) for the flesh
- ~ The way we don't make a provision for the flesh in these days are to
  1. Show honor
  2. Show love
  3. Show up
  4. Show Christ

## Conclusion

- ~ While we can be challenged, frustrated and disturbed we can also be biblical and trust in the providence of God
- ~ We must increase our intensity for Christ and his word lest we fall asleep spiritually
- ~ These opportunities we have get meet as a church we must take advantage of because we don't know what the future holds with national level government being totally democrat
- ~ Take advantage of the freedoms we have (maybe they'll change and maybe they won't)