

Union Bethel AME Church Bible Study

Dial-in Number: (425) 436-6260 Access Code: 141997#

Zoom Meeting ID 863 1188 9288, Passcode 782781

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Tuesday, October 13, 2020, 6:30 – 7:30 PM

Romans 13:1-14



Romans 13:1-2

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

While we are to be respectful this section of Romans 13 requires a discussion of what submitting to authorities meant during first century AD. Rome recognized the Jewish people and their religion. Jewish people were not required to worship Caesar as a god. They were allowed to maintain their culture and practices. Paul's guidance is often misapplied. He was speaking to people who recognized authority but did not follow it.

How do we understand God as the final authority?

Romans 13:3-4

3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.

Rulers sometimes can be a terror for both those who do good things and those who do bad things. Those who do bad things can expect wrath from those in authority but there is no guarantee that a bad leader will not be abusive to everyone.

What do we do about abusive leaders?

Romans 13:5-7

5 Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Paul invokes our conscience in our submission to authority. That authority also includes paying taxes (not new!). Our conscience should act with the Holy Spirit to tell us when we are right and tell us when we are wrong. God requests our tithe but also requires that we pay fair wages, give respect, and honor people.

Why is it wrong to not pay living wages to those who work full time? Why is it wrong to decrease a worker's hours to avoid paying for benefits?

Why is it wrong to decrease a worker's hours to avoid paying for benefits?

Romans 13:8-10

8 *Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9* *The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” 10* *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.*

Jesus summed up the law and the prophets in the phrase “Love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love neighbor as self”. Jesus knew the 10 Commandments and yet he gave a simple response to the question of the greatest law. Paul also said not to owe anyone anything but love and that to love fulfills the law.

How does love fulfill the law?

Romans 13:11-14

11 *Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 12* *the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13* *let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14* *Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

This chapter closes with Paul encouraging the church in Rome to awake from sleep, lay aside darkness, and put on light.

In what ways are we asleep in darkness? How do we wake up?
