

The Gospel Story: Put On Christ

A Study of Romans

Romans 13:1-14

Pastor Bryan Clark

Opening Discussion

1. What do you understand to be the role of government? What makes a good government and what makes a bad government in your opinion?
2. Can you disagree with governing authorities and still maintain a respectful attitude toward those in authority? What constitutes a disrespectful attitude?
3. Do you think we as American Christians could stand before God and blame our government for why we did not accomplish our mission? Why or why not?
4. Like in any relationship, it's tempting to focus on the bad rather than all that's good. We as Americans probably experience as comfortable a lifestyle as any people ever in history. What are the benefits of living in America that we experience and probably take for granted every day?

Bible Study

1. Read Romans 13:1-7. Compare what Jesus said in Matthew 22:15-22. Compare also I Peter 2:13-17. What should be our attitude toward governing authorities according to these texts? Why?
2. What do you know about the Roman government that was ruling when Paul wrote Romans 13? Why should Christians submit to a corrupt government according to the text?

3. Romans 13:4 refers to the Roman government as “bearing the sword.” While some may argue this point, most see this as a clear reference to Rome administering the death penalty. Rather than criticizing this practice Paul seems to affirm it is part of the role of government as a ministry of God. Compare Genesis 9:6. What is the principle here? The people of God are also called to fight for justice and fairness in the administration of the law. See Amos 5:24. Do you believe we today as a nation are in a position to administer such a final judgment on people according to justice and fairness without regard to media pressure, politics, racial or socio-economic factors? Does the evidence support your conclusion?
4. The dynamics of government in first century Rome and our government today are quite different. What is our responsibility and culpability in a democratic republic? When do you believe we as Christians have a right to disobey governing authorities? Why?
5. Read Romans 13:8-14. Why do we need governing authorities? Would these authorities be necessary if we loved our neighbors? Why or why not? Do you think it’s true then that the more secular we become as a nation the more government will exercise its authority? Why or why not?
6. Why should we make sure that we, as Christians, are diligent about the things that really matter? Why should there be a sense of urgency? Is there anything in our country that prohibits us from living this way?

Application

1. Does it really make sense for us to be critical of governing authorities (most of whom don’t even know Christ) if we, as Christians, are not living according to Romans 13:9-14? The first step in setting things right is to get our own act together. What does that mean for you?
2. Since our current government doesn’t really prohibit you from fulfilling the mission of the Church, what should you be busy about today?
3. What are some creative ways we can get involved in local and national solutions to our problems without compromising our Christian witness?