

Romans 13:1-7

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[0 : 00] I've heard of your Bibles through Romans 13. I'm going to apologize right now because I have some sinus stuff going on.

! It's really messed my throat up. So the college students who heard me on Thursday night, they're probably like, Oh no, listening to this for another hour. So I apologize, but I trust that God will work despite of my voice.

But just join me in prayer real fast. Father, I'm just thankful to be with your people this morning. Thank you for your word and how it ministers to our souls.

Show us how important it is that we learn how to relate to our authorities in a manner that glorifies you. And Lord, this is written for our good and you have great purpose and reason, Lord.

So help me just be able to communicate what's true. And Lord, what's not really my own opinion, Lord, but just to focus on what your word says.

[1 : 05] And for you to receive the glory this morning. In Christ's name, amen. Well, we're in Romans 13 now. And for those of you who have been following along in Romans, these latter chapters of Romans are focused mainly toward the practical outworking of the gospel in our lives.

He spent a huge number of chapters covering biblical doctrine on salvation, the gospel, the sinfulness of man, the grace of God, justification by faith in Christ.

And now, like in response to that, how does that look like in our lives? And so that's kind of where we're going today. It's where we were last week. We talked about letting love be genuine and the outworking of love in our lives to others.

And now we come to the topic of government. But before we get going, I just want to say that my goal this morning is not to give a situational ethics course on government.

Like if this happens, how do we respond in any little small particular way? But more or less just about the overall biblical teaching about what government is. We do have like more specifics about that in ethics and how we respond when government does this or government does that.

[2 : 28] Those kind of ideas, but really not the goal this morning. And also to remember that like government is going to be a gift to us.

It is a gift from the Lord. We're going to look at that this morning. But I only have two questions this morning to kind of split this text up, verses 1 through 7.

But underneath those, we have some sub points, if you want to call them that, as answering those questions. But just getting into it, the first question is, what is the divine purpose of government?

What is the divine purpose of government? And we see this in verses 1 through 4. Let every person be subject to governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

[3 : 35] When you have no fear of the one who is in authority, then do what is good, and you will receive his approval. 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. So, verses 1 through 4 kind of give us a place to kind of say this is what God's divine purpose for government is.

So, the little sub points under this. The first one, the sub point under this is government is by divine decree. And we see this in verse 1.

No authority except from God. And those that exist have been instituted by God. So, all human governments, regardless of their form, have been ordained by God.

And he's ordained them ultimately for the good of all societies. And to protect them, to serve their good. And, but they're all, regardless of what government in history, ones today, ones that will be eventually.

[4 : 46] We need to understand that like all of them, regardless of how evil they may be, are still under the sovereign control of God. Still under the providence of God. And he uses them for his own means.

Even, it's kind of the mystery of how God's sovereignty works. He even allows the actions of evil men to play right into his plan every time.

And learning that whatever we intend for evil, God intends for good. And there's nothing that we can do. The cross being the ultimate example of that. When evil men crucified the Son of God, it actually played into God's plan in destroying evil.

And so like God has a plan A, there's no plan B. He's working it all out. And he uses governments to achieve that. And turning the book of Daniel real fast.

I'm just going to show you two passages in Daniel. But Daniel was an amazing book to go to in relation to how we should live in government. And he himself saw many kingdoms come and go.

[5 : 55] Many empires rise and fall in his own life. And even foresaw the future. But Daniel chapter 2, go there first. Daniel chapter 2 verse 20.

So we're going to learn here that God sovereignly works in and through both good and evil governments to accomplish his purposes.

Things don't just happen. So Daniel 2 verse 20. Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.

He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and setups kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals the deep and hidden things.

He knows what is in the darkness and the light that dwells with him. So, one example. We'll flip over just two chapters to Daniel 4 real fast.

[6 : 54] And this is a confession of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. And who himself was a very powerful ruler over men.

And he had great wealth and great power. And God ended up humbling him through a series of events. And to kind of show him that he really didn't have any power in and of himself.

That it was all granted by God. And so Nebuchadnezzar, in verse 34, if you go to verse 34, says, At the end of the days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes to heaven.

And my reason returned to me. And I blessed the Most High and praised and honored him who lives forever. For his dominion is an everlasting dominion. And his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. And he does according to his will among the hosts of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And no one can stay his hand or say to him, What have you done?

[8 : 00] And that's a picture of, like, unrivaled sovereignty. God himself, you know, we talk about the kingdom of God. And we tend to think as Westerners, as Americans, that democracy is the best form of government on the planet.

That can be argued in a lot of ways. I would say that it's probably one of the best in the broken, sinful world we live in. But the majority can be wrong, as we've learned throughout history and other things.

But the kingdom of God, not our democracy, is a monarchy. But not even just a monarchy, but an absolute monarchy, where he rules over all things.

And we would have reason to fear if he was an unjust and harsh and not a good God. But he's perfect in all his ways. So regardless of those who are in governing positions today and in the past, God has used them for his own purposes to play right into what his ultimate plan is.

Both good and evil governments. And there's a verse in Proverbs 21 that you can just write down if you don't want to turn there. Proverbs 21, verse 1. It says, The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord.

[9 : 19] And he turns it wherever he will. This idea that God even can control the kings of the earth to accomplish what he wants. So, but here's what we see in Scripture.

God can grant good authorities as a blessing to people. But he also can grant and allow evil wars to be over people as a means of judgment. And an example of this is when both Israel and Judah, the

northern, southern kingdoms that were split, were in rebellion against God and had a lot of sinful things going on.

And God constantly kept calling them back to repentance. It's like, repent, come back, do not do this, or I'll have to judge you. And they continued to resist God. And so eventually God sent prophets to them.

One of them he sent was Amos. Turn to Amos chapter 2. I only have a few places for you to look this morning. But look at Amos chapter 2.

But God called out Israel and Judah for a lot of things. Social injustice, corruption like in the judicial system kind of thing, gluttonous living, and religious hypocrisy.

[10:38] It sounds a lot like where our country could be going in a lot of ways. And in a lot of ways it's already arrived. So this is what happened.

God sent Amos to the northern kingdom of Israel to call them back and basically to say God's done with you guys.

Like he's had it. Like you guys have been in rebellion for far too long and you've ignored all his calls to repent. And this is what he says. Look at verse 4, chapter 2.

Thus says the Lord, For three transgressions of Judah and for four, I will not revoke the punishment because they have rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept the statutes, but their lives have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked.

So I will send fire upon Judah and devour the strongholds of Jerusalem. And this is God saying, my response to this is going to be judgment, discipline.

[11:46] And flip over to chapter 3 real fast in Amos. I'll read just one verse out of this. But we have to understand that this is the same God who's alive and at work today.

The God of the Old Testament was not a different God than we have today. And when some calamity happens, regardless of whatever it is, when some tragedy happens in the government or in a nation, it's not just randomly happening.

God is at work. He is the one who's allowing things to happen and bringing them about himself as a means to call people to repentance, to show them that their life is fleeting and they need to repent and believe the gospel, which was Jesus' response to what people asked him in the gospels.

So look at verse, sorry, look at verse 6, I believe. Yeah, verse 6. It says, Is a trumpet blown in a city and the people were not afraid?

Does disaster come to a city unless the Lord has done it? You know, and so we see that God even judges nations by allowing them to be ruled over wicked men.

[13:03] And in this case, it was Assyria. God had like protected Israel from Assyria and like said, you know, come back to me, repent. And they refused. It was like blatantly refused them, but acted like they still belonged to them, like gave God a lot of lip service, but their hearts were far from him.

So what he did to judge them and to discipline them was to remove his hand of protection and to allow Assyria to pretty much destroy the northern kingdom of Israel.

And so that's just an example, an example of how God uses even evil men to accomplish his purpose. And so that's sub-point number one is that government is under divine decree.

So the second sub-point is that government is a restraint on the depravity of man or the sinfulness of man. Government is a divine restraint on the depravity of man.

I'm going to go back to Romans 13 again. Back to Romans 13, look at verse 2. It says, Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

[14:28] For the rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? And then jump over to verse 4, the second part of verse 4.

But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain, for he is a servant of God, an avenger, who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

So we've got to understand that, you know, if there's anything that really is, that we don't really need to prove or really search for much evidence, it's so funny that, like when you're sharing the gospel with somebody, that, like they often have a hard time understanding this, when there's so much evidence of this surrounding us every day.

But we don't need a lot of evidence to prove that we live in like a very corrupt world, very fallen, very broken, very sinful world. And government is a divine restraint against the sinfulness of man.

Martin Luther said, government is a sign of divine grace, of the mercy of God, who has no pleasure in murdering, killing, and strangling. If God left all things to which they would, as he has among other nations without good government, we should quickly dispatch one another out of this world. [15:48] And remember that government was not an institution in the pre-fall sinless world. You know that? Like you remember the story. There was no need for it.

If man was inherently good, selfless, humble, always seeking the good of his fellow man, we wouldn't really need much government at all. But this is not the case. Humans are not that way. We're all the exact opposite. We're we have original sin, we are selfish, and we always look out for number one. And that's not a good combination for people living in harmony with one another.

So government is a restraint on the rebellion of man. And without which we would have no peace, no stability, chaos, anarchy would pretty much rule.

And we can see that in different nations throughout the world where there's no real stable government and how people just kind of do whatever they want and no one's safe, there's no peace and protection for people at all.

[16:54] And even little moments, little windows, places that we can look in in our own country when we see like a national, like a disaster hit, like Katrina, and they would say that so many people were just running around rampant, stealing things, shooting at helicopters flying by, where there's not like a lot of law enforcement.

People left to their own devices will always go the other way. And chaos and anarchy would be the result. And as someone who really loves to study empires of the past, like I can tell you like that's just true, like it's the same story over and over.

And so, you might not agree with this, it could be argued that an imperfect order is better than no order at all in a lot of situations.

But government is a mercy from God to keep order and to rule over the sinfulness of man. I have a, I started trying to paraphrase this in my own words, but as when you're writing a paper, if you really can't do that that well, you should just state what's there.

And this is just a quote by a guy named Robert Hadlin on government. He said, the institution of civil government is a dispensation of mercy. And it exists and its existence is so indispensable that the moment it sees under one form, it reestablishes itself in another.

[18:24] The world, ever since the fall, when the dominion of one part of the human race was over another, immediately introduced, that's in Genesis 3, if you want to know Genesis 3, 16, has been in such a state of corruption and depravity that without the powerful obstacle presented by government to the selfish passions of men, it would be better to live among the beasts of the forest than in human society.

So he's saying like in a pre-fall condition, without government, we might as well go out and live in the woods. Some of us would rather do that anyway. But it says, as soon as its restraints are removed, man shows himself in his real character when there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

We see the last three chapters of the book of Judges which were the dreadful consequences when everyone just did what was right in their own eyes and there was no ruler over them. So, and as it says in our text, back in Romans, it says that they wield the power of the sword.

What does that mean? It means they have weapons. It means that they have, if you take away the sword from the government, they don't have any authority at all. They can't make you do anything. They can't control sinful men or protect those who are law-abiding citizens without the sword. And so, going on, like, it says that the governing authorities are God's servants carrying out his judgment and his wrath against the evil actions of man.

[19:58] and if we look on and, no, don't turn here, but I was going to say, I'll read this to you from 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 15. Let no one suffer as a murderer trouble with the government.

Let it be for something righteous, not for doing evil, not for, like, attacking, trying to rebel against the government in some sinful way. He's like, don't be in trouble by that, but a major difference between Romans and 1 Peter is that when the book of Romans was written historically, the persecution from the empire had not really started yet, officially, and it came probably the second time Paul came to Rome and, but around 1 Peter it was already happening, so Peter's like saying, in these cases, you know, do not suffer for doing evil, like, if you're going to suffer, suffer for the cause of Christ, in the

name of Christ, for loving people and for laying down your life for people, like, suffer in that way, so, you know, we don't really, like I said, this isn't going to be a situational ethics mourning, but, but also, the power of the sword refers to war, the state has a right to defend itself, but also refers to the idea of capital punishment, which you can read about in Genesis 9, 5 through 6, if you want a basis for why God commands that, and it's a large deterrent for people to do evil, it doesn't deter everybody, but it is a deterrent, and in the, the means of exercising that authority are important, and even though sometimes innocent people suffer, and may be falsely accused, the overall institution is more important than, than doing away with it, and so we look at, that'll bring us to the next thing, which these kind of go hand in hand, but government resists to, to keep in check the sinful actions of man, but also on the other hand, this is the last sub point under this question, government is a divine means to promote good, if you look at verses 3 and 4 back in Romans 13, for the 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, for he is God's servant for your good, that's what he, what he says, so as a general rule, as a general rule, the peaceful, law-abiding citizen should have no reason to fear the government, and it exists as the deterrent for evil and the promotion of what is good, seeking, seeking the good of, and welfare of that nation is what a government exists for, it doesn't always do that, but it does in a large way, and like we got to remember that no government system is going to be perfect because it's made up of sinful men, and just like the church is not perfect because though we are born again, we still sin, we're made up of people that have a lot of issues, and so, but we would have,

I'll read you this little statement that I think sums up these two points in the old Westminster confession from the 1600s, God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people for his own glory and the public good, and to this end he has armed them with the power of the sword for the defense and the encouragement of them that are good and for the punishment of those who do evil.

So, they're to uphold justice, they're to seek the welfare of their nation, of their people, and if they abuse that authority, God is very clear that he will hold them accountable for that and that he will judge them if they abuse that authority, and that's why we see, like, why nations have destroyed other nations, you know, like, though God used Assyria to punish Israel and to punish Judah, like, eventually, I mean, it seems like, well, God is on the side of the Assyrians, right?

No, because eventually God judged the Assyrians with the Babylonians and the Babylonians with the Persians and the Persians with the Greeks and so forth, so God always is going to punish the men in government who use their power for evil, always.

[24 : 57] He's going to hold them accountable for that. So, this brings us to the second question, the other half of this, is, how can we glorify God in our government as believers?

How can we glorify God in our government? And this is verses 5 through 7 in Romans. Therefore, one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience.

For because of this, you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God attending to this very thing. 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, and honor to him honor is owed.

So, he tells us in this context how we should relate to the government, and this would have been a big question to the church in Rome. How do we, because they had like the Roman government in their faith.

They had the senate that was there, they had the Palatine Hill where the emperor lived, and all these things. They had to learn how do we, how do we actually act within this context in regard to our rulers, and so the practical outworking of it, and this is sub-point number one.

[26 : 22] Humbly submit to the government. Citizens that are under civil law are to be in submission to their authorities, even as believers.

In the midst of a lot of people under governments who are slandering the government and like attacking the government, we're to place ourselves in humble submission to the government.

And it's a military term there, subjection, to place yourself underneath the command of someone who has a higher rank than you and to do what they say and to do it willingly.

It kind of carries a picture of like a willingness, not being forced to. Because Paul also says in verse 5 there, do it for the sake of conscience. So if you are in direct rebellion against the government, your conscience will condemn you.

And it's because it's clearly a command of God that you're not to do that. And so I'll read you from Titus chapter 3, or Titus 3, chapter 3, says, remind them to be submissive to the rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy towards all people.

[27 : 42] So, this is not like debatable. Like God says, be humbly submitted to your authorities. So then the question will arise, is there ever a time that we don't obey the authorities?

Like, what if they're asking us to do something that's like really evil, really simple? What do we do? Well, that doesn't always play out really pretty, but here's the deal.

We obey the laws and commandments of our authorities as long as they are not in direct opposition to God's commands and God's laws. And we should refuse, in fact, to submit to anything that would cause us to sin against God and breaking His commandments.

I'll give you three examples of this. One was in Exodus, the Hebrew midwives who were told to make sure that the male children were killed.

It says this, it says the midwives, well, I mean, back up, Pharaoh commanded them to do this. So their governing authority commanded the midwives to like play into the scheme to kill all the male children.

[28 : 58] It says, but the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded, but let the male children live. That's Exodus 1, 15-17.

Another example is Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, or you want their Hebrew names, which are much cooler. Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, who were exiles in Babylon, and they convinced the king, Nebuchadnezzar, to build this big statue of himself.

His guys convinced him to do that. And when the music sounded, you were to bow down and worship this statue of the king of Babylon, of Nebuchadnezzar, and to give your worship and your homage to him.

So, very symbolic, yes. A really hard place, but they refused to bow down to that image because it was idolatry.

It was turning their back on the true and living God. That's found in Daniel 3, 15-18. Great story there. God ends up delivering them, but they just openly defied Nebuchadnezzar, but they did it in a very humble way.

[30 : 20] They did it like, we love you, but we're not going to do that kind of thing. And a guy ended up delivering them from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. But turn to Acts 5 real fast.

Acts 5, verse 27. Acts 5, verse 27. A third example. Acts 5, verse 27.

And this is when Peter and the apostles were taken before the Jewish council to be judged for preaching the gospel, for telling people about Christ. It says, when they had brought them, they stood them before the council.

The high priest questioned them, saying, we gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, intended to bring this man's blood upon us.

Okay, so we told you to shut your mouth, and you're not shutting your mouth about Jesus. Their response, but Peter and the other apostles answered, we must obey God rather than men.

[31 : 31] So, ultimately, our ultimate citizenship and our ultimate kingdom is the kingdom of God. And as we read earlier, even he rules over the nations and governments of men, even he does.

So, which one are we going to submit to? Always the law of God, as long as it's not in contradiction to what the laws of man would say. that's the sub-point number one, humbly submit to the government.

And, sub-point number two, back in our text in Romans, pay taxes, right? For it says, for because of this you pay taxes for the authorities or ministers of God, attending to this very good.

And it says to give taxes to them, taxes to their own, honor to honor his own, so forth. And so, we're commanded in scripture to pay taxes to our government. And God will hold them accountable again and judge them for how they're using that money.

If they're doing it in a sinful, unlawful way, God will, what goes around comes around. They'll get what's coming to them if they're abusing that authority. And so, just because we disagree with the way that some taxes are being spent or whatever, it doesn't give us the right to refuse to pay taxes.

[32 : 50] Consider the context in which Romans is written. You know, the Christians there are taxing so Caesar can throw people in the amphitheaters and watch them die, and paying taxes so

Caesar can go and conquer more lands for Rome.

So, we see that. Can you imagine what it would have been like living under the Assyrians or Babylonians? If we think our government is bad, like, man, just go and read a little bit, read a book. I'll recommend some good history books for you. But, like, paying taxes under those empires, far more terrifying. Far more terrifying. So, if you don't believe me, let's just ask Jesus himself, so, those of you who have a skewed view of how to read scripture sometimes, like, Paul said this, but Jesus said this, kind of thing, they say the same things.

I'll read something right out of the mouth of Jesus. They ask him, is it unlawful to pay taxes to Caesar? And, he understands that they're trying to test him and cause them hypocrites.

And then he says, throw me a coin, so they give him a denarii, and he says, he says on there, like, whose likeness inscription is on this coin, and they say Caesar's, then he says, alright, then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

[34 : 13] Pay your taxes to Caesar, and what's owed to God, give to God. And so Jesus himself says to submit in the government that way. sub-point number three is, use your freedoms to do good.

Use your freedoms to do good. we live in a nation where, unlike any other in history, we have so many rights that have been granted to us by government and freedoms that we can operate within. So, Christians should seek the good of their nation by operating within their legal boundaries as citizens granted to them by the government. So, we even see this by Paul.

He exercised his rights in a context as a Roman citizen in many, many different cases. He would say, hey, I'm a Roman citizen, the law says this. And they would be like, you're right.

And they would always be used for good. And also, to vote. Like, we've been given a chance to vote against things that are evil and vote for things that are good.

[35 : 19] Sometimes there's, it's the less of two evils in some situations. And I leave that up to your conscience whether you decide to vote on things like that or not. But, at the end of the day, we have the ability to have some influence on our government.

And also the ability to speak out against things that are sinful and unrighteous. And, but, here's, I don't want to give you a bad impression.

I think the way that we're going to change the nation as believers is not by getting, going and picketing, you know, like, no more, whatever, rah, rah, rah, rah, I don't really think that's going to change anything.

But, there's ways that we can fight for righteous causes. And we have to understand that even when we speak out against things, we have to do it with humility and gentleness, not, you guys are evil and, you know, whatever.

It's not a picture of that. And an example, I don't have time to get into this, would be like William Wilberforce in the 19th century when he was a British MP in the House of Commons and God used him at times almost single-handedly over a huge period of time to bring down the slave trade in the British Empire.

[36 : 38] And even when he was in Parliament arguing with the other guys in there about slavery, he had like such a kind and humble spirit as he did it. He never attacked them personally.

They attacked him personally a lot. And it's just amazing to go back and read how he dealt with those situations in a way that glorified Christ. And God used him to destroy slavery in the British Empire.

Eventually that would spill over into America again many years later. An example of that today is abortion. We've been talking about that a lot at Christ's Family to stand up for the unborn.

So in all these things, we're to use our freedoms to do good, but not boast about our freedoms like we're free and we have a right to be a pain in the neck.

No we're not. We have freedom to influence our government and our nation in a humble way. And to speak about those things with them, to go to our congressmen, to our senators, whatever, and try to influence them for good.

[37 : 44] So another sub-point underneath this is to pray for the government. Pray for the government. So instead of slandering and speaking out against and hatred towards our leaders, we're to pray for them.

That's what the command is. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 1. First of all, then I urge you that supplications and prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all people.

So pray for these people. It says for kings, and all those who are in high positions, that they may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

That's 1 Timothy 2, 1 through 2. So the last point here, the last sub-point, I think is probably the greatest influence we can have on the government, have on our nation, preaching the gospel.

This is it, preaching the gospel. realize that the gospel is what changes societies. The gospel is what changes societies, always has.

[38 : 54] Let me give you an example. When Christ came into the world, he came into a very, you know, broken, sinful world, just like we did. Rome was the existing ruler and authority, and slavery was going on, you know, obviously, in the Roman Empire in a legal way.

So all these things, all these things that existed when Christ came into this sinful world, what did he do? Did he, like, take up a picket sign and start, like, charging, you know, the Senate and saying, you know, hey, stop slavery, hey, you know, like, this needs to stop these unjust things that you're doing?

No. But what did he do? He submitted to all the institutions, even to the Mosaic Law, because at that time, the fullness of it had not come.

Like, he hadn't died, he hasn't resurrected yet, so he even submitted himself to that, to the Roman government, political, economic systems. He submitted to that, but here's the deal.

He stayed focused on his mission while he was here, and his mission was not to overturn the Roman government. It took his disciples forever to figure that out, like, not why I'm here, guys.

[40 : 12] And so, so what if the government was replaced? Okay? We learn from history that if a bad system can be overturned or overruled, it usually can be replaced with another bad system right after that.

So, is that really the answer to the problem? No. So, Christ came to focus on a much bigger problem, on the spiritual bondage of man, to focus on the sinfulness of man, and he understood that the power of the gospel changes people from the inside out, and he understood that if he could work in their hearts and their minds, the sinful systems of men would be destroyed.

Well, like, renewed hearts that love God and want to worship God in spirit and truth, the overflow of that would be the destruction of sinful governments and sinful laws, and he knew that the greater included the lesser there.

So, as his followers, we're to unleash the power of the gospel in all areas of society, wherever we work, in our homes, in our government, whatever we do, we're to, like, unleash the power of the gospel.

We shouldn't expect sinful men to, like, always act in accordance with God's law. The power of the gospel is the only thing that can free them and actually change those societies is Christ.

[41 : 35] And as people were changed and they love God, they also will value their fellow man even more as a result of that. And so, we see that, you know, I guess Britain is another example to use of that with what Wilberforce was doing, okay?

He was fighting to end the slave trade. There were a lot of people, who were saying we need to just overthrow the government, overthrow parliament, overthrow the king.

They did it in France, and France was still going chaotic at the time, wasn't really a good model to follow. And so, but he refused. He was like, no, like, if we're going to change society, we're going to do it, like, in a godly, law-abiding way with humble submission to our leaders.

And it did. Like, it happened. It took time, but that society was changed, and slavery was brought down as a result. Turn to 1 Peter 2, and this is where we're going to end. 1 Peter 2.

The gospel will change hearts, change minds, and thus will destroy the evil actions of man. 1 Peter 2, verse 13, to kind of add to what Paul is saying, Peter says the same stuff here.

[42 : 58] Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil, and to the praise of those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, right?

It's us, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor.

I mean, this is all just very clear. These aren't negotiable things, but as we draw near to Christ and the power of the gospel changes us, the power of the gospel changes the lives of people around us.

That's how societies are changed. In other words, we can't fix our nation with a bunch of, at the end of the day, rules and laws that are thrown at them.

[44 : 02] We have to change people for societies to be changed for the glory of God. So let me just pray for us and continue. Father, I just admit that this is a hard subject in God.

I'm afraid that even as believers we can come across very simplistic and very naive about the realities of a sinful world around us.

God, I know that in governments today, there's so many hard decisions that have to be made. And sometimes it really isn't a choice of good versus evil.

It's almost like what's the lesser of two evils. They have hard positions that they are in. And Lord, it's hard to know what to do. So I pray that you would work in them and that you would work in President Obama, you work in the House and the Senate and the judicial system.

Lord, I pray that you would raise up both golly men and women to have an influence on the government for your glory.

[45 : 28] And as citizens, we would glorify you in how we conduct our lives under the government just as law-abiding citizens, those who pay taxes, those who don't slander out hatred against the government.

But Lord, for those who are quick to pray for the government and quick to speak the words of life, the gospel to the lost world that surrounds us.

And Lord, just help us to be humbled by that, that a lot of us live in a simple world and live by simple rules because our world is simple.

But Lord, we often fail to realize that government is an instrument you use to protect that world for us. And we're just naive about so many things. Lord, just work in the hearts of our leaders.

But above all, we give you praise and just thanksgiving that one day all governments will be brought under the supreme rule of Christ and his kingdom will endure for all generations and from everlasting to everlasting we'll have a king that is worthy to be praised, worthy to be loved and followed for all eternity.

[46 : 47] And that's where we're going, Lord. So until then, help us to know how to live in this life in ways that glorify you. In Christ's name, Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.