

Romans: Christians and Government

(Romans 13)

Introduction:

1. Paul has spent a great deal of time talking in deep theological terms about the justification that has been offered to all through Christ.
2. As Paul begins to wrap up his letter to the Romans, he turns his focus from theological concepts to practical actions.
 1. Chapter 12 — You're a Christian; act like one. You are obligated to the right by God, your brethren, and your enemies.
 2. Chapter 13 — How should a Christian act with reference to the government?

I. Are things worse now than before?

- A. We certainly live in sinful times.
 1. Society seems to have lost its collective mind.
 2. Our leaders (regardless of whom you voted for) advocate and participate in ungodliness.
- B. Some historical perspective:
 1. Herod the Great
 - a) "It is better to be Herod's pig than his own son" — Allegedly Caesar Augustus.
 - (1) He had 3 of his sons killed because of his paranoia.
 - (2) He perpetrated the massacre of the innocents, recorded in Matthew
 2. Caligula
 - a) The First Roman emperor demanded worship while living.
 - (1) He ordered a statue of himself to be placed in the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - b) During a games, they ran out of prisoners to kill wild animals, and he ordered an entire section of spectators to be thrown into the ring.
 - c) He committed incest with many of his sisters and had an affair with his brother-in-law.
 3. Nero
 - a) He murdered his mother
 - b) He kicked his pregnant wife to death
 - c) He likely caused the great Fire of Rome and blamed it on Christians.
 - d) He murdered Peter and Paul.
 4. Tax burdens on the Jews
 - a) Temple Tax — about 2 days wages
 - b) Tithing — 10%
 - c) Roman land tax — 10%
 - d) "Head tax" — one days wage for everyone in your family
 - e) Customs tax — 5%
 - f) Misc. taxes — sales tax, tolls, road taxes, city taxes
 - g) Tax Extortion
- C. Is it surprising what Jesus says in Mark 12:17?

II. How should Christians respond?

- A. (Romans 13:1-7)
- B. Submission?
 - 1. Paul is telling Roman Christians to submit to the authority of Nero.
 - a) A Homicidal, sexually deviant, self-worshipper.
 - 2. This word (Hupo-tasso) is in the “middle” voice. It is something you do to yourself.
 - 3. To “resist” (Anti-Tasso) is to resist God.
- C. Ministers of God?
 - 1. A Minister is a servant. What is the service that governments are rendering?
 - a) (Jer 27:6; Isa 45:1)
 - 2. God is a God Of Justice. Governments are to facilitate justice.
 - a) Do governments do this perfectly?
- D. Live righteously
 - 1. Respecting the authority of government.
 - a) Even when it is something you may not like.
- E. Is Paul advocating full government support?
 - 1. Our primary obligation is to God and his law.
 - 2. Paul was someone who took a stand for what was right
 - a) (Acts 26:28) — Agrippa

III. How do we handle government?

- A. Are our allegiances toward God or political parties?
 - 1. Neither political party is free from sinful positions. No political figure is free from sin.
 - a) John DeBerry and Shelia Butt are godly Christians in government, but they are not our salvation.
- B. Are we Americans first or Christians First?
 - 1. Which would you list first if you were to describe yourself?
 - 2. The Church existed before America, and it will exist after America. There are faithful Christians throughout the world that are just as significant as we are.

IV. Lead By Love.

- A. Owe nothing, but Love.
 - 1. What is “Love”
 - a) It is an action, not simply a feeling.
 - 2. If we practice love, we will be fulfilling the law of God.
 - a) Love for God — leads to righteousness
 - b) Love for brother — leads to encouragement
 - c) Love of enemy — wakes them up to their sin.
- B. Time is running out
 - 1. Tomorrow is not guaranteed
 - a) (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11)
 - 2. Let’s use the time we are given wisely.