

Giving to Caesar

July 21, 2019

I Peter 2:11-17

Please find with me the Book of Romans chapter thirteen. Thank you for an opportunity to preach God's Word again today.

I'd like to begin today with a word from the Prophet Isaiah. It's this. Isaiah 40:28 *"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding."*

(29) He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. (30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah is telling his congregation how to find the power of the LORD for their daily lives. Ten times he refers to power. Verse 28 – "fainteth not, neither is weary." Verse 29 – "He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increases strength." Verse 30 – "the youth shall faint and be weary." Verse 31 – "they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength." And verse 31 – "they shall walk and not faint."

And don't you want to know how to find that same strength for your daily life?

Power is everywhere in the physical universe. And there are many kinds of power. There's latent power in an apple seed. And it will take soil and water and sunlight to get that power out of the seed and into an apple tree. There's battery

power in your watch or in your iPhone. There's horsepower under the hood of your car. There's the power of money.

Then there's power in the vitamins you took with your breakfast. There's also power in the food you ate. And does anybody here have power in your tongue?

And when you consider Niagara Falls, there's enough electricity in the water to power 3.8 million homes and businesses.

Then we have the power of interpersonal relationships and even the power of love. And don't forget that the power of God to save a soul is found in the Gospel.

Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."*

Would you agree with me that there's power in almost everything you can think of?

So, today, what's on my heart is the power God has placed in the hands of people.

I've titled today's message "Giving to Caesar." Shall we pray?

I said something about the government to someone this week. And the lady says to me "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." So, I said "Do you know Who said that?" She had no idea. So, I told her that Jesus said it.

What kind of power do you think of when you hear this?

Luke 20:25 *"And he said unto them, Render [give what is due] therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."*

Caesar is clearly a symbol today of our government. And in the government we see power that God has placed in the hands of people.

Now, have you ever wondered where this idea of the government really came from? Well, since the Bible covers,

as you know, every necessary subject known to man; and since the Bible always tells the truth about everything, then you can expect that the Bible will tell us exactly where it came from and well as what it means to have a right relationship to the government.

And what I've learned over the years and what I'm still learning is this. How else can you grow in your knowledge of the truth unless you take it line by line or we could say verse by verse?

So, today's topic, and the next important practical concern the Apostle Paul has for the Christians in Rome, is the government. Yes, it's a Bible subject. And yes, the LORD does tell us what the *right* relationship to government is.

My introduction to the history of the governments of the world came in my first year of college. In those days every freshman had to take the most important and the most popular course in college. It was called "The History of Western Civilization." Today, by the way, a mere two per cent of colleges and universities in the United States today require this course. ["The Vanishing West: 1964-2010" by Ricketts, Glenn; Wood, Peter R.; Balch, Stephen H.; Thorne, Ashley found on <https://eric.ed.gov> and "How Western Civilization Disappeared from College Campuses" found on <https://www.newsmax.com>].

Now, my college professor began at the beginning; literally, she began with the Book of Genesis, which is the beginning of everything. And in that first Book of the Bible you find the first government. It began around 3,000 B.C. That government was Egypt.

But, technically, the first time the word "government" is found in Scripture is in the Book of Isaiah, where the LORD says this. Isaiah 9:6 "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and **the government** shall be upon his shoulder: and his*

name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

(7) *Of the increase of **his government** and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*"

Isaiah 9 is a prophecy. It predicts the coming of a future government, a truly good government, and a form of government called a Monarchy, where One Person rules everyone everywhere. And, under the leadership of the Jewish Messiah; the One called the Prince of Peace, the world will be ruled from the Throne of David by a Monarch, Jesus Christ, King of the Jews.

So, government. What's the last use of it in the Bible? The last time "government" is used in Scripture is a reference to people who despise authority. II Peter 2:9 "*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished: (10) But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and **despise government**. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*"

Jerusalem is about 1,400 miles away from Rome. So, it's possible that the man who ruled the Roman Empire while Jesus was ministering in Judea; his name was Tiberius Caesar. He ruled the Roman Empire from 14-37 A.D. He, very likely, didn't know who Jesus was. But, did Jesus know who Caesar was?

One day the Pharisees sent some representatives to Jesus with a question. Luke 20:19 "*And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.*

(20) *And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign [pretend] themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the*

governor. (21) *And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:*

(22) *Is it lawful for us [Jews] to give tribute [taxes] unto Caesar, or no?* (23) *But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, why tempt ye me?* (24) *Shew me a penny [Roman denarius]. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's.*

(25) *And he said unto them, **Render [give what is due] therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.*** (26) *And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marveled at his answer, and held their peace."*

Did Jesus know who Caesar was? Yes, even if Caesar didn't know Jesus. And, according to Jesus, Caesar stands as a symbol of human government. And He says you are to give Caesar what is his. In the same way that you give to God what is His, you give to the government what belongs to the government.

Look again with me at the twentieth verse of Luke 20.

Luke 20:20 *"And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign [pretend to be] themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto **the power and authority of the governor.**"*

Who was the governor of Judea at that time? His name was Pontius Pilate. You might recall from the Book of Luke that two chapters later, in Luke 22, the LORD celebrates the Passover with His disciples and Judas betrays Jesus. Then, in Luke 23 we see Jesus being tried in a Roman court before the Roman Pontius Pilate.

So, the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus into saying something offensive to Pilate. But they discover that Jesus, not only doesn't speak against the power and authority of the government. And, instead, He *insists* that the Jews support it with their taxes.

So, today, "What does it mean to give to Caesar?"

The answer is found right here in Romans thirteen. Here's verse one [read 13:1-6].

First, the LORD is your Creator. And He placed you and me and everybody under four, what we might call, structures of authority: the home, the job (the workplace), the Church, and the government.

Romans 13:1 *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God ..."*

Everything has a Source. Everything, including power, authority, and government; everything was designed and created by the Source of Everything; the LORD. And everybody here stands under those that God has placed over you. That's God's plan for the entire human race across the entire world; verse one. Romans 13:1 *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."*

If it's a "higher power," then it's above you. We are beneath the higher powers that God has set up over us. That's the way the LORD set up all 195 countries of the world. Some are in charge. And some are beneath those in charge; in the home, at the job, in the Church, and in the government.

Can you see what the right relationship you have to the government is? Do you see that God is the One Who placed you there? Do you see yourself as subject to those higher powers over you? And do you believe that all power comes from God?

Now, who are "the powers that be"? It's those in power at this very moment. "The powers that be" were ordained by God.

Do you see this word "ordained"? *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are **ordained** of God."*

It means “appointed by” and “placed in position by.” You have been placed under authority to someone above you. And that someone above you has been placed in that position by the LORD; whether it’s in the home, in the Church, at the job, or in the local or federal government.

You see, it’s not a question of whether we like this person or that person. It’s not even a question of whether or not we agree with the one in authority. God has placed him or her where He has because He’s God and we’re not.

Listen again to Jesus as He explains this to Pontius Pilate. John 19:10 “*Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have **power** to crucify thee, and have **power** to release thee? (11) Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: ...**”*

And do you remember what Pilate did when he heard Jesus say this? John 19:12 “*And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him...*”

So, folks, not only is the one in power in power because God put him or her there; but each person in power is accountable to God. So, Jesus’ words put the fear of God into Pilate that day. Jesus is the One Who’d been arrested. And, now, Pilate, the Governor, was being instructed by the One Who was under arrest.

So, first, Paul makes it clear, just as Jesus did both when the Pharisees came to Him and when He was in Pilate’s courtroom, that God is the Source of all power and authority.

Second, you are subject to those God has placed over you; verse one.

Romans 13:1 “***Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.***”

“Every soul” includes every person everywhere, in every country, and under every government. Paul is making a blanket statement as to your place under the authority *He* has set up.

Here’s Paul to his friend Titus. Titus 3:1 “*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.***”

“To be subject” and “to be obedient;” that’s what the LORD says through Paul. And the phrase “to obey magistrates” is one word in the original Greek. It means “follow and obey the one who is in authority.”

Think again with me about God’s four structures of authority. Think about how amazing this really is. God has set up the concept of a society in every nation on the earth; even those you might consider backward; even “third world.”

All authority structures are God-created. Now, think about *your* role in your family. Now consider *your* place at your of work. Now, the Church. And now, the government. If you don’t have a right relationship to each of these, you’re neglecting; even rejecting, God’s plan for your life.

Romans 13:1 “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*”

Can you see what Paul is doing here? He’s calling for Christians to maintain a good relationship to those *He* has placed over you.

And, who was it that Paul was accountable to?

Roman	Emperors
Augustus	27 BC – AD 14
Tiberius	AD 14–37
Caligula	AD 37–41
Claudius	AD 41–54
Nero	AD 54–68
	Paul wrote Romans in 57 AD

Can you imagine Paul as a Pharisee? At the time Paul was serving as a Jewish Pharisee, the Jews were quote “under the thumb” of Rome. And now we find Paul preaching “submission to those in authority in Rome.” And who was ruling the Roman Empire when Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans? Nero Claudius Caesar. Nero was such a wicked ruler that, on the night that Rome heard he’d committed suicide, they ran through the streets rejoicing because they were now free.

It’s been said that he hated his mother so much he tried numerous times to get rid of her quote “by accident.”

“He had an elaborate device created for her bedchamber ceiling which would collapse and crush her in her sleep; however, it proved to be too complicated to build and install. Next, he tried a specially designed boat that would collapse and sink, but she proved too smart and swam to the shore. Finally, his last attempt was the simplest and easiest: he had her stabbed to death ...” [Found on [www. https://www.ancient.eu](https://www.ancient.eu) “Nero” by Donald L. Wasson, June 29, 2012].

So, it’s important to see Romans thirteen in this context.

And notice that three times Paul uses the word “resist” to describe the opposite of “be subject to.”

Romans 13:2 “Whosoever therefore **resisteth** the power, **resisteth** the ordinance of God: and they that **resist** shall receive to themselves damnation.”

Now, how you should you hold a right relationship to those in authority over you? At least these four ways: by your attitude, by your prayers, by your behavior, and by your speech. If you choose to not hold a right relationship to those God has placed over you, you’re very likely in the position of resisting God.

First, God is the Source of all power and authority.

Second, you are subject to those God has placed over you.

Third, what is the primary purpose for government? The purpose for government is found in verse three. It’s to punish the evil and reward the good; verse three.

Romans 13:3 “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: (4) for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

What is the purpose of government?

Verse 3 – to be a terror to evil deeds

Verse 4 – to praise good deeds

Verse 4 – to be a minister of God

And vs. 4 – to execute wrath on those who do evil.

These are the things God says are His plan for those who serve in our government. It is God’s design that a government hinder evil while it re-enforces and encourages good.

And, did you think when you read today’s message title that you would respond by saying that those in our government are ministers of God?

Three times Paul calls those who serve in government “ministers of God.”

Romans 13:4 *“For he is **the minister of God** to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is **the minister of God**, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

*(5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are **God's ministers**, attending continually upon this very thing.”*

And if you believe that those in authority over you are sent there by the LORD, you have one primary responsibility as it relates to them. You are to pray for them. I Timothy 2:1 *“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.*

(3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

So, first, pray for those in the government.

And, one more thing. Here's how Jesus spoke about corrupt leaders; those in authority whose hearts were far from Him. Matthew 23:1 *“Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, (2) Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: (3) **All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.**”*

Nero was truly corrupt while he was Emperor of the Roman Empire. And the Scribes and Pharisees were corrupt leaders of the Jews. Yet, the LORD says you are to obey them.

So, what are you giving to Caesar? And is the LORD not continuing to command you to be subject to those in

authority over you? And He's commanding you to pray for those in authority over you. So, the question is this.

Do you have a right relationship to those in our government? Jesus died so you'd have a right relationship to Him. And one aspect of that right relationship is to have a right relationship to those He has placed over you.

I'd like to conclude today with a word from a famous American. President Ronald Reagan who said these words at this second Inaugural Address before the United States and before the world.

“Can you hear that sound? It is the American sound. It is hopeful, big-hearted, idealistic, daring, decent, and fair. That's our heritage, that's our song. We sing it still. For all our problems, our differences, we are together as of old. We raise our voices to the God Who is the Author of this most tender music. And may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound – in unity, affection, and love -- - one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon now to pass that dream to a waiting and hopeful world. God bless you, and God bless America.”

Hymn # 644 “The Greatest Thing”