TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor /Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
#650 Send the Light

Scripture Reading by: Parker Balch
#701 My Jesus I Love Thee
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#647 Soldiers of Christ Arise
Sermon: "Jesus on Trial"
Mark 15:1-15

#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom
#634 We'll Work Till Jesus Comes

Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Fourth Sunday night Fellowship

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

August 22, 2021

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

Civil Disobedience

In our Wednesday night Bible study this past week, we talked about civil disobedience. With so much recent talk about mask mandates and vaccine passports—or state laws prohibiting such measures—and the strong feelings they stir in many people, this is a timely question. And that is just one current example; this is an issue that is felt even more keenly by Christians under oppressive regimes, like those now facing the prospect of persecution in Afghanistan. What guidance does Scripture offer in this area?

Should Christians ever disobey the government?
There are a number of passages that teach that we have a fundamental responsibility to submit to the governing authorities. The most comprehensive statement in this area is in **Romans 13:1-7:**

> *Let every person be subject to the 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. 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. 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. 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, honor to whom honor is owed.*

Government has been set in order by God, and he expects us to obey it (cf. **1 Pet 2:13-17; Titus 3:1).** That does not depend upon whether those in power are good or evil, either: this text was written to the church in Rome living under the rule of the Emperor Nero, a murderous tyrant and persecutor of Christians. Our submission to the government is not because of its inherent worth, but is a reflection of our submission to the God who orders it. *The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men and gives them to whomever he will* **(Daniel 4:32).**

With that said, we recognize that, while God ordains government in an institutional sense, he is not the author of its evil. In fact, much of Scripture—the prophets in particular—is focused on

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Bo McKewen, Jo Ella McKewen's son, has bone spurs on the back of his neck.

KaLeisha Jones has health problems.

Jo Ann Modisette has covid.

Stephanie Howser will be having an MRI on her back.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Gwen Pettit, Gary Nielsen, Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Jackie David, Frank & Tina Garcia, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Winston Leifester, Caitlin Smith, Peggy McIntosh, Oscar Cantu, Debby McKinzie

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Larry Hicks, Catherine Parker

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Mwanza, Africa, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meet Monday, Aug 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

We will have our monthly fellowship meal tonight at 5:00 p.m.

Primetimers will be going to Monument Inn on Saturday, Sept. 11th at 5:00 p.m. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board.

Sympathy

We express our sympathy to Kevin Griswold and his family on the death of his mother, Louise Griswold. The funeral was Wednesday.

Please Add

Please add Don & Debbie Lynn to your address book. Their address is: 809 Milam St., Liberty, TX 77575; 361-363-0265. Email address is: lynns1980@yahoo.com.

We are in need of Bible class teachers for Sunday morning and Wednesday evening. If you would like to help please let Bryant or one of the Elders know.

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"
is the weekly bulletin of the Liberty Church of Christ 3201 North Main, Liberty Texas 77575
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continued from front page

condemning the wickedness of rulers. So the obedience that God expects as a general rule is not unqualified; there are limitations upon it. We can obey a government that permits evil, even engages in evil, but not one that commands us to do evil. That leads naturally to a follow-up:

When is it right to disobey?

There are several examples in Scripture of civil disobedience that are approved by God. In **Exodus 1:15-21,** Pharaoh orders the Hebrew midwives to kill all the male babies; they refuse, and are blessed by God as a result. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship the idol that Nebuchadnezzar builds, and are thrown into the fiery furnace as a result; thy are delivered by God **(Daniel 3).** Daniel faces a similar incident, when he persists in praying to God rather than the Persian king and is thrown to the lions' den, where God protects him **(Daniel 6).** The apostles are commanded to stop proclaiming Jesus, but they persist in their preaching; God continues to bless them with success (**Acts 4-5).**

Note that all of these examples have the same pattern: a) the government commands an act that is contrary to God's will—it does more than just permit evil, in other words, it actually compels believers to disobey God; b) that oppressive law is itself disobeyed; and c) God approves this measure.

This paradigm points out that while there are times when Christians can—indeed, must—disobey the government, those circumstances are limited. It must be more that a regime that tolerates or even promotes evil; there certainly must be more at stake than our personal comfort or policy preference. Only when we are commanded to violate God's law can we violate earthly law instead. *We must obey God rather than men* **(Acts 5:29).**

And even then, we must still submit to the penalty for disobedience: the fiery furnace, the lions' den, imprisonment, even death. That does not mean that we must acquiesce in the face of oppression—we can protest, we can peacefully resist. But it means that we will not take the law into our own hands, because the authorities have been instituted by God.

All of this chafes against our natural impulses as Americans. But the ethic of the New Testament is not one of individual liberty; it emphasizes radical submission in all of our relationships. That is the example that Jesus himself left us to follow **(1 Peter 2:21-23).** Let's endeavor to be shaped by it.

Bryant Perkins