

Paul's Letter to the Romans:



THE PINNACLE OF
CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

What Drives a Man to Drive the Speed Limit? Romans 13:1-7

Father, we come to you this morning confessing to you our great need. Father we need and we desire that your Spirit will come now and take the things of Christ and make them real to our hearts. Blessed Spirit, I ask for you to come and take the written word and since you are its true author and therefore its infallible teacher, we pray for you to come and instruct us in the truth of your Son. Open the book we pray to see what you have accomplished on our behalf, In Christ. In whose name, we pray, Amen.

Sometimes, just because they are citizens of a country, men and women have to do things that are hard. That is true whether a man is an American, a Russian, an African or a Spaniard. It certainly was true of Sullivan Ballou. Sullivan Ballou was a major in the Second Regiment of the Rhode Island Volunteers. Sullivan only thirty-two years old had overcome being an orphan and had built for himself a promising career as a lawyer and as a congressman. He was also building a good life with his beloved wife Sarah and their two young sons. Sullivan was an ardent union man and a devoted supporter of Abraham Lincoln. In the spring of 1861, Sullivan and his regiment left Providence for Washington

D.C. to try to help save the Union. He wrote the following letter to his wife from a camp outside the nation's capital and it is an extraordinary letter.

It is a passionate love letter as well as a profound meditation on his willingness to do whatever was required of him. This wonderful letter remained obscure however until 129 years later, when Ken Burns used it on the amazing series "**The Civil War.**" Sullivan wrote his letter on July 14th, while awaiting orders.¹ Now, while I read this letter, ask yourself this question: What is it that motivated him to do something so hard?

My very dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days – perhaps tomorrow. Lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write lines that may fall under your eye when I shall be no more.

Our movement may be one of a few days' duration and full of pleasure – and it may be one of severe conflict and death to me. Not my will, but thine O God, be done. If it is necessary that I should fall on the battlefield for my country, I am ready, I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in, the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter... And I am willing—perfectly willing—to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this Government...

My dear wife, ...I cannot describe to you my feelings on this calm summer night, when two thousand men are sleeping around me, many of them enjoying the last, perhaps, before that of death – and I, suspicious that Death is creeping behind me with his fatal dart, am communing with God, my country, and thee.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break...

The memories of the blissful moments I have spent with you come creeping over me, and I feel most gratified to God and to you that I have enjoyed them so long. And hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes of future years, when God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and seen our sons grow up to honorable

manhood around us. I have, I know, but few and small claims upon Divine Providence, but something whispers to me – perhaps it is the wafted prayer of my little (boy) Edgar – that I shall return to my loved ones unharmed. If I do not, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I love you, and when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will whisper your name.

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless and foolish I have oftentimes been! How gladly would I wash out with my tears every little spot upon your happiness...to shield you and my children from harm. But I cannot.

*I must watch you from the spirit land and hover near you, while you buffet the storms with **our** precious little freight, and wait with sad patience till we meet to part no more.*

But, O Sarah ... do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for thee, for we shall meet again. As for my little boys, they will grow as I have done, and never know a father's love and care.

Sarah, I have unlimited confidence in your maternal care and your development of their characters. O Sarah, I wait for you there. Come to me, and lead thither my children.²

Sullivan Ballou wrote the letter on July 14th, while awaiting orders that would take him to Manassas, where he and twenty-seven of his men would die one week later at the Battle of Bull Run.

What drives a man to do such a hard thing? What is it that drives a man, to leave house and home, wife and kids, security and future, what drives a man to leave those things behind, and to go and do something so hard? What is it that drives a man to do the hard thing? That's the question we are going to answer in our text this morning.

This morning we are going to look at Romans 13:1-7 and what we are going to see is this: **sometimes Christians, because of the gospel, have to do things that are hard.**

Now, we remember from our last two studies, that we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices, and that we should live the way we live, because of everything Christ has done for us. Well, since we have to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, one of the ways we do that is to not take vengeance into our own hands. We may not get even. Although it may seem fair, although, it may make us feel better, and even if it seems like someone is extremely deserving of our wrath and indignation... We cannot, we may not, lash out in vengeance toward anyone, although they may even deserve it. Individuals are forbidden to lash out in wrath. Wrath is left for God. We can't be impatient and take out vengeance on our own even if it seems that God is a little slow in doing justice.

The Bible says that, **"He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.** (Jer. 34:7) Punishment is God's job. So, when Paul takes us to the first part of chapter 13, he says, that God uses the government to carry out his own will when it comes to the execution of wrath and justice.

God uses the government to do justice. Justice and wrath are not for us, even though there are times in everyone's boy's life, when he meets a bully.

When I was about 6-7 there was a kid who lived across the street from me, and his name was Nelson. Nelson was 10 and he used to beat me up about every day. Every day, I would come home crying, and hurt, because Nelson liked to beat me up. Well, my mom I think, got sick of it. So, she gave me a pep talk, you know, the kind. She told me that boys had very sensitive heads of hair, and Nelson, had a very thick, curly head of jet-black hair that would fit nicely in my 6 year old hands. So, my Mom told me that next time Nelson hit me, that I should

grab his hair and hang on for dear life, or until at least, I had a lot of hair in my hands. A few days later, it happened.

I was riding my bike, and Nelson started to pick on me, and he wanted me to get off of my bike. I refused, and the fight was on. The next thing I knew, I had all this hair in my hands, and I was swinging him around like a merry-go-round. Finally, I let go... and Nelson went flying... and Nelson never bothered me again.

Now, obviously, that is the negative example. Individual vengeance is forbidden. As a matter of fact Paul is going to say that justice and revenge is the job of the government. Now, if you are like me, you like to see bullies get what they deserve. I don't know if I'm the only one, but I like to see people get what they really deserve, (except me of course). But Paul says, No! That's God's job, and in our section this morning Paul is going to say that God has even chosen the government to carry out justice and vengeance. So we have to abstain from carrying out our own brand of justice. Even if it's hard, we have to obey. **You see because of the Gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** The hard thing that Paul has in mind here is this idea: Christians must be subject to the governing authority. Let's look at Romans 13:1-7.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:1**...Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴ For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment

on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

You see as a result of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.

But who in their right mind wants to submit to the government? Let's take our government for instance. Without stating any political affiliation, I believe, quite sincerely, that I pay too much in income taxes. I pay too much in property taxes, too much in sales tax. I pay all these taxes all to support a government that protects a woman's "**right**" to murder her unborn child, and it keeps alive men and women who deserve death. (As I said, I'm not stating my political affiliation.) But, do I really have to support and even submit myself to that kind of government? Paul's answer... Absolutely.

(No, really do I have to actually submit myself to that type of government? They don't for the most part, have a Christian worldview, they don't support us, and they are sometimes antagonistic to us. Do I really have to subject myself that type of government's authority?)

The answer is yes!

Think for a minute who it is the apostle Paul is writing to. He is writing to a church in Rome. That church was under the rule and persecution of Nero, Rome's worst Emperor.

Nero came into power in October of 54 A.D.³ Nero hated Christians. In 64 A.D., a great fire ravaged Rome. Historians suspect that Nero had the fires set, so that he could start an ambitious building campaign. We don't know if he had the fires started or not, but what we do know is that he used the fires to stir up hatred toward Christians. He blamed the Christians for the fires. Tacitus, a Roman historian in 116 A.D. said, **"the blaze came to be believed to be an official act. So in order to quash the rumor, Nero blamed it on and applied the cruelest punishment to those sinners, whom ordinary people call Christians, hating them for their sinful behaviour. The originator of this name, Christ, was sentenced to torture by Procurator Pontius Pilate, during the reign of Tiberius, but although it checked for a moment, the deadly cult erupted again, not just in Judea, the source of its evil, but even in Rome, where all the sins and scandals of the world gather and are glorified."**⁴

The Christians were hated. They were tortured for their faith.

Nero wanted to find scapegoats, and he did. The Christians experienced every imaginable torment. Some were burned alive. Some were sewn into the skins of wild animals and given to dogs to tear into pieces. Some were crucified. Some martyrs were tortured and put on display in a circus with Nero on a throne watching with great amusement. Nero also used Christians to light up his gardens in the evenings. Some form of accelerant would be put on the martyr and then the martyr would be hoisted onto a pole and then it would be lit, so that Nero could walk through his garden with his admirers. The brutality done to the Christians actually backfired a little. The crowds who once laughed and scoffed at the Christians actually began to feel sorry for them. Sympathy began to swing in favor of the martyrs. The people of Rome began to realize that

Christians were being put to death not for starting the fire but to cover Nero's crimes and to fill his appetite for utter cruelty.

One historian said, **"that compassion for the meek followers of Jesus, whose blameless conduct was apparent to many, led to a new wave of conversions"**.⁵ As Sinclair Ferguson said, when quoting Tertullian, **"You see the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."**⁶

Now, why have I labored this point? Brothers and sisters, it was to **this church**, that Paul says in Romans 13:1....

^{NIV} **Romans 13:1**...Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

The church in Rome received a letter from Paul and they were being persecuted, hated, and despised and Paul says, **"Oh yea, by the way"**, that government has been established by God, and, you must submit to that same government.

What? Are you kidding me? I have to submit to that kind of government? Paul says, yes! You must. You must and there are two reasons why. The first reason is that God establishes the government. That's a positive reason.

Governing authorities are established by God and that includes just and unjust governments. God's ultimate purpose in justice may be hard to see but it is still true. God allowed Pharaoh to rule tyrannically over his people and He allowed Pilate to sentence Christ to death. Therefore, individual rebellion against these authorities is the same as rebellion against God. Which leads us to our second

point of why we must submit ourselves to the government. It's a negative reason. Look at verse two.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:2...** Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

If you resist authority you are actually resisting God. If we do that we can expect to be punished. But what if the government is stupid?

"There was an Idaho sheep rancher, that was approached one day by a stranger in a suit. The stranger told the sheep rancher, "If I can guess how many sheep you have, could I have one of them?" Thinking this was impossible the rancher agreed. "1795 sheep" the man in the suit said. The rancher was stunned, because the man in the suit was right. The rancher told the man in the suit to pick it out. The man in the suit selected the animal and he slung it over his shoulder and started to walk away. The rancher then said, "Hey if I can tell you who you work for can I have that animal back?" The man in the suit said, "Okay." The rancher said, "You work for the government." The man in the suit said, "How did you know?" The rancher said, "Put my dog down, and I'll tell you."

We don't think too highly of the government and sometimes rightfully so.

Here is where most people will ask the question, **"But what if the government wants me to do something wrong?"** That's the question I had. What if I have to do something wrong? What if they command me to do something wrong?

And I'm not sure if we will actually ever experience a government telling us to do something that is wrong. But what if we do? Turn to Acts 5:27.

^{NIV} **Acts 5:27**...Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." ²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

I think Peter is clear enough. If we are ever commanded to do something that is contrary to God's clear commands, we are to **"obey God rather than man."**

There may come a day, when our government tells us to stop preaching this message. If they do, we must **"obey God rather than man"**. If anyone ever tries to stop us from preaching Christ and Him crucified, we won't stop. We will **"obey God rather than man"**. Now, we may have to suffer for it. **Sometimes Christians, because of the gospel, have to do the hard thing.** If the government ever commands us to perform immoral, non-Christian, unbiblical acts, we will say, we must **"obey God rather than man."** For instance: During the Nazi reign of power, Christians in Germany were told by the German government to have no dealing with the Jews. They weren't allowed to do business with them, or to be friends with them, or to even acknowledge them. The Christians who refused to obey were right. **Sometimes, because of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** Corrie ten Boom and her family were right to hide Jews. Many people suffered great loss in doing right in that era. And sometimes, **Christians, because of the gospel have to do things that are hard.** Sometimes, we must **"obey God rather than man."** That is the grid that we must use.

But if the government commands us to do something that is **not** against the clear teaching of scripture, we must obey it. As a matter of fact, if they are obeyed, Paul says, we don't have much to worry about. Look at verse 3 of Romans 13.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:3...** For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

Generally, speaking there is no reason to be afraid if we are doing the right thing. Now, I said, generally speaking. (Usually, it's true.) It's a general rule of thumb here for Paul. It's almost proverbial, which means (it's usually the case.) If we obey the speed limit, it's a rare thing to get a speeding ticket. Usually, when I see those blue and red lights suddenly flashing behind me, and my heart skips a beat, it's usually because, I was speeding. But if we don't speed, generally speaking we don't have to worry about speeding tickets. That's the principle here that Paul is talking about. Obey, and most of the time, you will be treated as if you obeyed. Disobey, and then you should expect consequences. This is generally true, and Paul is making this point because the government exists for our good. Look at verse four.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:4...** For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

The government is for our good. How is the government for our good? The wrong doer gets punished, and justice is carried out. Imagine a world, where the evildoer had no one to restrain him. As poor a job as it seems our government does sometimes, they do restrain evil. You see God uses the state as a means of carrying out His justice. The government is God's servant. One of the ways God carries out his justice is through the government. The proof: there are people on death row, and there are thousands and thousands of people in prison.

You see the government's job is to do justice. One man said, **"What the individual Christian must not do what they do out of a motive of revenge, the state may legitimately do in the pursuit of justice."**⁸

Now, why in the world is Paul spelling all this out for us? Because, you see sometimes, **because of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** Some of the things that are hard are to submit to authority, even the government. Remember, we have a good reason to submit to authority. We should because God has ordained the government, for our good, to bring about justice and to carry out his purpose. We have to keep that in mind. But most of all, even when obedience is hard to do, even when submission to the government seems hard, we must submit, because of the gospel. Look at verse five.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:5...** Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Our subjection to the state should be for more reasons than for fear of punishment, because we know that the state is playing its part in God's eternal purposes. But Paul also says here that we should submit to authorities because of conscience. Listen to how Augustine explains this verse. I think he says it pretty well.

"...for the sake of conscience. That is to say, you should not submit simply to avoid the authorities anger, which can be done by pretense, but so that you might be assured in your conscience that you are doing this out of love for him. For you submit at your Lord's command."⁹

You see we have to obey and submit ourselves to the state, because negatively, we will be punished when we don't, and positively, because... well, because of the gospel.

Christ has put the government into place as a means to accomplish his eternal purpose, and we need to keep that in mind when we think about disobeying the government.

We'll come back to that point in a moment, but I think it's becoming clear beloved, that, **because of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** It's hard to submit to authority, I know, I don't like to do it. But, I do know that Christ, came and submitted himself to the Father and he took on flesh, and even endured and submitted himself to a government that he was sovereign over. He **"humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."** (Phil 2:8b). He left his throne and the worship of thousands of angels and he came and submitted himself to His Father. He said in John 6:38, **"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."**

He did that for me and for you, and as a result of his obedience, as a result of the gospel, I should submit myself, and I should obey. You see, beloved, **because of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** One of the reasons I have never robbed a bank is because I might get 25 years to life. Right? If I get caught, I will go to prison. But that's not enough reason to obey is it? I should be so grateful for Christ sacrifice for me that it would prick my conscience, even to think of such a sin. That's what Paul is driving at when he says for the *"sake of conscience."* We should have more to motivate us to righteousness, than the fact

that we might go to jail or get a ticket if we don't. **What is it that drives a man to drive the speed limit? What is it that taxes a man to pay his taxes?** What is it that motivates us to obey and to submit? We should be motivated by the gospel. Beloved, **because of the gospel, Christians have to do things that are hard.** Look at verse six.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:6...**This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

Obviously, the Apostle Paul was not a very good republican. He says nothing here of a limited government, or the idea that an oppressive government should be fought against. He doesn't say, **"If you don't like your taxes, start a tax revolt"**. He doesn't say, **"if you think you are being treated unfairly by your government, just get on a ship and move across the pond to a *New World*"**. He says, **"Pay your taxes."** Are you serious? Yes! Paul says pay your taxes because the government is a servant of God, and they receive their pay by taxes. Even Jesus said to pay our taxes. Mark 12:14-17.

^{NIV} **Mark 12:14...**They came to him and said, **"Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? ¹⁵ Should we pay or shouldn't we?"** But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. **"Why are you trying to trap me?"** he asked. **"Bring me a denarius and let me look at it."** ¹⁶ They brought the coin, and he asked them, **"Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"** **"Caesar's,"** they replied. ¹⁷ Then Jesus said to them, **"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."** And they were amazed at him.

Jesus affirmed here the lawfulness of paying taxes as not only legitimate, but actually, it's one of the means that God uses to sustain and rule his creation. You

see the government is ordained by God to maintain order, to restrain the wicked, and to further the purposes of God.

Colossians 1:16 is clear.

^{NIV} **Colossians 1:16**...For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

1 Peter 2:13-14 seems to echo Romans 13 as well.

^{NIV} **1 Peter 2:13**...Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

You see even if it's taxes we should pay those taxes, because, Christians, **because of the gospel, have to do things that are hard.**

Even if it's just regular obedience to the government, beloved, Christians, **because of the gospel, have to do things that are hard.**

Let's finish up now. Look at Romans 13:7.

^{NIV} **Romans 13:7**...Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

You see when Paul wrote this, **"Taxes were everywhere. There were taxes on Land, there were poll taxes, there were royalty taxes, taxes on produce, taxes on imports and exports... you name it, and it was taxed."**¹⁰

And Paul says, pay all of those taxes. As a matter of fact, pay anything you owe. Whatever it is you owe, pay it! If it's respect, pay it! If it's honor, pay it! Even if it's hard, do it. You see, **it's because of the gospel, that Christians have to do things that are hard.**

What is it that motivates a man to do the hard things? For Paul, it's the gospel. You see he spent the first eleven chapters explaining, and preaching, and teaching who we are and what we are, because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in the gospel. Because Christ, came in utter submission to the will of His Father, I should be motivated to obey and submit to authority. Because Christ, came humbly and even bore in His body the sin of those who don't like to submit to authority, I should respond gratefully by doing things that are hard like submitting to the government. Christ came in full submission and obeyed even to the death. And he did it for you and for me, and as a result of that, we beloved, we have to do things that are hard. Obedience is hard. Submission to authority is hard. Yes, we have to submit to the government. We have to pay taxes. We have to do all that. There are many hard things that we must do.

For instance, because of the gospel we may have to endure a mate who is not a believer, or who is not very good to us. We may have to endure regular ole' persecution. Paul doesn't allow lashing out in vengeance when we are being oppressed. Even if it's hard, we must obey.

Let me ask you this morning, what is it that motivates you to do the hard things? What is it that motivates a man to take a \$70,000 dollar pay-cut to find a teaching job so he could go to Bible College? What is that motivates a mother to take care of 15 kids so that she could stay home with her own kids? What is that motivates

parents to forgo buying themselves Christmas or birthday presents just so their kids could open presents on Christmas and could have good birthdays? What is that motivates parents to make sacrifice after sacrifice for a son who at the time is so ungrateful, but wishes now that he would have been more grateful?

What is that motivates a man to teach school all day, and then go to seminary in the afternoon to study the Bible, to come home and be with his kids, and to then study late at night to only get a few hours sleep? And then to do that all over again day after day for some 20 years? What is that motivates a man to forgo money, a comfortable existence, and ambition, just to become a passionate teacher and preacher of the Bible? What is it that motivates a man and wife to endure heart attacks, to endure the loss of a mother, and now to even endure cancer with dignity, while maintaining a passionate love for each other? What is it that motivated my Mom and Dad to do those things? A lot of things motivate my Mom and Dad, but the one thing I know for sure... the overwhelming motivation for my Mom and Dad is a love for the gospel. That's how they can endure and even do the hard thing in hard times.

What is that motivates you to obey? What is that motivates you to do the hard thing? Beloved, it's because of the gospel Christians have to do things that are hard.

¹ From the website – <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/23.htm>

² Taken verbatim from the PBS television series, "The Civil War" read and produced by Ken Burns- also found on the web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/23.htm>

³ The Date for Nero's reign came from the online version of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia- http://.bible-history.com/nero/NEROThe_International_Standard-Bible.htm

⁴ Tacitus Annals xv-44.2-3 - All text is available under the terms of the GNU Free documentation license.

⁵ Christian History Institute – an article “Nero unleashed First Wave of Terror” – found on www.gospelcom.net/chi/ARCHIVEF/06/daily.shtml

⁶ A sermon preached at a Ligonier Conference- “The blood of the martyrs” by Sinclair Ferguson

⁷ Sermon by Guy McGraw, “You and Your Government”- taken from sermoncentral.com

⁸ New Geneva Study Bible- from the study note on verse 4, page 1790

⁹ Quote taken from – Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture Volume 6 on Romans, IVP, page 328 – also from P.F. Landes, ed. Augustine on Romans, Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press 1982.

¹⁰ The Message of Romans- John R. W. Stott from The Bible Speaks today series- page 346

Documents for further study: Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 23. Of the Civil Magistrate

1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public good, and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.

3. Civil magistrates, may not assume themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of the civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And as Jesus Christ hath appointed regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder the due exercise thereof, among voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence or abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever; and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

4. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute or other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates just and legal

authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them; from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the pope any power and jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and least of all, to deprive them of the dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

Roman Emperor Timeline

The Twelve Caesars

<u>Caesar</u>	<u>Birth/Death</u>	<u>Reign</u>
1. Julius Caesar	102-44 BC	49-44 BC
2. Augustus	63 BC-14 AD	27 BC-14AD
3. Tiberius	42 BC-37 AD	14-37 AD
4. Caligula	12-41 AD	37-41 AD
5. Claudius	10 BC- 54 AD	41-54 AD
6. Nero	37-68 AD	54-68 AD
7. Galba	3 BC-69 AD	68-69 AD
8. Otho	32-69 AD	69-69 AD
9. Vitellius	15-69 AD	69-69 AD
10. Vespasian	9-79 AD	69-79 AD
11. Titus	39-81 AD	79-81 AD
12 Domitian	51-96 AD	81-96 AD

The Date and Occasion of Romans

“Paul wrote Romans shortly before his visit to Jerusalem with the gift from the Gentile congregations (Rom 15:25, Acts 24:17). Internal indications suggesting that at this time he was a resident of Corinth include the reference to Phoebe, a member of the church of Cenchræa, the port of Corinth (16:1-2), the references to Gaius as his host (1 Cor 1:14), and to Erastus (Acts 19:22, 2 Tim 4:20). The time of the writing was probably during his three months in Greece, described in Acts 20:2, 3. While it is not possible to fix a date, it is known that Gallio (before whom Paul appeared in Acts 18:12) was proconsul (normally a one-year appointment) in Achaia in AD 52. Paul was in Corinth for “a good while” (Acts 18:18) presumably during the period AD 51-53. He then sailed to Ephesus for a brief visit, and went to Caesaria and probably Jerusalem as well as Antioch (Acts 18:22). Returning through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23) to Ephesus, he was a resident there for about three years (Acts 19:8,10) before deciding to go to Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21). The earliest possible date for the writing of Romans, therefore, is towards the end of AD 54; but a later date leaves more leeway for Paul’s many activities, so the letter is best dated some time between the end of AD 55 and the early months of AD 57.” *Quote from the introduction to the Epistle to the Romans (New Geneva Study Bible).*

John Calvin

“The thirteenth, (chapter of Romans) for the; most part, speaks of the authority of magistrates. We may hence undoubtedly gather that there were then some unruly persons, who thought Christian liberty could not exist without overturning the civil power.” *Taken from “The Argument” portion at the beginning of his commentary on Romans 13- The Ages Digital Library page 26.*

On my interpretation of the word “Submit” in Romans 13:1 and 13:5 –

The Greek word for “submit” (NIV) or be in “subjection” (NAS) is the Greek word “hupotasso” which means to submit or obey. That word is used in Galatians 2:5- “ *But we did not yield in **subjection** to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.*” There are some that argue that the word does not mean obedience. Where there can be a case made for that, it seems hard to explain the usage any other way in Luke 2:51 “ *And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in **subjection** to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*” It seems that the plain reading supports an interpretation for obedience as being at least part of the meaning of the word. Christ was in subjection to his mother, therefore he obeyed. That seems to be a plain reading of the verse and the usage of the word.

I recognize however, that more learned and godly men disagree with this study of the word. C.E.B. Cranfield for instance says in his commentary, “*the meaning obey is clearly excluded*”, (Cranfield page 320). Dr. Lloyd-Jones when he says in his commentary, “*its root meaning, a military word denoting soldiers arranged in order under their general and subject to his commands. There they are, lined up on the parade ground, awaiting their orders. That is the original meaning of the word.*” (Lloyd-Jones Commentary on Chapter 13, page 20).

My question is, “What soldier is submitting without obeying?” But I don’t think I necessarily disagree with either of these two scholars, I probably just don’t say it as well. Lloyd-Jones says it pretty clear later in his exposition, “*Paul is describing an attitude of mind where we recognize certain things as being in position, and act and behave in accordance with that recognition.*”(p. 23). This is the meaning then. Our position, in light of our government that has been placed over us by Christ (John 19:11, Prov. 8:15,16), is that of a citizen. Being that is our place to be a citizen, we are indeed to obey. That is why I believe Paul gets so specific as to what being subject actually is. He says, “pay”, and “render” which are words obviously to be obeyed. Because we are subject, we in turn show our subjection in obedience. Thus my conclusion: that being subject and being obedient are distinct, but also linked. I pray that I did justice to the word in my exposition, and I pray most of all that it is at least clear.

SDG

Gage Browning 04'