

Pray for Kings - Part 4

by Chip Brogden

Christians are called to submit to secular authority, pray for those in authority, live godly, honest lives, obey the laws of the land, and pay taxes, as they recognize that secular authority is to be submitted to God.

Duration: 19:20

Scripture: 1 Peter 2:13

Topics: "Civil Obedience", "Submission To Authority"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of submitting to secular authority as ordered by God, even in challenging circumstances like dictatorships or oppressive governments. It discusses the responsibilities of Christians towards secular authority, including praying for leaders, living godly lives, obeying laws, and paying taxes. The sermon also highlights the concept that secular authority should be submitted to God, as ultimately all authority is accountable to Him.

Transcript

Submission to secular authority is ordered by God in Romans chapter 13. Romans 13 1 says, let every soul be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Somebody will say, well what about Hitler? We're going to deal with Hitler.

We're going to deal with dictatorships. It's under a section titled, When Things Go Wrong. When things go wrong, because things are going to go wrong.

I'm giving you God's purpose. I'm giving you God's intention, God's will. Now when things go off the tracks, when government gets out of control, and when you have something like Nazi Germany, or when you have something like any number of dictatorships in the world, or even when you have governments that are maybe not actively persecuting Christians, but maybe they are passively allowing Christians to be persecuted, when you have government that goes off the tracks, there's ways and means of dealing with that, spiritually speaking, and that's what we're going to deal with.

But right now, I just want to give you what God's Word says, so that we can recognize what it means when a government goes off the tracks, so that you and I can cooperate, not just as good citizens with God's purpose for the nations, but we can cooperate as citizens of heaven for God's kingdom and for his purpose in the nations. So submission to secular authority is ordered by God, Romans 13 1 and 2, that we

just read. The authorities that exist are appointed by God, therefore whoever resists the authority, resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves, and it goes on to talk about the responsibility of government to keep law and order, to punish those who do wrong.

So I want to share with you now four responsibilities of Christians with respect to secular authority. How are you and I to live and relate to secular authority? You say, well, I'm only accountable to the Lord Jesus. Spiritually speaking, you're absolutely correct, but given reason, by reason of the fact that you live in the world, Scripture says you are also to be submitted to secular authority, to the government, to its leadership, because God has appointed and God has established that.

Remember, we established secular authority was instituted by God. The governments of this world, the nations of this world, their times, their boundaries, their leaders are appointed by God. Therefore Paul concludes that we are to be subject to these governing authorities, and if there is no authority except what comes from God, then the authorities that exist are appointed by God, and therefore whoever resists the authority, resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

What he's trying to get across, I believe, is that we need to cooperate with secular authority to the extent possible. Again, there's going to be exceptions to the rule, we're going to deal with that, but the general rule of thumb is if you're living a godly life, an honest life, you're not breaking the law, the government should leave you alone, and ideally the government will not want to bother you. Again, that's ideally, correct? But you and I know, we know that there are nations in this world that are actively persecuting Christians, where Christians are tortured for their faith, where they're being imprisoned, where they're being persecuted, where their families are being persecuted and attacked for their faith.

So we're going to deal with those exceptions, but the ideal and God's will and God's purpose and his original intention is that we all be submitted to secular authority with regard to the nation, the government that we live in. So if you are a citizen of South Africa, you should be submitted to the government of South Africa insofar as your citizenry on earth is concerned. As a citizen of the United States, I'm subject to the laws of the United States.

So this is important, and there's four ways for responsibilities of Christians with respect to secular authority. Number one, we've already seen to pray for those that are in authority. As Christians, you and I have the unique privilege that we can pray because we believe that God is the highest authority, and if we believe that God appointed secular authority and we have some kind of an issue with the secular authority, then the first thing we should do is go to the higher authority.

Appeal, pray, intercede, supplicate to the higher authority. Scripture calls him the ruler of the kings of the earth. So we pray for kings and for all those who are in authority that they would be saved and that they would come to the full knowledge of the truth, but in so far as you and I live a godly, quiet life, honest, obeying the law, not causing any problems, we want the government to leave us alone, right? So four responsibilities we have is number one, pray for kings.

Number two, live godly, honest lives. You can't break the law and then say, I don't want the government to tell me what to do. So we live godly, honest lives before God, and if you obey the laws of God, then you wouldn't be doing anything illegal to the laws of man, theoretically.

Now again, you've got these situations in China and Saudi Arabia where if you try to live as a Christian, then you're going to be persecuted, so we'll deal with those aberrations later on, but in those nations

where that's not the case, where you are not being persecuted for your faith, where the government is not trying to silence you or imprison you or punish you for your belief in Jesus, first count yourself blessed because not every believer in the world has that same privilege and that same freedom that you and I enjoy. So our responsibility is to pray for kings, number one. Number two, live godly, honest lives, not only towards the Lord but towards others, and that brings me to the third, which is obey the laws of the land.

Obey the laws of the land. You won't have anything to fear from a legitimate government if you obey the laws of the land. Again, we're going to deal with what happens when those laws are contrary to conscience or contrary to God's laws.

I'm telling you what Scripture says as the ideal, but remember, these instructions were being given to people that were occupied by a foreign power, so if they are applicable in those situations, how much more would they be applicable to you and I living in nations where we do have freedom, we do have liberty. It's just an interesting comparison, but 1st Peter chapter 2, 1st Peter 2, 1st Peter 2, beginning in verse 13, says, therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. So when I'm submitted to secular authority and when I'm obeying the laws of the land, when I'm driving the speed limit and keeping insurance on my car because it's required, and when I file my taxes and when I do the different things that the government pass when they pass laws and I obey those laws, it's not just that I'm obeying the government, I'm obeying the Lord because the Lord says be submitted to that government.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme or to governors as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bond servants of God. So what Peter and what Paul is trying to do is to say as Christians we should live above reproach.

There should not be anything that we would be accused of with respect to obeying the laws of the land or with respect to rebelling or being revolutionaries or anarchists, but that there would be nothing to accuse us of. So that if we are accused of something, the only thing they can accuse us of is that we are Christians. They can accuse us of our faith, but they can't accuse us that this guy broke the law or this lady here, you know, she got drunk and she drove.

So that's a bad witness, that's a bad testimony with respect to breaking the laws of the land, and for that reason Peter says submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. Now you say well I don't know if I agree with the law. Then change it.

If you live in a country that you don't like the law, change it. If you don't have the type of government or the type of system that allows you to change the laws, then you have to go along with it whether you like it or not to a certain extent. We'll talk about that exception here in just a minute.

I know you're itching to get to that exception. Well what about this? What about this? But you've got to get the foundational principles of what God has established. So pray for kings as citizens of this earth.

We've talked about your citizenship that's in heaven, and that's important, but we are also citizens of the earth, citizens of each individual nation, and why does this matter? Because I believe God has us here to be a light to the world, as a light to the nations, and so we've got to learn how to be in the world but not of the world, and I'm teaching that right now, how to be in the world, how to be in the the nations of this world, how to be amongst the kings and the presidents and the prime ministers and the governments and the

secular authorities of this world and be a light where there is so much darkness, and to be a positive witness for Christ, no matter what your government, no matter what nation you come from, no matter what your political belief system is, I'm talking about our obligation, our duties, our responsibilities as citizens of heaven to the governments of this earth, as citizens, dual citizens of both heaven and earth. Pray for kings, live godly, honest lives, obey the laws of the land, those kind of go together, and here's the other one, some might not like to hear it, pay your taxes, you got to pay your taxes. I mean nothing brings more swift retribution from the government than to not pay your taxes.

Romans 13, see I think there's some people that they get this idea in their head that they're too spiritual to obey the laws of the land, and you're not too spiritual. You're unspiritual if you're not submitted to the government, if you're not submitted to the laws of the land, to be a law-abiding citizen of whatever nation you hail from. If you're not obeying the laws of land, if you're not submitted to the secular authority, how will you learn to be submitted to the spiritual authority? If you don't listen to secular leadership, how will you learn to obey spiritual leadership? So pay your taxes.

Romans 13, 6 says for because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers, talking about the government, the representatives of secular authority, they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing, render therefore to all their due, taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. So those are four responsibilities of Christians with respect to secular authority. Well, you say, I don't know, that's all going one way.

No, it's not, because right after this, I want to talk about secular authority is to be submitted to God. Secular authority is to be submitted to God, and we're going to talk about the responsibility that the government has. See, I believe submission works both ways.

You are submitted, for example, you are submitted to spiritual leadership, so long as that spiritual leadership is submitted to the Lord. If that spiritual leadership is not submitted to Christ, you're under no obligation to be submitted to that spiritual leadership, and in the same way, you are under the authority of Scripture to be submitted to secular authority, to secular leadership, but you have to understand that secular authority is also to be submitted to God. It doesn't matter if they're a Christian nation or not, it doesn't matter if they believe in God or not, or if they are an atheist state, it doesn't make any difference.

Secular authority is to be and is to conduct itself in submission and reverence to God. Now one way or the other, it's going to happen, but you may be thinking, what nation really conducts its affairs in the fear of God, and the answer is, not many, if any. But that's addressed in Psalm chapter 2, if you would turn over there please, I want to show this to you.

Psalm chapter 2, it says, Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bonds in pieces, and cast away their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then he shall speak to them in his wrath, and distress them in his deep displeasure. Yet I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said to me.

You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron.

You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel. Now here's the word to secular authority that doesn't want to be submitted to God. Now therefore be wise, O kings.

Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all those who put their trust in him. So I can't point to a nation today where you can say, oh that's a Christian nation, that's a Christian government, but when the Lord Jesus returns and establishes his kingdom and his earthly reign over the nations of this world, then all these kings and all these secular authorities will be submitted to him. In the meantime, they are supposed to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the fact that God established them with a responsibility to the people.

And so this is where the correction is going to come in. You say here's the standard, here's what God intended. Again, God's will for the nations, God's will for government.

Then you see what's actually happening, which is not God's will at all, but you have to understand what his will is, what his purpose is, so that you can see up we've deviated, we've gotten off track from God's purpose, and now we can understand what God is trying to do when he brings correction, when he brings adjustment. But if you don't know the ideal, you don't know the purpose, you don't have the vision, then you don't know when you're off track. You've been listening to Cross With, featuring the teaching ministry of Jeff Brogdon.

We hope you enjoyed today's broadcast and found it challenging and encouraging. If you'd like to find out more about the School of Christ and how to get additional teachings, audio recordings, books, and other Christ centered resources to help you grow spiritually, visit us online at www.theschoolofchrist.org

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