

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Romans 13:1-7**.
- B. The Bible Question Box statement (#8) read: **What is the role of a Christian in the world of politics? What should I do as a U.S. citizen? What are my responsibilities?**
- C. There are three great institutions set up by God:
 - 1. The **family**.
 - 2. The **government**.
 - 3. The **church**.
- D. We hear a great deal in the media today about the "separation of church and state."
- E. Sadly some use the argument for their own advantage:
 - 1. Wanting to do as they please the hide behind religion and say the State can't interfere.
 - 2. Hiding behind the power of the State others disregard religion's moral code of behavior.
- F. This morning I will talk about a Xian's responsibility to his/her government.

I. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND STATE.

- A. Jesus said that some things are to be given to the state and some things to the church. Taxes are paid to the state and service is "paid" to God (see Mt. 22:17-22).
- B. Governments are supported by taxation; something the church cannot do (Rom. 13:6-7).

For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. **7** Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The church is to be supported by free-will offerings (1Cor. 16:1-2; 2Cor. 9:6-7).
(1Cor 16:1-2) Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. **2** On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.
(2Cor 9:6-7) Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. **7** Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.
- C. Jesus said the church does NOT bear the sword, but the NT says the State does (Jn. 18:36; Rom. 13:4).

(Jn 18:36) Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."
(Rom 13:4) ...for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

II. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND STATE.

- A. The church and the civil state are similar in four areas:
 - 1. Both have a law:
 - a. The church--the NT.
 - b. The state--civil law.
 - 2. Both have members:
 - a. The church--Xians.
 - b. The state--citizens.
 - 3. Both have a territory:
 - a. The church--the heart/mind.
 - b. The state--country/land area.
 - 4. Both have a king:
 - a. The church--Christ.
 - b. The state--president.
- B. Jesus, Paul, and Peter said that it is possible to live acceptable in both the church and the state at the same time:
 - 1. Jesus said it in Jn. 19:10-11; see Mt. 17:24-27.

Pilate therefore said[^] to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" **11** Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me up to you has the greater sin."

2. Paul said it in Rom. 13:1-2.
Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. **2** Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
 3. Peter said it in 1Pet. 2:13-14.
Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, **14** or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.
- C. Two extremes to avoid:
1. He did didn't say that you don't have to obey the laws you don't agree with. As long as the law is not sinful it must be obeyed (seat belts, speed limits, etc.).
 2. Just because something is legal doesn't make it godly or righteous. Civil laws do not give Xians license to do things that are sinful (lottery, abortion, drink alcohol, etc.). Just because the law will allow young people into PG-13 movies and R-rated movies doesn't mean it is right to go and view (or rent) them.
- D. In most cases the church and the state are mutually exclusive, meaning it is possible to serve the one and not violate the other.

III. EXAMPLES OF SERVING BOTH THE CHURCH AND STATE.

- A. Jesus subjected Himself to the civil powers of His day:
1. Jesus paid taxes, and did the work of God too (Mt. 17:27; Jn. 17:4).
(Mt 17:27) "But, lest we give them offense, go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a stater. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."
(Jn 17:4) "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."
 2. Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested even though he was unjustly and illegally treated (Mt. 26:47-56).
 3. Jesus refused to allow His followers to mount any kind of offensive against the government (Jn. 18:10; Lk. 22:50-51).
(Jn 18:10) Simon Peter therefore having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.
(Lk 22:51) But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him.
- B. The apostle Paul used his Roman citizenship for his advantage:
1. It kept him from receiving a beating (Ac. 22:25-29).
 2. It allowed him to use the government to go to Rome (Ac. 26:29-32).
 3. He disagreed with the person, but respected the office (Ac. 23:1-5).
 4. Paul believed that the State had the right to use capital punishment (Ac. 25:11).
"If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die;"

IV. TWO SPECIAL CASES.

- A. See Acts 5:27-29.
And when they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. And the high priest questioned them, **28** saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." **29** But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men."
When the civil laws of the land and mankind directly contradict those of God, the Xian is bound to serve the higher authority of God.
- B. See Mt. 18:15-17.
"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **16** "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. **17** "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

1. Jesus gives three possible solutions to disagreements before a Xian should have to go to court against a brother. If they cannot solve their problems one on one, or with witnesses, or in front of the entire congregation--they may sue.
2. It would be much better however to allow the brethren to solve such matters for they can give better judgments (see 1Cor. 6:1-8).

V. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN TO DO?

- A. There are 5 things that a Christian must do politically to be in the favor w/God and man:
 1. **Pray for your civil leaders** (1Tim. 2:1-2).
First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
 2. **Obey all the civil laws of the land** (Rom. 13:1-2; 1Pet. 2:13-14). Peter and Paul said these things while the brethren were living under a government that was hostile to Xianity!
(Rom 13:1-2) Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. **2** Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. **(1Pet 2:13-14)** Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, **14** or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.
 3. **Pay your taxes** (Rom. 13:6-7).
For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. **7** Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.
 4. **Serve when called** (military, jury duty, appointed or elected office, voting judge), see Titus 3:1-2.
Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, **2** to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.
 5. **Vote and try to change things according to the law** (illicit conduct is not tolerated, see Lk. 22:50-53).
- B. When we keep the civil law of the land we are doing God's will in that way.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Things to remember from this lesson:
 1. It is possible in most cases to serve the State and the church.
 2. We are to be thankful for the government we live under that allows us to practice our Xianity with little or no fear of persecution.
- B. Being a law abiding citizen of the State is a good thing. Being a law abiding member of Christ's church is even better.
- C. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.