

The Christian and the (unbelieving) state

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[0 : 00] So as we look to the Lord to help us, we're thinking about this subject of being a Christian in this world where there are non-believing powers, authorities, governing authorities, the state, and so on.

So it's a bit of an unusual subject, but actually there in the Bible, and it's actually a very important subject because it touches the lives of each one of us.

And all Christians throughout this period of history, we don't live in heaven yet. We live on this earth where there are governments of all sorts of shapes and sizes, all sorts of different methods of government, but there's always something.

So I've tried to think of some questions. I suppose they're a little bit slanted towards the situation that we're in. So here's a question. If I stick to this 20-mile-an-hour limit on my way to church, I'm going to be late.

Wouldn't it be better for me to go faster to be at church because that would please God? That might be a very relevant question to some people.

[1 : 20] So there's a question. Here's another question. The government, so this is particularly for us, isn't it? The government have redefined marriage.

They're supposed to be Christian. Aren't they therefore all hypocrites, cheats, and deserves to be ridiculed, pilloried, shot, whatever? However, there's another question.

It's sort of about attitude to the government when it doesn't do what you think it ought to do. The present government have made it illegal to pray, but Paul says I should submit to the governing authorities, so what should I do?

Now, the present government hasn't made it illegal to pray, but in the days of Daniel, of course, the government did make it illegal to pray. And in the days of Paul, things like that were on the cards in that under certain circumstances, you had to pray to the emperor.

And if you didn't, then you were in trouble. So here's a question about, well, I'll tell you what, question one, I think, is about what is really spirituality.

[2 : 27] What does it look like? Is it all to do with being in church, or is there more to it than that? Question two is about what, in a godly way and in a realistic way, we should expect of government.

And question three is to do with the limits of obedience and where we have to start not doing what the government asks us to do.

And there are many more things that we could think about as well in this very big subject. So, for example, we live in a parliamentary democracy, so it's part of our citizenship that we can question our representatives and indeed choose our representatives.

So we've got an interaction and a responsibility and a possibility that in the days of empire, they didn't really have. So there's a lot going on there.

So we'll do our best to look at it this morning in a fairly straightforward way. So let's look, first of all, at the context.

[3 : 33] Excuse me. Why does Paul suddenly go from loving one another in the end of chapter 12 into chapter 13, submitting to the governing authorities?

It does fit. In the immediate context, he's chalked in chapter 12, verse 2. This is sort of his main theme, living in a way which tests and approves God's will.

Chapter 2, verse 2, it says he's good, pleasing, perfect will. So the idea of good, the goodness of God's will is there.

And if you noticed in chapter 13, there's a lot about good, doing good, what is good in society and so on. And there's another link from the end of chapter 12 because he had said at the end of chapter 12 in verse 19, Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath.

It is mine to avenge. I will repay, says the Lord. And he's talking about a situation where you might have got ill-treated. And he says it's not right for you on a personal level to take vengeance.
[4 : 48] Suppose somebody's scratched your car and you know who it is. It's not right for you to go back and scratch their car. But there are provisions ahead of the final day of judgment to put that right or to bring justice into that situation.

And that's where the governing authorities come in. So there is a link in the immediate context. In the larger context, Paul is talking to people in the world of the gospel. So it's not just limited to the nation of Israel, but spread out into the whole world. And you remember that he's thinking then of the Gentile world, which is under sin. He's spent a long time saying this. He's not being rosy-eyed about it. He's not saying, oh, you all live in a wonderful world. He's saying, no, you live in the world where the nations, the Gentiles, they're sinful. There's the vast spell of idolatry cast over the empire. They worship idols. And the emperor, well, we know he's not a Christian.

[6 : 08] He's a pagan. And as history goes on, he will be expecting people to worship him as if he were a god. So he's realistic about that. That's part of the context. And then for his Jewish readers, they too are under sin.

Jerusalem and the land of Israel was occupied by Rome. So they have known for quite a while what it is to deal with the authorities that don't believe the Bible.

And many of the Jews have been dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. So they too have faced this issue of how you live when you're in a context where people don't believe the Bible.

And of course, there is the Jewish thing that they actually have rejected their king. So that's the larger context.

And then you can fit it into a context of the whole Bible if you wish to take a really big view of it. So the idea of the pagan nations has been in the Bible for a long, long time.

[7 : 21] So Israel was told to be God's particular people. So there they are. The pagan nations are all around.

But Israel is different from those nations. And she's always been told to be different. She has different food laws and a different ethos. A different way of doing things.

And of course, a different God. Israel has always been meant to be a witness to the nations. That the nations were supposed to look on and say, What wise laws you have. What a wonderful God who hears you when you pray to you.

We wish we could be like you. And of course, there's another strand of the Old Testament which sees Israel in conflict with the nations and that she will be triumphant over the nations.

And the king, as we were singing right at the beginning, will rule wherever the son makes his journey. So the king of Israel will, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, rule over Egypt.

[8 : 28] And he will rule over Africa. And he will rule over Europe. And he will rule over all the different places. And we've got another couple of things here during the history of Israel.

That at certain times, her relationship with the nations became one of they dominated Israel. And the nations attacked Israel and were allowed to defeat Israel and either defeat her or defeat her and take her into exile.

So Assyria did that. And Babylon did that. And what's going on there? And the prophets say God is using the nations as a stick in his hand to punish Israel, to show her that she's been disobedient.

So apparently, even in the Old Testament, God uses foreign kings to do his will and fulfill his purposes, even though they don't realize that's what's happening, even though it never entered their heads to do anything that the God of Israel wanted.

And yet, that's exactly what they did. And you could add to that the lessons of exile when they were taken to a foreign country. You remember there's a memorable verse in Jeremiah which says, you're in a foreign city.

[9 : 56] Don't try and put bombs under the bridges and knock out their infrastructure. Pray for the peace of the city. Because if the city where God's put you, even if it's a foreign city, even if that, even though it's a foreign city, if it prospers, you will prosper.

Pray for the peace of the city. So they had to learn something of coexistence and they also had to learn how to be different. So for example, the book of Esther is dealing with this whole matter of how do you keep your spirituality in the midst of a foreign regime and can God work through that?

Remember that Esther said, you've been put here for just such a time as this. So I put that in a context of the whole Bible. The whole thing of God's people and the nations is not a new subject. There's a lot already there. So that's context. Are you with me so far? Yep.

So let me, before we get right into the passage, I would like to suggest two important ideas that will help us to think how this fits. And the first idea is the sovereignty of God.

[11:19] The sovereignty of God. By which I mean that God rules as king over everything. God rules as king over everything.

So he rules in the hearts of his willing people. So if you're a Christian, you would say, absolutely, God is my king. What he says, I will do.

Where he sends me, I will go. God rules in the hearts of his willing people. There's more to God's sovereignty than that. God rules over things.

the world of the world of stars and planets and subatomic particles and Higgs boson and the world of animals and the sun and the rain.

They're not outside God's control. He rules in a different way to the willing rule over his people but he still rules over, well it says, doesn't it, Jesus says, he sends the sun and the rain on the good and the bad alike.

[12:37] So he rules over everything in that sense and then also he rules in his sovereignty over unwilling people, unwilling kings, unwilling nations, rebels.

he rules over them, their fortunes, their history, even the decisions that they make where they think this is nothing to do with God at all. So for example, Pharaoh in Egypt said, I'm going to do what I think.

I don't recognize the Lord God of Israel. I will do my own thing and God says, well there you are doing that but actually you're just serving me.

I've raised you up for this very purpose to show my power and the same is true of Nebuchadnezzar who said, look at me, look at the empire I've got and God said to Nebuchadnezzar, I've given you this power.

You didn't get it yourself, it's given by God. So first thought to have in the back of our minds the sovereignty of God, the real extent to which God rules.

[13:51] There aren't little pockets where God says, oh dear, I can't do very much about that, oh dear, that's happening all by itself, I can't touch that. It's all under God's rule, one way or another, the sovereignty of God.

Second important idea, we can call it common grace, which is a very funny word for it because common might have the idea of being rather unworthy but it's not meant to mean that, it's meant to be spread very wide, all over the place.

God's grace, his kindness, which goes everywhere. So I've put it in other words that God has not totally abandoned the world he created.

God has not totally abandoned the world he created. So I'm thinking of his little timeline going from creation, so that's how God originally made things, to the fall, which is how things are, now that sin is in this world, and then going forward to glory, which is what it will be one day.

And God rules over all of these. If we think of creation, creation, though we know that the world fell very quickly, but the idea of the created world is that God is the king over everything, so I put a crown right at the top there, and that underneath him there are other structures.

[15:36] There are big kings and lesser kings and so on, so there are authority structures of various sorts, which are not the function of sin, but the function of creation.

So within that, there is the structure, for example, of the family. So I put a husband and wife there, and children, and there is an order built into creation, and this is a good gift of God.

So that's how things were in creation, creation, and now we live in a world where we have sin, so I've put a little picture of the fall, so we still have big kings and lesser kings, and we still have people being married, and we still have families.

It's not so simple now, because sometimes you get conflict between kingdoms, like we have in Ukraine at the moment, or in Syria, and sometimes we have conflict within the family, and sometimes we have children falling out with their other brothers and sisters, so sin affects these things, but the order is still there.

God hasn't totally withdrawn all his good gifts. We still have order, we still have marriage, we still have family, so in this world there's a mixture of order and disorder.

[17 : 10] God still, in his common grace, gives us these good gifts. Of course, in the world to come it will all be fulfilled, but I wasn't really going to talk about that today.

So that's two ideas to have in our mind, the sovereignty of God, and what we call common grace, and the more you think about it, the more wonderful God's sovereignty is, and the more wonderful his common grace is, because we are beneficiaries of his common grace all the time.

So the sun is shining in, and we're grateful for the sun. Well, God sends the sun to everybody, whether they're in church or not, doesn't he? And so on. So at this point, I have to say, I realized that I had only got a limited number of acetate sheets, so my writing gets smaller as I try to fit in what I had to say in all the other sheets.

So just be warned. Here's something that Jesus said, and I think what Paul is saying comes from this. Jesus was asked about paying taxes, and, let's bring that down a little bit, it is in red, not very good, but, and Jesus said quite significantly about, he asked for a coin, it had Caesar's head on it, and he said to his questioners, give to God what is God's, and give to Caesar what is Caesar's. Caesar was the Roman emperor, which is a very interesting thing to say, isn't it? So Jesus doesn't say Caesar has no business here in this world because he's not a Christian.

[19 : 04] He says, no, he does have business, and he says that you, as the followers of Jesus, need to relate to that. You are in some sort of contract with Caesar, you give him what he rightly deserves.

And I think what Paul is saying comes off the back of what Jesus said. So let me try and give you, number one, a main principle, number two, an explanation, number three, a motivation, number four, some specifics, and as we go through, they get shorter and shorter as I realize I've got to put it into less and less space.

So here's the main principle. Chapter 13, everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.

The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Let's think about that. Here's God in his sovereignty who rules over everything and here we have the rulers, perhaps we have Caesar, maybe we have Pontius Pilate, but we have various types of authority and then we have people who either fit into that pattern or resist it.

[20 : 42] So let's notice simply what it says. It refers to these authorities several times the governing authorities. There is no authority except that which God has established.

The authorities have been established by God and he repeats this that God has put them there. There is no authority except that which God has established.

The authorities that exist have been established by God. An interesting statement, isn't it? but he is quite specific about it.

Whether it's David Cameron or whether it's Jason Kitkat or whether it's Caesar or whether it's Pontius Pilate, they have a degree of authority and there is a real sense that God has allowed them to have that or God has put them there.

Do you remember that Jesus said to Pontius Pilate when he was interrogated, you have no authority except what was given you from above? It's a very interesting statement relating to the sovereignty of God and the method of his common grace.

[22 : 04] And so Paul says every soul must submit to the governing authorities. So NIV translates it everyone, the Greek is a bit more specific, every soul.

That's quite a strong statement isn't it? Every soul should submit to the governing authorities. The word submit, there's a little bit of a word play in here on this idea of submission.

It's to do with forming a pattern and the pattern being in the right order and in the right place. So I've done a clunky translation to take the proper place.

Everyone must take the proper place regarding the governing authorities. It's quite a bit about placing things. Come back to that in a moment.

And Paul spells out the opposite. Since God has put those people there, verse 2, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

[23 : 25] So he says you're not to rebel because if you rebel against the authorities, in a sense you're rebelling against God. He doesn't actually put it quite as starkly as that but he says you're

rebelling against what God has instituted and in doing that you bring judgment on yourself.

Another interesting thought of bringing judgment on oneself. That's what he says. And that's his main principle. principle. I've got my notes slightly mixed up here.

That's the main principle and I point out that it's a general principle. So that's the statement of the general principle. It's not an inflexible principle and he hasn't said all he's going to say.

In other words there are going to be tweaks and exceptions in the same sort of way that Jesus said that there's not to be divorce but he made some exceptions or he made an exception in one of the gospels.

So let me say this is a general principle and it needs have more said about it and one thing I'll say at this point is the idea of submission is finding the proper place.

[24 : 48] Finding the proper place. So I would suggest that if the authorities command shall we say they command all the men to take up weapons and go and commit genocide against the inhabitants of West Sussex shall we say that that is not a proper thing for them to be doing.

It's not their proper place for them to tell us to do things like that and therefore we are not in our proper place if we unquestionably obey when they tell us something to do that they shouldn't be telling us to do.

I think that's a little bit of an unrealistic example in the case of West Sussex but it wasn't an unrealistic example in the case of Nazi Germany. Here's another example.

if the state tells us that the state is to be worshipped which of course in the book of Revelation is exactly what the state does try to do that is moving out of its proper place and we are not in our proper place if we go along with what the state tells us to do in that case.

So the duty of a Christian if told to worship the emperor and say the emperor is lord as David was saying the other day is to say I'm sorry I respectfully decline to do that because the emperor is many things but he is not lord and he is not to be worshipped.

[26 : 29] Jesus is lord and I will only worship him and that was one of the things that got Christians into trouble and indeed led them to their deaths.

So as the main principle and a little bit about what that does and doesn't say. let's move on to an explanation because he gives us a bit of an explanation of this.

So the next verse is say verse 3 4 rulers hold no terror for those who do right but for those who do wrong.

Do you want to be free from the fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you 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 or an avenger of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

[27 : 38] So you see that Paul neatly divides it into the ideas of right and wrong. so there's the whoops there's in the middle up here is the ruling authority whether it's the judge or the police officer or the politician or the king or whatever it is or all of that system linked up together and he says he says that do you want to be free from the fear of the one of authority then do what is right and he will commend you.

So here we've got the one in authority and here we've got where good is happening so the little person there does good and if they do good let me find my place lost it if you do good he will praise you where does that say he will commend you.

do what is right end of verse 3 and he will commend you. So you do what is right he will commend you. It actually says he will praise you. Apparently in those days the Roman society used to have a sort of New Year's Honours list of benefactors public benefactors and they write their names up maybe that's what Paul has in mind.

It wouldn't be such a bad idea for governments to do more of that these days although I suppose you would be open to abuse. And then he says on the other hand well here's somebody running off with swag except I couldn't write swag in there it's too small so they're doing evil and there is another set of relationships that go on there so verse 3 rulers hold no terror for those who do right but for those who do wrong so there's a relationship of fear between the authorities and the ones who do wrong and he says that's absent or ought to be absent for those who do right and then he also adds in verse 4 which I've omitted bear with me so over on this side we've got fear and we've got punishment it's in verse 4 he brings punishment on the wrongdoer and I would also like to put in there the sword which I didn't put and he is referring to the ability of the state to use lethal force and

he is well he's certainly not criticising it he's saying it's legitimate for the state to have lethal force on its side verse 4 if you do wrong be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing so I would not automatically say that it is wrong for a state to have the death penalty

I think that's just what Paul is saying there may be other reasons for not using the death penalty but it's not automatically out of order for the state to do that and I'd also like to point out to you in this way of explanation the words he uses about this representative of authority and he twice uses the word servant so let's see if we can find that in verse 4 he is God's servant to do you good and then in verse 4 again he is God's servant an agent of wrath for those who do wrong and I always find this interesting the word for servant is the word deacon diakonos we have deacons in the church and as it happens in a sense David Cameron is a deacon too and Inspector

[32 : 00] Gareth Davis is one of God's deacons and Councillor Jason Kitkat is one of God's deacons and Michael Gove is one of God's deacons God has all sorts of deacons serving him in various ways they don't always do a good job of it but that's the position that they hold they are God's servants and it also says in verse six the authorities are God's servants uses another word there which is like the word for priest it is actually not only used as priest but it's just interesting isn't it how strongly the Bible says even although these people might make a bad job of it and even though they might be badly motivated etc they're still there by God's mysterious say so they're

God's deacons God's servants so in a little bit summary for that the authorities are there to prevent to deter to punish wrong and so they ought to do that with fairness we should expect that of them and ask them to do that they should if they're deterring wrong they should deter with I think a proportional deterrence so it used to be the case under English law that if you stole a sheep you would be hanged which seems and the idea being a deterrent so that the people who are sheep owners could be assured that they'd have the same number of sheep as the week went by rather than finding they'd been nicked by people I don't think that that is a good law because the deterrent is disproportionate to the crime so we should be looking for fairness and proportionality and things like that

I'm not an expert in law but I'm sure there is a lot of principles there that could be drawn out if it was your job to be making laws and a lot of wisdom from those thoughts in Monty Python I can't remember where it was they said What did the Romans ever do for us?

! What have the Romans ever done for us? What have the Romans ever done for us?

Well there's roads and there's Latin What have the authorities ever done for us? What has David Cameron ever done for me?

[34 : 55] What has Jason Kitkat ever done for me? What have these people ever done for me? Actually you have running water a lot of countries don't have running water when I was in Sri Lanka a few years ago they said we wish we had running water we wish the government could get around to providing us with running water but we have running water don't we?

And we have power that doesn't come on for one hour a day and then go off again although on Friday it did was it last Friday or the Friday before but generally speaking we have power what the state ever done for us well they have given you water and power and heat and light and education and you might say well the education system is totally corrupt well actually have another think because if people couldn't read and write we really would be in a mess but we have very high standards of literacy compared with much of the world so what have they done for us well they've done quite a lot in terms of education security well you say well people are street drinkers and graffiti and well yeah okay there's always problems but have you noticed that in England everywhere people leave their cars on the streets at night you noticed that have you in some countries you wouldn't dream of leaving your car on the street at night you bring it into your compound and lock the gate and in

England people don't have bars on their ground floor windows do they they have sash windows around here you have sash windows and people don't get their windows broken well we that what have they done for us they provide us security and they provide a transport system so you can actually go to London and work you can go and visit your auntie in York or wherever it is and we actually have all sorts of things that the state does for us and this for this we should thank God because it has come through God's deacons the various authorities so let's move on now to motivation which is the third thing where have I got to verse five therefore it is necessary to submit to the authorities not only because of wrath or possible punishment but also because of conscience this is also why you pay taxes for the authorities of

God's servants so he goes on to motivation why should I do this why should I do this you might say for me it goes against the grain well he gives one reason he says to avoid punishment so he says possible punishment in the NIV which does link itself back to the wrath of God to avoid punishment to avoid being fined to avoid being imprisoned and to avoid having to do community service I know the justice system is not perfect but neither is it totally random and totally unreliable so if you are given to smoking various illegal substances and you get fined please don't ask the church to pray for you that it wouldn't happen because I don't think the church would pray for you if you're smoking illegal substances and you get fined you should have not smoked the illegal substances if you got on the train without a ticket don't ask the church to pray for you because you were thinking of putting the money in the collection anyway!

if you are a bit short of money and you decided to go and help yourself to the things in Aldi and go out without paying and you got caught and you got taken to court CAUGHT and then you got taken to court C-O-U-R-T then please don't ask the church to pray for you if you were shoplifting then you shouldn't have been shoplifting the punishment is there to deter you why should you do this it is necessary to submit to the authorities well because of possible punishment it's there for a reason and it's right that it's!

[39 : 37] for a reason! conscience verse 5 not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience so what he's saying here in a very quick way is there's not only that you might get caught but even if you know you're not going to get caught or even if you might not get caught there's something inside you your conscience which says that's still wrong you shouldn't be doing that and you need to listen to there too motivation for conscience so even if you're not going to get caught and you know that they don't give parking tickets if you leave your car on those double yellow lines you still shouldn't leave it on those double yellow lines and even if you know that it's very unlikely for somebody to go through your computer and see how many of the programs on there you haven't paid for properly you still shouldn't download pirated copies of things for conscience sake and the third motivation he says this is why you pay taxes you're already paying taxes you're already getting water and light and heat and all those sorts of things you're already involved it's too late for you to back out and say

I'm not going to have anything to do with this society they're all pagans they're all idiots you're already signed up for power and electricity unless you live in a hillside in Wales when conceivably you might not but most of us don't and aren't you're already involved so motivation you can see how it will get shorter now I realise I've only got this sheet to write on and then he brings it down to some specifics and he says verse 6 and 7 he says the authorities are God's servants who give their full time to governing give everyone what you owe him interesting that he seems to imply there's a sort of contract there there are things that the state might ask of you that you don't owe them so I don't think we owe our state unquestioning obedience to everything they say I think we're allowed to go to the state and say are you sure you want this are you sure you're right about this you were supposed to tell me something you haven't told me so you're not asking me to do the right thing we're entitled to question but question and dispute and challenge even but he does say give to everyone what you owe him and he goes through a list which apparently means direct taxes and then he talks about respect and then he talks about honour whatever you owe pay so I had a thought about this I mean the taxes is fairly obvious there is a difference between tax avoidance and which one is it tax evasion and tax avoidance so tax evasion is when you do something illegal isn't it that's the right way around tax avoidance is when you use the legal system to be wise about how you use your money and although people get up in arms and say oh Google and Amazon are evading taxes if it's it's a little bit unfair to do that if it's wrong then make it illegal and then demonstrate they've evaded tax so I just want to say something there about taxes we pay our taxes willingly I think we try to avoid paying taxes that we're not actually bound to pay don't think that's dishonorable don't think it's dishonorable to be an accountant in other words for the accountants present there was an accountant last week but he's not here today so some things about taxes some things about respect it's quite common

I'm thinking about local politics now for council officers to be treated with immense disrespect it's quite common and if I was a council officer I really wouldn't like it council officers I know there are exceptions but by and large council officers work very hard and take their duties very seriously and do the best they can with insufficient resources or sometimes with insufficient resources I'm particularly thinking of just from personal experience of the head of City Clean who's Mike Moon

who's actually come along to some meetings and I've met him and each time I've met him he's come with a sort of strained looking face and a weary and a weary demeanour and I say to him how are you today Mike are you okay and he said I've just been at this awful meeting and then I was at an awful meeting before and I got an awful meeting afterwards and you think poor chap he really doesn't want to be here so I say would you like a cup of tea just sit in the corner for a bit and we'll try and make it as easy for you as possible

I think it's worth thinking there are human beings on the end of all the letters to the Argus these council are bonkers and everything else we may well disagree with some of the ideology of our elected representatives and we might disagree with some of the policies that have been worked out certainly in local council level but there is some respect that they are due because many of them work very hard and even if you disagree in all sorts of ways there is some respect that is owed it seems to me well it seems to Paul as well and they said if honour then honour so again it's a very common thing to mock politicians as being in it just for their own good and out to make a killing and milk the system and I'm sure there are politicians like that so I

[46 : 12] I'm sure there are politicians like that I think in my view that we are blessed in our country that many politicians are not like that so I'm just going to cough so do you know how much a councillor earns these councillors that milk the system and put all the money in their own pocket do you know how much a councillor earns in a year 12,000 pounds about 12,000 pounds so it seems to me that 12,000 pounds for being a councillor is not in it for the money I think many if not all the councillors are in it because they care they want to try and make a difference and when we think about the council I'm going off on a hobby horse now when we think about a council raking on all those parking fines and all that money and you think look at the council of fat cats taking in all that money what do they do with that money doesn't go in their pockets does it it just goes back into providing other services excuse me and I certainly speak personally

I wouldn't like to have the responsibility that some of these people carry I wouldn't like to have to be Ian Davey who goes along to meetings and half the people shout at him for not bringing in a parking zone they say we can't park anywhere and the other part of the people shout at him and say why don't you council do something about it it's very difficult to be a politician and I know some of the local politicians on a personal level and I'm sure that on a national level it's even worse how many of you would like to have the job of deciding how to divide the cake of a budget whether it's nationally or locally because really not always very nice to you you make a decision and somebody is bound to be up in arms about it and they'll call you all sorts of names I think we need there is some honour to be paid if honour then honour so there's some specifics there

I have a footnote and then we close I have a footnote about a time when there was the power of the state and it was wrongly used and there was a defeat and an overcoming and the state thought that it had overcome one weak lone man and the state in its folly condemned him to death but this lone man was not defeated and overcome by the power of the state but rather he in his weakness overcame the state and I'm referring well I could be referring to martyrs who were told by the state to worship the emperor and they didn't and they overcame the beast by the word of their testimony but I'm thinking predominantly of Jesus who was there on his own faced with the might of Pilate and Caesar he was respectful he was calm he was dignified they still crucified him but in his crucifixion he won the greatest battle he overcame so it's now can be said that

Jesus Christ is lord of the princes of the earth and he is king of kings and lord of lords and one day his lordship will not only be a fact but it will be a visible glorious fact let's sing together let's sing together and to to to to to to to!