

Sermon Title: The God Ordained Responsibilities of Government to Citizens

Sermon Text: Romans 13:3-4

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to develop a biblical perspective on the role of Government.

Sermon Proposition: There are 3 basic responsibilities of God ordained government in Romans 13.

Introduction: We have previously in verses 1-2 described the biblical responsibility of citizens to government. Christians have the responsibility of responding to governing authorities, in a way that reflects the basic characteristics and attitude of good citizenship, for the purpose of gaining a gospel witness.

1 Peter 2:13-17 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.

Today we want to look at the Governments responsibility to citizens as ordained by God. In doing some research the following statistics provide some damaging insight.

-Half the world's prison population of about 9 million is held in the U.S., China, and Russia. Prison rates in the U.S. are the world's highest at 724 people per 100,000. Compared to 584 for Russia and 145 for England and Wales.

-Since 2002, the United States has had the highest incarceration rate in the world.

-Third highest divorce rate 4.34 per 1000 inhabitants.

-U.S. residents pay about \$260 per year on corrections up from \$77 per year in 1980. The country's cost annually is \$80 billion per year for incarceration.

-How much does it cost to house an inmate for life? Cases without the death penalty cost \$740,000 while cases where the death penalty is sought cost \$1.26 million. Maintaining each death row prisoner costs taxpayers \$90,000 more per year than a prisoner in general population. (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/costs-death-penalty)

-What percentage of incarcerated are African American males? Approximately 12-13% of the American population is African American, but they make up 35% of jail inmates, and 37% of prison inmates of the 2.2 million male inmates as of 2014 (US Department of Justice, 2014).

(www.ew.wikipedia.org/wiki/statistics_of_incarcerated_AfricanAmerican_males)

-1 in every 15 African Americans

-1 in every 36 Hispanics

-1 in every 106 Caucasians

Under the Mosaic Law, punishment had several objectives.

1) It was administered as a matter of justice for appropriate retribution of a crime.

Deuteronomy 19:21 "Your eye shall not pity: life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

2) Punishment was to be a deterrent to crime, to discourage the guilty person from committing further crime and to discourage others from following his unlawful example.

3) The Mosaic law required impartiality.

Deuteronomy 13:6 "If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,

4) Punishment was to be without delay.

Deuteronomy 25:2 "then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

- 5) Again with the exception of execution, Old Testament law provided for pardon and rehabilitation. Once an offender paid his penalty, he was to be accepted back into society as a respectable citizen.

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p.221-222]

I. Government is ordained by God to reward good behavior and punish evil behavior of citizens. V.3a

II. Government is ordained by God to maintain peace and order in societies for citizens. V.3b

III. Government is ordained by God to administer capital punishment. V.4

I. Government is ordained by God to reward good behavior and punish evil behavior of citizens. V.3a

Government has been established by God to maintain order in society by reward good citizens and punish evil citizens.

A. By protecting those who do good. (12:2, 9, 13, 21)

B. By punishing those who do evil.

Even the most wicked, ungodly governments act as a huge hedge against crime.

“Robert Haldane comments that:

The institution of civil government is a dispensation of mercy, and its existence is so indispensable, that the moment it ceases under one form, it re-establishes itself in another. The world, ever since the fall, when the dominion of one part of the human race over another was immediately introduced (Gen. 3:16), has been in such a state of corruption and depravity, that without the powerful obstacle presented by civil government to the selfish and malignant passions of men, it would be better to live among the beasts of the forest than in human society. 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 that which was right in his own eyes, we see in the last three chapters of the Book of Judges what were the dreadful consequences. (An Exposition of Romans, p.581)”
[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p.225]

II. Government is ordained by God to maintain peace and order in societies for citizens. V.3b

A. The 1st benefit will be freedom from fear of authority when citizens do what is good. (1 Peter 3:8-12, 13-17)

B. The 2nd benefit will be praise from authority when citizens do what is good.

Peaceful, law-abiding citizens need not fear authorities. Most governments will not do harm to those who obey the laws. In fact, governments usually commend such people.

III. Government is ordained by God to administer capital punishment. V.4

The governing authorities are carrying out God’s purposes when they reflect these biblical guidelines. Because they are the ministers, servants (diakonos) for what is morally good. A government that rewards evil and punishes good will not long survive, because evil by nature is destructive, decaying, and results in death.

Proverbs 29:12 If a ruler pays attention to lies, All his servants *become* wicked.

The goals of government in a society falls into several categories:

- 1) Restrain evil conduct
- 2) Protect life in the womb and to the grave
- 3) Protect property
- 4) Administer capital punishment to murderers.

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

Paul and Jesus demonstrated the right to take advantage of their government rights of citizenship or Jewish citizenship. Yet yield those rights to the preordained plans and will of God. (**1 Peter 3:9-17**) **Acts 16:37** But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

Acts 22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

Acts 22:29 Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Acts 25:11 "For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."

This text symbolizes the government's right and responsibility to inflict punishment befitting of the crime related to evil practices. (**Matthew 26:52; Acts 25:11**)

Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Douglas Moo states, "For the purpose of his argument at this point Paul is assuming that the laws of the state embody those general moral principles that are taught in the Word of God." (in 10 commandments) [Douglas J. Moo "The Epistles To The Romans" The New International Commentary on the New Testament, p. 802.]

This is not necessarily a reference to God's wrath, but to the delegated authority from God to civil authorities, on behalf of God against acts of evil that God condemns.

Conclusion:

- v.1b – Governing authorities are to administer justice in keeping with moral divine standards of good and evil.
- v.3b – Governing authorities should reward and bestow praise on those who do good.
- v.4a – Governing authorities should encourage all citizens to do what is good.
- v.4b – Governing authorities should punish those who do what is evil, so that others will fear judgment.
 - Governing authorities should administer judgment that equals the crime or evil done.

Robert Culver again reminds us:

"What must not be lost sight of is that, unpleasant as is the task of the jailor and the use of the whip, the cell, the noose, the guillotine, these things stand behind the stability of civilized society, and they stand there necessarily, for God has declared it so, in harmony with reality, rather than with apostate sociological opinion. Government, with its coercive powers, is a social necessity, but one determined by the Creator, not by the statistical tables of some university social research staff! No society can successfully vote fines, imprisonment, corporal and capital punishment away permanently. The society which tries has lost touch with realities of man (has fallen sinful state), realities of the world, and the truth of divine revelation in nature, man's conscience, and the Bible." (*Towards a Biblical View of Civil Government*, p.256)

[John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 9-16*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, p.226]