

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map
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Romans 13:1-10
September 20, 2020

The worship of our God transforms us into civil engaged neighbors.

- Ask: *Who is willing to talk with me about our county, its leaders, and policies?*
 - ◆ Only those who agree with me?
 - ◆ Do my friends who avoid discussing this with me think I turn into a bitter, biting, belligerent nasty person - disgruntled, a divisive person?
 - ◆ Even if this is just a little true, Jesus is calling me to sit down with Romans 13 and let Jesus transform me - setting me free to find his joy and peace all over again, transformed to be a **civil engaged citizen**. Because...

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❖ Context is Big!

- Why did Paul shock us with these words?
 - ◆ ¹ **Everyone must submit to the governing authorities. For no authority exists except by God, and the authorities that do exist have been established by God.**
 - ◆ ² **Therefore the one who rebels against the authority is opposing God's institution, and those who oppose will bring judgment on themselves.**
 - ◆ Shocking. Paul wrote when Nero was Caesar. A pagan, not friendly to Christians. Not a man who earned honor and respect. That's irrelevant.
 - ◆ ^{12:9} **Do not just pretend to love others. ...Think of others as deserving more honor than yourselves....** ¹² **Be joyful in hope. Endure trials patiently. Persist in prayer. ...** ¹⁴ **Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. ...** ¹⁶ **Have the same respect for one another. Do not be arrogant, ...** ¹⁷ **Do not pay anyone back evil for evil. Focus on those things that everyone considers noble. ...** ²¹ **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**
- How do you do that under a government that is unjust and not fair?
 - ◆ View civil authorities from God's point of view, not the world's view.
 - ◆ Live in your relationship to government & neighbors as the living worship of our God that Paul taught us last Sunday. **We need** a transformed perspective.

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❖ Live with a transformed view of every civil servant, regulation, and tax.

- The Holy Spirit leaves no wiggle room. Face it!
- **Everyone must submit to every governing authority.**
 - ◆ God who rules all - established that **position** and **filled it** - PERIOD!
 - ◆ He can and does use even the wicked to advance his work - then and there.
 - ◆ Our God will hold them accountable. Leave judgment and justice up to him!
- They are God's servants. *Honor and respect* both **office** and **office holder**!
 - ◆ It's worldly thinking to only honor the honorable and respect those who have earned respect. The pagans will do that. Christ transforms our perspective.
 - ◆ Taxes and revenue are **not your money** stolen or misused by the government.
 - **God's view:** It's **his** money, given to us to support the work of government.
 - What an honor! God lets us collectively do projects far beyond our ability.
 - Praise God who created our communities and provides leaders to build roads, protect against fraud, regulate utilities, food safety, currency, & banking, etc.

- Led to know and worship God as our Lord, his word changes how we see things.
 - ◆ By faith, submitting to his authority is something we gladly do as we live worshiping our gracious Lord. We obey and pay taxes in worship of him.
 - ◆ Paul adds joy to this part of our worship life - revealing God's good purpose.
 - ***Do what is good, and you will receive praise from him, ⁴ because he is God's servant for your benefit.... ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience.***
 - God channels blessing us through government. Civil order vs. Chaos.
 - Gospel-motivated obedience eases our conscience - know & do God's will
- Contrast this with living with a worldly view - negative about government
 - ◆ Negative view of civil servants: parking police, President, EPA inspectors, ambassadors, Postal workers, police, prison guards, IRS agents - all suspect
 - ◆ Doubtful that I and mine are treated fairly and/or that taxes are used wisely
 - ◆ Wanting to live in a tax free environment, then complain about poor service
 - ◆ God's view is transformative - liberating - a life worshiping/trusting God is in charge and working everything out to our benefit, even persecution!
 - ◆ ***²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.***
 - A negative worldly view of civic authority fights fire with fire.
 - A forgiven Christ-like view calls us to ***overcome evil with good.***
- ❖ Live with a transformed calling to be a civil engaged neighbor.
 - Recall: ^{12:9} ***Do not just pretend to love others***
 - Worshiping our God is living the calling we were made for:
 - ◆ Jesus died and rose to give us new eternal life flowing from his forgiveness
 - ◆ Captivated by his love, we're called to ***"Love your neighbor as yourself."*** ¹⁰ ***Love does no harm to a neighbor, so love is the fulfillment of the law.***
 - ◆ Love for neighbors cares for individuals and for **neighborhoods** - community
 - ◆ Striving to cultivate a community of care - civil righteousness - blesses all
 - ◆ ***do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet***
 - Think how this destroys lives, families, and communities.
 - Did you notice the 2 *love your neighbor* commandments missing?
 - *Honor your Father and Mother - You shall not bear false witness.*
 - The 2 commandments covered under government.
 - Living isolated lives - obsessed with how to please ourselves is self-worship.
 - ◆ Living in community as the neighbor spouting off and complaining - not love!
 - ◆ ***...let your light shine in people's presence, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.*** Matthew 5:16
 - ◆ Be known as the civil peacemaker, abounding in kindness, care, patience.
 - ◆ How can you love you neighbor in isolation? Get out and be engaged.
 - ◆ Worshiping God by loving our neighbors and neighborhoods - God uses us to create stronger communities, silence those who speak ill of Christ, and draw people to Jesus. The greatest way to help, change, and bless our nation.

If concern for our country, its future, its morals, its policies are filling you with fear and making you someone your neighbors avoid - God is using them to call you back to his word for renewal and transformation. Calling you to spend your life in worship of the Lord by letting his love & word take over, transforming & liberating you.

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