



ROMANS

The Gospel of God

The Gospel of Authority!

Romans 13:1-14

Message #30 of 33 – S1161

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Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel of Authority!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 13**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel of Authority!**
- Growing up I did not have a healthy relationship with authority.
- There was no positive male role model in my life, so I became the authority of my life.
- That didn't always work out so well for me in school.
- By God's providence I ended up in the Navy.
- The military is pretty effective at teaching young men about authority.
- Even with the positive influence of the Navy, I struggled a long time with authority.
- Paul is going to tell us in Romans 13 that our relationship with worldly authority is connected to our relationship with God's authority.
- It also impacts our relationships with others.
- First, what is authority. Here are a couple of definitions.
Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience; a person or organization having power or control in a particular, typically political or administrative, sphere.
- The book or letter of Romans is written to the believers in Rome.
- Rome was the center of the Roman Empire; they had authority.
- For the most part, the Romans were a godless culture and government.
- Corruption and depravity were common.
- Paul was a Jew with Roman citizenship.
- When Paul came to Christ, he acknowledged a new authority in his life, Christ Jesus.
- Once Paul was saved, he was still a Jew and a Roman citizen.

- The question Paul is going to address in this text is who has authority over the life of a believer.
 - He deals with the authority of the government first.
 - **Romans 13:1**
 - Any group of people that organizes itself will establish a form of government.
 - In the US we have many layers of governing authorities; federal, state, county, and city.
 - Corporations will have a board of directors or advisory councils.
 - Even churches have governing authorities.
 - The big denominations have layers of authority.
 - Even our small church uses a Board of Elders to govern the affairs of the church.
 - Paul says we are to be subject to those authorities.
 - Peter says something very similar. **1 Peter 2:13-17**
- ¹³ **Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ 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.**
- ¹⁵ **For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.**
- As Americans, we don't care for the word king.
 - You can substitute, president, governor, or mayor.
 - As we sit here in this room, we are subject to the federal government, the California government, the count of Riverside, and the city of Murrieta.
 - Both Paul and Peter tell us to submit to these authorities.
- Submit: to be or become inclined or willing to submit to orders or wishes of others or showing such inclination.**
- The key words in that definition are 'inclined or willing'.
 - If someone is not inclined or willing to submit, then whatever they might end up doing is not submission.
 - Governments are created and appointed by God.
 - This is where some people might struggle.
 - They might have a hard time accepting that God appointed the government of California.

- There is nothing wrong with the government – the problem is with the people ruining the government.
- Remember, Paul was talking to Christians who were living under Roman authority.
- Paul tells us what not to do.
- **Romans 13:2**
- There may be many things we disagree with in the governing authorities, but if you oppose, resist, or rebel against that authority, you are resisting God, and the consequence is judgment from God.
- God created governing authorities and gave them a purpose.
- **Romans 13:3-4**
- Governing authorities are appointed by God for people for good and to protect them from evil.
- They are given the sword, the power to condemn, by God to punish evil people.
- A problem develops when a ruler/leader doesn't understand that he is a servant of Almighty God, and they do whatever their evil heart wants.
- That is what we see going on in California.
- Governor Newsom is an unbeliever who seeks his own good over the good of the people of California.
- President Trump is a believer, though it is hard to say how deep his faith is.
- I'll take a marginal Christian leader over an obviously lost leader any day of the week.
- President Trump seems to be taking his role as a minister of God for the people seriously and he doesn't seem to be afraid to be the avenger of God's wrath against the wicked.
- Paul then makes the exhortation more forceful.
- **Romans 13:5-7**
- Submission and obedience to the governing authorities are not optional for the Christ-follower.
- Rebelling against the governing authorities is rebelling against God and there are consequences for doing that.

- Not only are we to be subject to the governing authorities but we are to pay our taxes so they can continue to govern us.
- In California we have some of the highest taxes in the country.
- And they take the money we pay in taxes and use it for things we are opposed to as Christ-followers.
- Is it right for us to pay taxes that go to pay for abortions and other godless programs?
- Turn to **Matthew 22**
- The Roman Empire had conquered the land of Israel prior to Christ being born.
- They regularly collected tribute from the nations they conquered.
- The money collected went to fund their vicious campaigns of conquering and subjugating other nations.
- Slavery was common in many places around the empire, including Rome.
- At the time of Christ, the Jews despised the collection of taxes.
- Some Jews were hired by the Romans and became some of the most hated men in Israel, and some of the wealthiest.
- That is the context of this interaction with Jesus.
- **Matthew 22:15-17**
- There was an active debate, and some believed paying the Roman tax was a violation of the Law of Moses.
- **Matthew 22:18-22**
- When we pay taxes to a wicked, immoral government, we are submitting to God and trusting Him to bring justice and holiness.
- And it should go without saying that we should not cheat on our taxes.
- Take every deduction that is allowed but pay every penny you should.
- Turn back to **Romans 13**.
- Paul tells us we ought to give to everyone what they are owed.
- But then he tells them not to owe anyone anything.
- **Romans 13:8-10**
- This is an exhortation to avoid being in debt to anyone.
- One of God's goals in our life is freedom.
- Jesus set us free from the bondage of sin.

- He wants us to be free in every area of our life.
- Most debt is a form of bondage.
- With the possible exception of a home mortgage, you are in bondage to your debt. **Proverbs 22:7**

⁷ **The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower *is* servant to the lender.**

- A goal of every Christ-follower ought to be debt-free.
- One debt we can never repay is our debt of love.
- When we are loving one another, we are fulfilling the law of God.
- Paul then quotes five of the Ten Commandments.
- Paul then repeats something Jesus said that the whole law can be summarized by quoting part of Leviticus 19:18.
- Loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills the Law of God.
- Love is doing what is in the best interest of another.
- Loving someone keeps you from harming them and sinning against them, breaking the law of God.
- Paul then shifts to tell them this is urgent.

• **Romans 13:11-13**

- We should be repaying the debt of love because of the time we are in.
- Paul says your salvation is nearer than when we first believed.
- Is Paul saying they are not saved? No!
- They are saved, just not all the way.
- None of us are saved all the way yet.
- There are three phases of salvation: initial, progressive, and ultimate.
- The initial phase of salvation happens when we put our faith in Christ.
- We are saved, past tense, from the power and penalty of sin.
- The rest of our life as believers is then spent in the progressive phase of salvation, where we are being conformed, present tense, into the image of Christ through the process of sanctification.
- Some day we will all experience the ultimate phase of salvation when we are taken to be with Jesus in heaven.
- In that phase, we are delivered, future tense, from the presence of sin.
- Every day we wake up we are one day closer to our ultimate salvation.
- Paul says the day is far spent, meaning, it could come at any moment.
- Let us cast off anything that gets in the way of loving God and others.

- We are children of light; we should walk in the light of Christ Jesus.
- We should stay away from drunkenness, lewdness, and lustful things.
- Stay away from anything that you wouldn't want Jesus being with you while you are doing it.
- Paul ends with two final exhortations.
- **Romans 13:14**
- To put on Christ is a beautiful picture of our daily life with Christ.
- It literally means to clothe yourself with Christ, His characteristics, His nature, His teaching, His love, grace, and mercy.
- It means we are deliberately allowing the Holy Spirit to shape us and change us to be more like Christ.
- And to help with that we need to make no provision for the flesh.
- The flesh is our carnal nature that seeks to please self rather than God.
- Paul is telling us not to think about those things the flesh wants.
- Instead, think about what God wants and what Christ would do.
- Think about loving others with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength with the agape love God poured into your heart.
- Think about being more like Jesus.
- Think about God, heaven, and God's Word.
- No one can do this all the time, but the more we do, the more ready we will be for Christ to come again.
- We will be better prepared to love others.
- And we will be a shining light on a hill for this world to see and maybe someone will see Jesus in you and want what you have.
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us.
- **Pray! Last Song!**