

# The State and the Disciple of Jesus

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 17 April 2016

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 00 ] Father, your word is your word. Every word in the Bible, Father, is the word that you wanted to have there. And we confess, Father, that often because of our culture and often because of our context, we completely and utterly misunderstand your word.

Father, we confess that sometimes we just, we get it all wrong and we don't even recognize that we've got it wrong. So, Father, we ask that you would continue to gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon our minds, our hearts, our wills, our bodies. And grant us, Father, a constant humility in regard to our own opinions, a willingness to change our minds.

Grant us a great humility before you and your word written. And grant us a great hunger for you and for your word written. So that your word might come into us, into our lives.

And we will then bear much fruit for your glory in this city and at the ends of the earth. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

[ 1 : 09 ] Please be seated. I almost want to say I apologize, but I'm not going to apologize. But I want to give you a bit of a warning right off the bat. I know that there's many, many guests here this morning.

And I'm going to talk later on in the sermon. It's just going to be brief. But I'm going to talk about abortion. I'm going to talk about doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia. And I'm going to talk about same-sex marriage.

In fact, I was dealing with so many complicated and controversial topics, I almost thought I'd throw in tithing while we're at it. Just to get it out of the way, you know.

But I'm going to be talking about these three. And some of you might think, you know, especially if you're a guest and you've come here to see maybe your daughter or your granddaughter or your niece or your friend, you know, dance.

And you think, oh, you know, I knew those, you know, fanatic, hardcore, right-wing Christians that all they ever did was hammer away at those topics. I knew that was the case.

[ 2 : 10 ] Well, that's actually, if you think that about churches in Ottawa, you could go to most churches in Ottawa for five years and never hear anybody ever talk about any of those three topics.

Most churches in Ottawa are terrified about talking about those topics, just if that's what you're thinking. And so you might be wondering, well, George, why on earth are you talking about it on a day like today?

And here's another thing that non-Christians often think about Christians, and they often think it correctly about Christians, by the way. A lot of people see Christians as being basically hypocritical, that we believe that we want to know the Bible and follow the Bible, but we actually ignore big parts of the Bible, the big parts of the Bible that we don't like, or we don't just agree with, or don't fit into our lifestyle, we just ignore.

And so one of the things that many non-Christians say about Christians, and unfortunately it's often correct, is that we pick and choose in the Bible. And so I just want to share with you, I mean, at Messiah, we don't want to be a pick and choose congregation.

And so one of the ways that we try to deal with that is that we preach through books of the Bible. And the Bible's long, so I'd have to probably have been the pastor here for 50 years to cover every book and every word, and that's hard to do.

[ 3 : 32 ] But we try to deal with that problem of bits and pieces Christianity by preaching through books of the Bible. And when you preach through a book of the Bible, it means you're going to regularly deal with things that aren't very comfortable for our culture.

And so that's what we're doing in this church right now. You can look in the bulletin later on in the blog, it talks a little bit about why we do that and upcoming things. But we're going through the book of Romans. And as part of going through the book of Romans, we come to Romans 13, which is what we're going to look at.

And I would fail you as a pastor and as a man who's called to open the word of God if I preached on Romans 13 and didn't mention those topics. It's abortion, doctor-assisted suicide or euthanasia and same-sex marriage.

So you've been warned, and I'll return to it, and hopefully I'll return to it twice. But it would be a great help to me if you open your Bibles, because you want to be able to see that I'm actually not just making it up as I go along, but I'm actually trying to follow the Bible.

I should have warned you earlier that there's free Bibles over there. I don't mind if you get up while I'm talking and go over there and get a free Bible. And if you don't own a Bible, keep it. It's our gift to you, or you can return it later.

[ 4 : 45 ] But Romans 13. And so let's get into the word. And here's how it begins. Let every person, Romans 13, 1, let every person be subject to the governing authorities.

For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

And just sort of pause there for a second. We just want to pause here for a second. Now, this is a really easy text.

Here's the problem about this text. There's something so blindingly obvious about this text that if we recognize what's so blindingly obvious, it's going to completely and utterly turn this text in a different direction.

But it's so obvious that we forget it. And here, I'm just going to, you know, if you're a guest here this morning, I'll say it. You might not know this. But for Christians, many Christians aren't even aware of this.

[ 5 : 58 ] But just before we get into it, I'm getting tongue-tied. Christians believe what Jesus teaches. And what Jesus teaches and the Bible teaches about itself is that the Bible is God's word written.

And what that means is that every word that we see here, this is what Christians believe because Jesus believed it, that every word that you see here is ultimately the word that God wanted to have there.

Now, it doesn't have, like, it's not like dictation. It wasn't as if one day Paul was out for a walk and then God took him over and he had to go to a table and he had to sort of write like this as God sort of overwhelmed his personality and overwhelmed him and made him write down every word.

That's not how it works. It's demons which possess us. And I don't have lots of experience with this, but my guess is that if you're demon-possessed, if you listen to ten different demon-possessed people speaking or writing, they'd all basically sound exactly the same because the demon actually possesses them.

And God doesn't possess us in that way. He never overwhelms us. And so Paul would just be writing what Paul is writing. But what Christians believe, and actually Romans teaches this, but it's a little bit later on, is that Paul writes just from his heart dealing with a particular problem.

[ 7 : 23 ] But God is sovereign over it. And so that later on, it's recognized that God caused those particular words, the particular words that God wanted his people and the whole world to know, God used Paul to get that done.

Just as he used Peter and he used Amos and he used Isaiah and he used Jeremiah and he used the different writers of the Bible. And because he actually just uses Paul, it sounds like Paul.

And if you read, you know, Isaiah, it sounds like Isaiah. And you read Jeremiah, it sounds like Jeremiah. He uses their personalities and everything like that. But God acts in such a way that the actual words that are written are the words he wants to be written down.

And then he also acts in such a way so that it's recognized by the church, by the followers of Jesus, that those are the actual words that God wants to have written down. So it doesn't mean that Paul is particularly a special person.

It just means that God used him. It doesn't mean that Paul was smarter than you and I or more insightful than you and I. If we went back in a time machine and just listened to Paul, it's not that he was more insightful than us, a special person.

[ 8 : 35 ] Every writer of the Bible is in a sense like Balaam's ass, that God uses the donkey to speak. And so why is this significant?

Well, it's very, very significant if you understand that it's God who's telling us to do this. In fact, Andrew, can you put up the point?

If we don't understand this, we're not going to understand anything in Romans 13. The King of kings and Lord of lords, the true and living God, tells his grace-ransomed children to submit to human authorities and to respect and honor them in a way which fully glorifies and honors him.

Now, just help me down. I'm going to help to unpack this a little bit. A few years ago, but maybe about 10 years ago now, actually more than 12 years ago. I'm getting old, so things long ago actually happened relatively close.

Anyway, I was the chair of a national organization, and I also was, in a sense, the CEO. And we had this really important thing going on. I was still part of the Anglican Church of Canada, and there was this really important meeting of the Anglican Church.

[ 9 : 51 ] And we wanted to have a presence there to sort of represent, you know, biblical Christianity in their deliberations. And it was going to be very, very far-reaching, this meeting, in terms of the things they would decide.

So I was there. Several other people were there. And we hired a communications person to help with daily press releases and a daily newsletter because we wanted to just represent biblical truths as the Anglican Church was making this important decision.

So we hired somebody. In a sense, I hired him. I was the chair of the board and the CEO, in effect. And so we hired somebody to help us. And he worked with a few volunteers.

And at the end of the event, as the three- or four-day or five-day conference, I can't remember how long it was, but it was a long conference. At the end of it, the Anglican Church of Canada made a horrendous decision.

And a couple of the very, very key volunteers who had been working with this guy that we'd hired, they had their own private agenda. And so they wanted to spin this particular important communication from the organization in a way that favored their particular agenda.

[ 11 : 06 ] And I heard about it that morning. And I was horrified. They were going to say the exact wrong thing. The board would not have agreed with it. It was the wrong thing.

So I went and I found the guy. And I said to him, have you sent off this press release yet? Have you released it? He said, no. I said, good. You're not sending it. It's wrong. And he said, well, whoa. Like, he said, well. And he mentions these two really important people in the Anglican Church. And they've agreed with it. And I said to him, I sign your checks.

I sign your check. I'm your boss. They're not. You're not sending it because it's wrong. Now, there will be another sermon illustration as to the two volunteers and the strips they tried to tear off of me when they found out that I'd actually put a kibosh to what they wanted.

But here's the significance. They, this fellow worked with volunteers in a sense because I, who was his employer, told him that he could work with these two people.

[ 12 : 11 ] But I never relinquished being his employer. He was my employee, not those other people's employees. So what's significant about this text?

And it's really even more significant because, as you'll see later on in the text, it's going to refer, the text is going to refer to the rulers and authorities as the servant of God, the slave of God.

So what we need to understand here is that this text is not a blank check to whoever's in power. I can tell you right now that Justin Trudeau would probably be deeply offended to hear that he's described as the slave of God.

And I don't think I would be overstretching matters to think that Beverly McLaughlin and the Supreme Court justices of this country would be offended to understand that the Bible is describing them as God's slaves, but he's describing those who are followers of Jesus as his children. It's all the way through the Romans. You'd have to be reading Romans all the way through here. So that's why I've tried to express it this way. Just remember what's happening here.

[ 13 : 24 ] It's just like me hiring this guy to work with other people, and I give him some instructions. Only it's different because it's not, God isn't speaking here to his employees, but he's our Father in Heaven speaking to his children.

And he doesn't stop or relinquish being our dad. And I could have said our Heavenly Father, but I wanted to emphasize here Lord of Lords and King of Kings, the Creator, Sustainer God, the

Sovereign God of all the universe, who has ransomed you and me.

If we put our faith and trust in Jesus, he has ransomed us through Jesus. We are now the children of the living God by adoption and by grace. And that God asks me to respect and honor and submit to human authorities that the text is going to describe as his servant and his slave.

This is not the government of Canada telling me how to worship or the Supreme Court giving me permission. You see how this text, in a sense, to use a postmodern word, it deconstructs and relativizes all human power and authority.

And then within that tells me not that Christians should rule, but that we are to submit and honor and respect.

[15:00] So it's a very, very surprising thing. And from that, we have to understand as well several other things about the text. Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. So is this text saying that when God looked down at Moclair and Trudeau and Harper, he said, I don't like Harper and I don't like Moclair.

I like Justin Trudeau. So I'm going to make Justin Trudeau the prime minister, and my people better submit to him. Right now, I'm going to pick your boogeyman.

If we were in an American United States and Trump wins, would all the Bible Belt Christians have to say, God liked Trump better than all those other guys and that one gal?

Or if Hillary Clinton wins, well, all those Bible Belt Christians have to say, obviously God thought Nelson Cruz and Trump and Sanders were terrible, evil men.

[16:16] He chose his woman. Is that what the text is saying? Just to put it very boldly and bluntly. Well, if you could put up the next point, this prayer is completely consistent with Romans 13.

And if we don't understand how this prayer is consistent with Romans 13, we won't understand the text. Lord, please spare our nation from the government that we deserve.

And in your mercy grant us a government which is better than we deserve. Lord, please spare our nation from the government that we deserve.

And in your mercy grant us a government which is better than we deserve. That prayer is completely and utterly consistent and congruent with Romans 13.

If you go back, and I don't have time to do this for obvious reasons, you go back and you read the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament, which Paul at that time would have just understood as the Bible. And it's very, very clear.

[17:21] In fact, the book of Habakkuk, which I'm going to return to in a bit, it's a very, very famous book. It's a very, very odd book because Habakkuk is complaining about how completely and utterly evil Israel is.

And God says, good news. I've heard your prayer. I'm answering them. I'm sending the Assyrians to take over and obliterate Israel.

And Habakkuk says, God, no, you can't do that. You got it all wrong. They're way worse than Israel. Okay? And then you go back. You read about Nebuchadnezzar.

You read about all of these. Just read Isaiah. Read Amos. Read Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Read the book of 1 and 2 Kings. Just because the person's in authority, sometimes they are there because it is the ruler the nation deserves and it is a punishment.

I know I've opened up a whole other can of worms. And I don't have time to go into it. But Trump or Clinton cannot, or Trudeau cannot say, I am obviously the choice person that God has chosen.

[18:31] It might very well be that they are there as part of God's judgment. And that is completely consistent with Romans 13, which is why, in a sense, we have to be careful because when our friends or the people that we like are in government, we have to be careful that we stop praying a prayer like that.

But there is no mere human collection known as a nation, which is God's favored people.

Israel is an exception. But apart from that, there's no, and even then Israel, just because they're Israel, doesn't mean they do a whole pile of evil things, by the way. Read the Old Testament. Israel did horrible things.

Okay? This is a prayer that we have to pray. I mean, my hope and prayer is that God didn't give us Trudeau as a punishment upon our nation. I'm not trying to make a, I'm not making a political, I really am not making a political comment.

I'm not. This is a prayer we have to pray as a nation that has a concern for our nation. So some of you might say, okay, George, well, this is all a little bit, you've turned the text a little bit upside down on me.

[ 19 : 52 ] But George, doesn't the text seem to say a whole pile of nonsense stuff? Doesn't it seem to say that, you know, it's just stuff that isn't obviously true, that, you know, rulers punish evil and rulers do good?

Like, okay, George, so this has surprised me, but even if that's all true what you've said, doesn't the text just say nonsense? Like, how could anybody with a straight face say that the government does good and rewards people who do good?

Is it Linda McKibben? Is that her name? One of the most dangerous people in the province of Ontario. How many times has she been arrested now? I mean, is it 25 times, 27 times, 30 times, something like that?

Just because she quietly stands and prays near an abortion clinic, and she's thrown in and out of jail constantly. Like, how can George, how can Romans be true? It's obvious that governments don't reward good people and discipline bad people.

Well, let's look at the text. We're not going to hide from it. Let's look at Romans. We'll start at verse one. We'll go through to verse seven. Let's listen to it again. Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

[ 21 : 07 ] Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain, for he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore, one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this, you also pay taxes for the authorities or ministers of God attending to this very thing.

Pay to all what is owed to them, taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

So, doesn't it seem to say odd things, George? Here's the first thing.

[ 22 : 13 ] Here's where your doctrine of the Bible is really, really important. If, in fact, God uses different human beings, not because they're wise or particularly insightful, but that God just uses them.

He chooses that he's going to use them and they just write the way they think they need to write. But at the end of the day, the end of the process, God has sovereignly worked in such a way that the words that they've written are the words that he wants written.

And therefore, there's not 66 completely different books in the Bible. I mean, there are, but there's ultimately one author who's written the Bible. And if you understand that, then you say to yourself, you can ask hard questions like this.

God asks us to ask honest, intellectual, hard questions. But we need to say, okay, well, is God going to actually write something which is just so obviously contradictory or foolish?

In fact, even without the doctrine of the Bible, Paul writing these words would, I mean, Paul knows that he has been unjustly put in jail.

[ 23 : 24 ] Paul knows that the authorities act in a way that oppresses him. And in fact, Paul knows, if you go back and read the book of Acts, Paul knows that he used legal and quasi-legal means to oppress people before he was a Christian.

That's what he did. In fact, he was on the way with letters from political and cultural and religious authorities. He was going with powers to oppress Christians in another city when he met Jesus.

Paul knows that. In fact, it's so well known to Paul, it was obviously a key part of how Paul understood himself. You can see traces of how he reacted to that throughout all of his letters.

And what's more, Paul knows that Jesus died an innocent man. That Jesus was a prey, oppressed and betrayed by the religious authorities and by the Roman authorities, by religious scholars and the secular scholars and powers, that Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent and Pilate had Jesus condemned to death.

Paul knows this. So what on earth is he saying here? What on earth is he saying here? What he's saying here, amongst other things, is that Paul here is actually talking about basically what we would call as general principles.

[ 24 : 49 ] Just some general principles. And it's actually a very, very curious thing that he talks about these general principles in such a way. Like, if you think about it for a second, like, I've had people come and talk to me now because increasingly, especially if they have something to do with government, that there's things going on at the government level that for Christians are problematic or evil.

And how do they actually work in government? Do they have to resign? Or what do they do? And surely, if you think about it for a second, how would you give some general advice? Well, do good. Like, wherever you are, do good.

And if you're in power, like, make sure that, you know, if there's a, like, the Kameshi affair like that, which, you know, if there's complaints about misconduct, like, you deal with that misconduct, right? Like, you try to deal with the wrong things that are going on in your workplace and do good. And that would be part of the way that we're going to try to give people a bit of a sense about how they work. And if all this, all that was in the text here was just these words, then it would be a lot more confusing.

But as we're going to look at in a moment, there's also verses 8 to 14. And so what Paul is doing here is he's giving some general principles in the context of God's word to help Christians to understand how they're to submit and how they're to respect and how they're to show honor.

[ 26 : 07 ] And one of the things which is exceptionally, I mean, if you think about this for a second, you'd have to think that God does this. Is my mic dying?

Is my battery dying? No? I'm fine? Okay. It seems like it goes out all of a sudden, but maybe it's just my hearing. But when Paul wrote this, it wasn't as if there were Christians in power.

In fact, when Paul wrote this, probably around the year 59 or 60, the Christian faith was an unregistered religion in the Roman Empire.

They were a minority of a minority of a minority of a minority of a minority. And the Roman state, Nero was a god. Everything's organized around the worship of the gods.

The state practices slavery. The state practices infanticide. And there's no Christians in power. But it's very interesting if you look at this in terms of sending some basic principles, not only, as I'm going to explain in a moment, principles about how we live under a power like that.

[ 27 : 14 ] But it actually looks down the road to when Christians get in positions of power and authority. Because the very, very same principle, which is going to help set the stage for how you submit and respect and show honor, is communicating to Christians that once they get in power, what their job description is.

That they're to do good. That they're to punish evil. So it's very, very, it's actually quite surprising because it's 300 years after this approximately before Christians will be in power.

Now obviously many Christians haven't kept it, but it's very, very interesting. And so this particular thing, this is telling us some general principles, but some of you might say, okay, George, maybe it's saying some particular principles, but doesn't the whole idea of being submissive and showing honor and respect mean that you have to do what people in authority tell you to do?

Well, okay, we just keep these different things that we've just heard and remember that Paul, with no break in his argument, goes from all these things about paying taxes and honor to verses 8 to 14.

So let's look at these right now, then we're going to sum it up with two quick points and then an overarching thing. Look at verses 8 to 14. So he's already told us about, you know, doing good and what the state in theory is supposed to do and it's implying, by the way, that sometimes we're going to fall victim to the sword if we don't do what they want, but look at verses 8 to 14.

[ 28 : 53 ] Owe no one anything except to love each other, for the one who loves has fulfilled the law. For 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.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Just pause here before we go any further. It's very interesting that the argument for abortion is, part of the argument for abortion is that it's the loving thing to do.

Part of the argument for doctor-assisted suicide, for euthanasia, is it's the loving thing to do. Part of the argument for same-sex marriage is it's all about love.

But Paul here, when he says, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, he says, these are all summed up by you love your neighbors yourself. In other words, he says that true love means that you would not do these things.

But we'll return to that in a moment. Verse 11, besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

[ 30 : 10 ] The night is far gone, the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, nor in sexual immorality and sensuality, nor in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

Now I know that in a room with this many people, there's at least one person who's had an abortion or who's aided somebody to have an abortion. And so this is maybe a very, very awkward topic.

And I'm going to return to it in a moment, but I just understand that. In fact, you know, there's been earlier, even before it's legalized to help doctors kill a patient, it's well known that there's other subtle ways in the past that doctors have acted to bring about the death of people.

I was involved in a case about 10 years ago. So we, and so there might very well be somebody here who's helped counsel a doctor to act in such a way so that they've acted to shorten, not just like to actually literally take action to shorten life.

And I know this is very uncomfortable maybe for you. Sometimes the government tells us to do wrong things.

[ 31 : 42 ] things. And when it says here, you shall not commit adultery, if you read through both the Old Testament and if you read through the New Testament, it actually, the literal word here which is used is pornea.

and the pornea word group points to the basic principle, not that sex is bad, that sexual knowing is bad, but that sexual knowing is restricted or set aside, maybe that's a better word, for one man and one woman who've been joined in holy matrimony.

And any sexual knowing or sexual stimulation outside of the one man married to one woman is adultery, is pornea.

And therefore, two men marrying would be by definition not something that the church should bless, but that the church with tears, but with conviction, should say is wrong.

And when the text here says you shall not murder, that means you shouldn't take innocent human life. And so, any attempt by the state to say that doctors can be given the power to take, it's not a sin to be old.

[ 33 : 17 ] It's not a sin to be mentally ill. It is not evil to have Alzheimer's or dementia. And it is not evil to be in the womb.

It might be profoundly inconvenient for people who are in power, but it is never a crime to be in the womb. And it's never a crime to be old or to be depressed or to be sick.

It's a call for us to show compassion. It is not a call for us to take innocent human life. and that means that a state that says that there is no restriction on abortion or that there is the power of the state to give power to doctors to kill innocent human life, it's just wrong.

It's just wrong. And so, the interesting thing here about Romans 13 is that the Bible here isn't giving us a simple technique or recipe about how to deal with things.

the Bible here is actually calling us to live in an awkward middle place in between those who just want to live in Christian ghettos and pretend that the world doesn't exist in a sense to be like a Hutterite.

[ 34 : 42 ] I apologize to mention them, but I'm going to mention them to any or any type of Christian ghetto that just tries to live as if the world doesn't exist, as if the world is evil and gone. There's the whole implication of this text is that we are to pray for government and we are to be for the good of the city, that we are to pray for the blessing of the city, that we are to be involved in the blessing and the flourishing of the city.

So we're not to take the one option of just completely withdrawing from the world. On the other hand, we are not to take the other option that whatever the government or the Supreme Court of Canada says that we just say amen and we go along with it.

There's a very awkward middle place that the Bible's calling us to, which is one of the reasons why we need the church, we need each other, and we need to develop means of discipleship and fellowship and community whereby we can help people to figure out what to do.

Here, could you put up the third point please for me? In light of God's instruction, and I say God's instruction because all the way through here when it says the law, it means the Torah, and the Torah means God's instruction.

So in light of God's instruction, through his word written, I will offer real but qualified respect and honor to rulers.

[ 35 : 59 ] That's what the text is trying to get at here. Real, but qualified, qualified by the word of God. You see, I don't remember if you, some of you might remember, but I don't know, was it 10 years ago that George W. Bush came to Ottawa?

And just so you get the joke, I only started wearing glasses when I was 49. And so at first, when I first started to wear glasses and preach, I had a bad habit. My glasses would start to go down like this, and I would do this.

So I had a son that every Sunday he said, Dad, I'm going to tell you how many times every Sunday you give the whole congregation the finger. And I would come home and Jacob would say, Dad, five times, five times a day you gave the whole congregation the finger.

I mean, I guess it was a pain of attention to the sermon, at least, right? And so I eventually had to stop doing that and raise my glasses another way. Some of you might remember when George Bush came to Ottawa a few years ago, quite a few years ago, George Bush said, Ottawa is such a friendly city.

Everywhere I go, people wave at me. And some of them even use all five fingers. And I thought that was pretty funny on his part. Anyway, here's the thing.

[ 37 : 11 ] Obviously, if George W. Bush comes and you give him a finger, you're not showing him respect. Right? You're not showing him respect. The interesting thing about this whole text is the Bible could have used the word obey, not submit.

But it doesn't use the word obey. It uses the word submit. And submit's a very, very different word. Submit is something that I do voluntarily. That's why the very, very early prayer is that Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he's asking his children to do something.

He's telling us to do something. But I get to choose and decide how to submit. The whole submit word group doesn't mean that the Supreme Court of Canada or Trudeau tells me the shape of how I submit.

That power is not given to them by God. I mean, they have their own secular powers, obviously. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they didn't submit in the way that Nebuchadnezzar thought they should submit.

And he gave them a chance to submit according to the way that he thought they should submit. And he said, if you don't submit, I'm going to throw you into the fiery furnace. I'm going to have you dead. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said very, very powerfully throughout the ages, we believe we are not going to do what you have told us to do.

[ 38 : 29 ] We believe that God will deliver us. But even if he did, but if not, but if not, even if God does not deliver us, we will not do what you want because it involves worshipping idols.

We won't do it. We'll die in the fiery furnace. One of the reasons that Shadrach, that beautiful old Jewish thing, the sovereign God that is the creator of the sun and the moon and the stars and the angels and everything in creation are all to worship God and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego reminds us as we read Romans 13 that God is sovereign, worthy of our praise.

And submission is something I do voluntarily within a context. And maybe if we are serving a boss and she's the best boss we've ever had.

She is a spectacular boss. She's really competent. She's honest. She keeps her word. She listens. She makes decisions. She's fair. She just moves the whole department full.

Then you know that your honoring and respecting her is going to be really easy. But maybe you have a boss which is completely and utterly not only they're worse than incompetent, they're incompetent and evil.

[ 39 : 46 ] If something goes wrong, it goes on you even if they did it. And if something goes right and you did it, they take the credit. You know those types of bosses? And it's completely and utterly how we honor and respect them is going to be very different.

The honor and respect might be that you're just silent. That might be how it looks. Right? It's qualified by the context and by God's word. It's qualified by the context and God's word. So that's why it says submit and not obey. That's why in light of God's instruction through his word written, I will offer real but qualified respect and honor to rulers. And it's also why you can't this whole thing, you know, it's very interesting that the Bible puts the do not steal, do not commit murder, do not commit adultery right after, as part of this whole thing in Romans 13 and in the power of government because in a sense it's looking down the ages to when Christians are in positions of power and it's saying that any politician who's in power cannot say I'm going to vote for this even though I'm personally opposed to it. I'm going to vote for abortion funding even though I'm personally opposed to it. The Bible doesn't leave that option. I mean, it might be that the MP has to sacrifice his career. [ 41 : 25 ] It might be that in some of these cases you have to move into other types of law or other types of work in the government or where you can do good. but this personally opposed thing is removed by this text.

So, if you could put the next point, please. I have to look at my time. Lord, please help me to be a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who builds my life on your eternal truths and not transient legislative and judicial decisions. see, that's why this text is talking about things in the Ten Commandments at the same time that it's helping to try to give people a sense of how we're going to serve both good governments and bad governments, both good rulers and evil rulers. It might be that if Canada was to become a really oppressive militaristic place and there's the draft then Christians, I would urge Christians to volunteer to work as medics. we're stretcher bearers. I mean, I don't know what it is. I'm just telling you that it's an awkward middle place but the heart of it is that we want to pray that God will help us to be gripped by the gospel and build our lives on eternal truths and not on transient legislative and judicial decisions. [ 42 : 48 ] The court looking at the same laws 20 years later reversing itself on doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia from the same documents it just reverses itself. Governments, do what governments do, judges do what judges do.

Sometimes they're very, very wise, they're very, very insightful and sometimes they're just merely willful and that's what life is like and we're to honor them and respect them and we're to pray for the good of our city.

Now, I just want to I have to wrap it up now. Could you look at verses 11 to 14? I want to leave those of you who are here and you might be wondering that if this, what I've just said is really hurtful about abortion and about doctor-assisted suicide and same-sex marriage and it just sounds legalistic and cold.

There's something here which is really important that I have to look at very briefly before we leave. Look at verses 11 to 14 again. Besides this, you know the time that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

The night is far gone, the day is at hand, so then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.

[ 44 : 17 ] But here's this wonderful verse, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. Could you put up the final point please, Andrew?

Lord, please make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who daily clothes myself with the Lord Jesus Christ and also turns away from all that is within me which is in rebellion against you. That's what the flesh means. The flesh in this particular case means that there's things within me even after I've come to faith in Jesus that are in rebellion against God.

And so that's what verse 14 is saying. In a sense it's saying that every morning when I wake up, like I can almost envision this because you know how clothes affect how you live the day. You know, if you get up and you're just going to spend the whole day in your grimmest working things, that's not how you're going to go to meet the prime minister, right?

On the other hand, you don't, you know, you don't, if you want to meet the prime minister, you dress one way, you don't dress that way then go work in the government, right? And I mean work in the garden. And so if you just in a sense when you wake up as you're a Christian, you imagine that you're putting on the Lord Jesus Christ at the same time you're just going to say, Father, help me to turn away from everything within me that's in rebellion against you.

[ 45 : 34 ] I want to live my day that way. But here's the thing about it. This is a text to ask us to be shaped by the gospel. You see, here's the wonderful thing about the gospel.

Dick Gregory, who was an anti-war comedian in the 60s and the 70s against the Vietnam War, he said that he had no problem with sending his son to go fight on the front lines.

But he said, if Nixon had a son, if you put my son where Nixon's son is, then I'm fine to send my son to fight in Vietnam. Because what do people in power do?

People in power send young men and now young women to fight, but they stay back. What do they pay taxes? They take honor. They take respect, but they don't give back.

They pass laws that we have to obey, but often they refuse to obey them themselves. But what is the gospel? The gospel is about the most remarkable thing in the world, that the King of kings and Lord of lords that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, that he sets aside his divine prerogatives, his right, in a sense, to be worshipped as God.

[ 46 : 48 ] He stays God, but he sets all of his appearances aside. He looks at human beings who cannot pay the taxes, who cannot keep the laws, who are complete and utter lawbreakers, and they can't stop it.

And he says, I will go and pay the punishment that they deserve. And I will go and fulfill and keep the law that they cannot keep.

I will do that for people in rebellion against me. I, who am properly King of kings and Lord of lords, I will empty myself.

Sorry, I'm making kids cry. We should all be crying in repentance, not just because I've been loud all of a sudden. I'm sorry. But that's what the Bible's telling us the gospel is. A complete reversal of our expectations.

And that's how we are made right with God. The Christian faith begins when in a sense, we call out to Jesus and say, Jesus, clothe me with yourself and what you've done on the cross to take me as your own.

[ 47 : 51 ] I don't want to be your servant or your slave in a sense. I want to be your child and therefore serve you. And the Christian life begins when we're gripped with what God has done for us, completely unlike human kings and queens.

and what he does to die for us to reconcile him to himself. And then the Bible says we don't just sort of accept that and then we go on and live hard-hearted, cold, legislative lives that are consumed with seeking honor for ourselves and respect for ourselves and money for ourselves and power for ourselves.

No. What does the text say? Every day when I wake up after I've given my life to Jesus, the text is saying I should say, Father, there's things in me that are incomplete and utter rebellion against you. I don't want to have them characterize my day. I want to be clothed with Jesus. My Lord and your Messiah, my Messiah, the Messiah and Savior I need.

I want the gospel to shape how I make every decision, how I serve, how I rule, how I show honor, how I show respect, how I bless the city.

[ 49 : 04 ] I want gospel to shape that. Please stand. Father, we ask for, I've mentioned Justin Trudeau, I've mentioned the Supreme Court of Canada, we lift them before you, Father.

Father, we ask that you would pour out your Holy Spirit upon them. We ask, Father, that they would come to a saving faith in Jesus. We ask, Father, that as well, that they would act, they have their own plans, they have their own agendas, they have their own concerns, but that your Holy Spirit might move and work in their lives so that they will be a blessing to Canada, that they will rule and act in such a way that Canada will be prosperous, that we will flourish, that we will not only flourish as a nation, but that we will be a blessing to all of the nations on the planet, that they will seek laws that are right with you and right for us, that bring harmony and mercy to our land.

Father, we ask for them. We ask that you'd not give us the government we deserve, but that you would bless us with great government. And, Father, we ask for ourselves.

You know how, Father, if we have a person that we don't like, how easy it is to show disrespect and dishonor them and tear them down. Father, we ask that you would help us to repent of that. Show us appropriate honor and respect, even for people who all of our contemporaries in the world might say don't deserve it, but help us, Father, to show appropriate respect and honor to them as a way of honoring you and bringing you glory.

And, Father, we ask that every day you help us to turn away from those things within us that are in rebellion against you and help us to clothe ourselves with Jesus. Help us, Father, to figure out how to follow you in Canada in a way which is true to you and is good for this city and this land.

[ 50 : 53 ] Father, help us to do it. And if there are any here, Father, who today have given their lives to you for the first time, may your Holy Spirit flood them with might and power and deep conviction. Seal them for yourself.

Seal all of us. Make us disciples of Jesus gripped by the gospel who live for your glory. This we ask in Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen. Amen.