

In the Beginning, God

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: 10 June 2026

Preacher: Raymond Smith

[0:00] You can take your Bibles from Romans chapter 13. This is where we're going to begin here tonight! Romans chapter 13. As you know, we've been looking, we started last week, Things are defined in order to adjust and to look at it.

How do I need to work through this biblically? To understand the context of not culture alone. We operate within culture, but what we need to do is be driven by what God says and what God's principles have established.

And one of the things that we talked about last week was this idea of dominion theology. And we talked about how and the root of a lot of Christian nationalism is dominion-based theology.

Because, you know, what people believe, you can go back to their theology. And that's just not religious people, people who call themselves religious. You know what an atheist operates within their theology?

How do they frame the world around them? Again, everybody has an operating theology. Some people call it a worldview, but everybody has one.

[1:29] The question is, is it the one that lines up with what God says? Because it's a measurement of standard. And so when we look at that, we see here the dynamics of what does the Bible teach.

You know, you hear a lot of terms today. You hear kingdom. You hear the church. You hear the believer. You know, I want you to understand all those who are important. How does us as a believer operate not only within our church, but operate within the scope of society and civil government?

Because we talked about those different spheres that God has given that are separate, but yet they cross over in our life. And we need to understand how those come together.

So here in Revelation, let's get to the end, right? But Romans chapter 13, verse 1, notice what it says here.

Let every soul be subject unto what? The higher powers, for there is no power but of God, but the powers that are what? Ordained of God. Now, that verse gets thrown around a lot.

[2:38] We're going to talk about it in more detail in a little bit. Because I think there's a lot of, when we get into some application, how do those things play out? And when we understood, as we're going to be looking here, let's just go to the Lord in prayer quick before we go any farther tonight.

Heavenly Fathers, we just come before you tonight. Lord, we just ask for your wisdom, your direction. Lord, help the words to be right. Lord, to properly represent you and your word.

Lord, not what we think or what we feel, but Lord, what we need to operate according to your word. Lord, not any other standard or measurement. Lord, as a believer and follower of yours, Lord, we ought to have that solely as our guide and direction.

And Lord, help us not to be influenced by these different voices that might sound good, but are not sound in doctrine. Lord, help us to keep a clear focus upon you and the truth of your word.

Lord, as you guide and direct as we walk through this life. And we give you all the praise in Jesus' name. Amen. You know, let's talk about a couple things here. The first thing, because last week we talked about dominion theology.

[3:46] And we talked about the fact that Christians, their idea is that Christians must take the political, cultural, and institutional control of the world to prepare it for Christ's return.

You know, we see a lot of that today. We need to have dominion over all these areas of life. And we saw how that was laid out. And if you didn't see last week, I think it's up on, is that on the website yet?

Okay. It's on the, if you can go to Reese, you can catch up with that. But we'll just hit that a little bit. But it also draws where dominion theology comes from. Its root is based in covenant theology and replacement theology.

And it's built upon a post-millennial mindset. And we looked at those things last week. So I'm not going to beat over all those things this week again. But I want you to understand this is lesson, is lesson two.

So you need to understand those things in context to fully understand what we're going to talk about tonight. Even though a lot of beneficial things. If you just take what we have tonight and forget about the rest, you'll still be okay.

[4:52] You'll still be good because we're going to get a little more practical on those things. So this evening we're going to examine that application of that scriptural context of how we need to live in this world.

Because we're going to start first and we're going to talk about what does the Bible teach about the kingdom of God? Now this is an important thing. How many of you heard, oh we've got to do it for the kingdom? Or you hear phrases about kingdom.

You know, in the last 15, 20 years that phrase has just taken off. In music, in rhetoric, you'll hear that word, you know, the kingdom.

You know, we've got to do kingdom, kingdom, kingdom. The question is, what do people mean when they say that? Because your theology drives your understanding.

We might think we have our definition, but I want you to encourage you, whenever somebody says it, you need to ask what is their definition. Because our definition really isn't important in the conversation at that point.

[5:55] We need to understand what are they telling you in the context of how they're defining it. What direction are they trying to steer you by those things? Because we get steered a lot because the first thing we're going to look at here, look over to John chapter 18 for a moment.

Hopefully you brought your Bible tonight because we've got some territory to cover. John chapter 18, down in verse 36, because we're going to see here first this very clear teaching because the simple thing here for your handout is that the kingdom is not of this world.

Okay? I want you to understand what we're going to, and we'll lay this out, but notice one of the clearest statements here that God gives. Look over to John chapter 18, look down at verse 36.

Here, Pilate is asking Jesus, and Jesus makes a pretty direct statement that applies to what we're talking about. Notice what Jesus says here very clearly. He says this, My kingdom is not of what? This world. Now notice the following phrase because it's an attachment to it of clarification. He says, If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants do what?

[7:10] Fight. That I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hands. That's an important statement that Jesus declares.

Jesus is making a statement, because you remember, Jesus already instituted the church with the disciples. Those things were fully functional in that context, but God says, it isn't for my servants to do what?

Fight. In other words, to take over or overthrow a government. Now, before everybody gets so wild on that statement, we'll talk about it in a little bit, okay? And I want you, because we need to keep everything in context.

But I want you to understand, to a dominionist, the response is that the kingdom is now and not yet. That is, the kingdom is present in one sense, but not complete.

I want you to understand why this is true in one sense. It's not completely accurate. Look over to Colossians chapter 1 for a moment. Colossians chapter 1 in verse 13.

[8:19] Colossians chapter 1 in verse 13. The word of God tells us this, and he says, notice this, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us in the kingdom of his dear son.

I want you to understand, the kingdom has a spiritual factor at this point in time. In other words, we are not physically in the kingdom, okay?

A dominionist's idea is that we have been given the kingdom. Key theological point to understand what they're saying.

Because if you grab a hold of that, it's going to take you down a road that's wrong. It's going to take you a wrong direction. Now, I want you to understand, the Bible's clear that it is equally clear that it's full political and governmental expression's going to wait until Christ returns.

I want you to understand, there's coming a day Jesus is going to literally rule in the rain. There'll be a literal kingdom. You know what? People talk a lot about the early church.

[9:32] You know what? The disciples of John, the apostle, Polycarp and Irenaeus, both believed in a literal thousand year reign of Christ.

It wasn't until later on that that took a twist. You know, history's important. When did things get changed? Because you see a lot of people today, they don't believe it's literal.

They believe that it's spiritual. You have people who think it's literal and we're going to force it. But, you know, let's take a look at a couple other verses here tonight. If I can get some help here from a couple of people.

Romans chapter 14, verse 7. You get that one, Ethan? If you can grab that one. I need 1 Corinthians 15, 24. 1 Corinthians 15, 24.

We got that, Joe? All right. And then I need the Colossians. Oh, we already read that one. So we'll do Colossians 1, 13. It's going to be talking about that a little bit. But what's Romans 14, 17 tell us?

[10:33] Yep. Okay. I want you to understand that's pretty clear that it's not physical.

It's spiritual in nature. It's not a political program. You know, I want you to understand dominion theology, Christian nationalism at its root, is driven by physical.

It's a political program. It's a political ideology. And so this is important for us to understand.

Secondly, I want you to understand 1 Corinthians 15, 50 says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

You know, I want you to understand it's inherited, not built. In other words, it's not something you can help God create. It's something that he places you into.

Okay? That's two different mindsets. You know? I want you to understand the importance. It's delivered up to the Father in the end.

[11:38] What's 1 Corinthians 15, 24 tell us, Joe? Go. Okay.

And then come at the end, he does what? He delivers up the kingdom to God. It's delivered up to the Father in the end. You know, it's important to understand. Believers are translated into it.

You know, I want you to understand 1 Corinthians 1, 13, who hath delivered us and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

You know? Those are important. Believers are translated into it. It's not activists building it. That's key because you have a lot of activists today trying to do spiritual things physically.

It's key to understand those things. So let's take a look next here at the error of this dominionist eschatology. You know, the scripture teaches that this current age is the age of grace.

[12:48] This isn't the kingdom age. Okay? A lot of people promote that idea of kingdom. And we'll get back to this in just a little later on because and how this influences, this has influenced even solid Baptist churches who say they stand on the word of God have let false philosophies drag in.

And we'll talk about how those philosophies show up in our life and how the devil loves to twist things and how we need to be careful of that. But let's continue on here because believers are not yet reigning and ruling with Christ.

You know, I want you to understand that's our future destiny. And the apostle Paul corrected the Corinthians when they had slipped into kind of what you might say a proto-dominionist mindset.

They wanted to seek to rule others over others as judges. You know, that's reserved for later on.

You know, take a look over into 1 Corinthians chapter 4. 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

That's an interesting verse and dynamic because Paul's actually kind of being corrective or even sarcastic at this point. Because notice what he tells him here.

[14:02] Now you're full. Now you're rich. You have reigned as kings without us. In other words, Paul's getting after him saying, you guys think you're reigning as kings right now, but you're wrong.

Because notice the next thing. And I would to God you did reign that we might reign with you. In other words, he's making a statement. He says, it's not your place to sit in judgment or to think that you're going to become, that you're in that position of the kingdom yet.

Okay? And so we need to understand it's kind of a sarcastic statement Paul throws back at him of saying, hey, if you guys are there, I wish we were because I'd be there too. But you know what he's saying?

I'm not there. So therefore, we need to understand that that's not what is. You're operating outside that realm. Because notice this age of grace is a time not of dominance.

You know, that's one of the other dynamics that we find here. People try to be dominant in that.

[15:04] And so we see here this, that this is not a time for dominance because what does Jesus tell us about our life? Does he say, hey, you're going to rise up and you're going to become kings of your universe?

What's the Bible tell us? It says we're going to, it's going to be a time, there's going to be humility, there's going to be humiliation, there's going to be suffering, there's going to be service.

That's the description that he has for us. You know, not triumph and dominion. Very clear. Think about Jesus before he was glorified.

He also, and the saints of his age, we suffer with him before we reign with him. You know, that's an important dynamic. We suffer with him before we reign with him.

You know, give you a few more to consider in that. Luke 24, 26. Philippians 2, verses 5 through 11. You know, Revelation 2, verses 25 and 27.

[16:11] I mean, just a few things to look up to kind of understand that we're never promised easy. Christ always tells us that we're going to have trials and tribulations.

You know, that doesn't sound like dominion. Doesn't sound like authority, does it? It sounds like problems. And so this is the contrast. One is saying, you as a believer have dominion that God's given to you, and the Bible says, no, you don't.

So who are you going to believe? How are you going to understand that? How are those things going to come together? Because as we're going to look at this, for the second thing here, let's understand the nature and mission of the local church.

Because when we understand, what does God say about a local church? What does God say about the gathering of his saints? Now, we're going to look here.

The first thing, the church is a gathered assembly, not a world-conquering empire. Now, the use of the term church here is like an institution. In other words, the institution that Jesus started, the local church, all local churches that God has started, that God is in, all operate under the same framework.

[17:26] Okay? There's no exceptions. It's a gathered assembly, not a world-conquering empire. You know, the scripture itself teaches the church is not a universal, invisible body, but a physical gathered assembly of baptized believers.

The very meaning of the word ecclesia is a called-out assembly that gathers in one place. You know? That's a key distinction.

You know, you hear a lot of things today from individuals who say, you know, the church is everybody, you know, everybody that gets saved is the church. You know what? The Bible doesn't promote that.

It tells us everybody that's saved is part of God's family. You're born again into God's family, but being a part of a church is different. It's a called-out assembly.

You know what? Every believer is called out to be a part of a local body of believers. But a lot of people want to stay on the skirts and on the outside.

[18:29] When we understand what God has done, you know, and understanding this, let's take a quick look over here. Go over to Acts chapter 14 for a moment. Notice what it says here.

And when we were come, they had gathered the church together. They rehearsed all that God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Notice what Paul says when they arrived.

What happened? They gathered the church, the local body of believers, the church that was there. That's a distinction that we'll see throughout.

And we see this, that Baptists have always historically held that this is what the Bible teaches, that Jesus established his church. You know, Matthew 16, 18, Jesus said this, Thou art Peter upon this rock, I will build my church.

What's he talking about there? He's not talking about Peter. He's talking about the truth that he is the son of the living God. Jesus established it on that fact. And he tells us this, And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

[19:50] You know what? Local churches have existed from the time of Christ moving forward. I want you to understand, you can find that in history. There's always been local churches, not universal.

The universal church is a concept that was created in about the second century. And we'll have time to get into all the history there tonight.

But there's a lot of history of why that change came about. Because like I said, you find the direct disciples of John not speaking the same way.

Something changed. Something changed. And they rejected the truth. You know, that's the reason we get into some other things about Alexandria and the school at Alexandria and Gnosticism.

I mean, you have a lot of roads to travel there, so we're not going to get into it tonight. But I want you to understand what we're talking about here, because the very meaning is a called out assembly that gathers in one place.

[20:51] The word church means called out assembly, a gathered congregation. You know, I want you to understand, the church began with Christ, but it's empowered at Pentecost. That is key.

It was already there. Jesus tells us, Acts chapter 1 and verse 8, tells us this. He says, wait for power from on high. He didn't tell them, hey, I'm going to start something new here in a few days.

He said, you go and you wait for what? You wait for power. The empowerment of the Holy Ghost to move forward. It's a key dynamic, and it's always existed as a local, visible, gathered body of baptized believers accountable to one another and to Christ as the head.

Now, dominion theology people, which covers a lot of territory, anybody, most of the reformed people, can fall into this. Some do not. This is what makes this messy, is you have a lot of people who blend theology systems in different areas, and then they get confused, because one area that they say something conflicts with something else, and I don't believe God's doctrines conflict.

So if something's conflicting in your theology, you know what you need to do? You need to start studying. You need to look and to say, which one's wrong?

[22:14] What's wrong with this? Well, it's just come together. Because dominion theology confuses the church identity that merges it with a supposed universal, invisible body whose mandate is to transform political institutions.

This is contrary to the biblical truth of the autonomy of the local church. Each congregation is accountable directly to Christ as its head.

Colossians 1.18 makes it very clear. He is the head. You know, I want you to understand, this has been historically defended, historically held, and it's contrary to the church's God-given mission.

Because when you make it universal, it's very easy to then make it political. Those two scopes seem to flow together very naturally when you look at history.

And I'm not talking about American history. Go back and watch the scope from first century all the way up through the Middle Ages, and all through that time and how things changed.

[23:19] You'll see that as a tool they used for political control. That political dynamic and the true mission of the church as an institution. You know, the missions of the local church as given by Jesus is threefold.

You know, let's look at a couple of verses that put this out for us. Who can look up Matthew 28 for me? Matthew 28, I need verses 18 through 20. Who's got that quick tonight?

Harry, you got that one? I need Matthew 28, 18 through 20, then Acts 1.8. You got that one, Darren? As soon as you're ready, Harry, you can stand up. As soon as you're ready.

Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Now, I want you to listen to this passage of Scripture to see what is the purpose, what's the direction?

Brother Harry? All right, go. Matthew 28, 18 through 20. And Jesus came to the Spirit. No, 28.

[24:35] Matthew 28. Verse 18. What's that? Okay, go ahead.

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. Am I confused?

You're in the right spot. Think about it. Now, what's Acts 1.8 tell us? Okay. So, what's the purpose of the church?

What's the purpose of a local church and its functioning assignment? Very simply, you can break it down into three things. There's three movements that you're going to find here that we're to be involved with.

We're to bear witness to Christ in the world. In other words, we're to evangelize. We're to raise up disciples. In other words, teach them about the truth of God's Word. Witness to Christ in the world.

[25:57] You know, witness to others. Also, to baptize converts and identify them publicly with Him. Because I want you to understand, baptism isn't part of your salvation. That's another twist of things that they've moved.

I want you to understand, baptism identifies you. It identifies you with the doctrines of Christ and His people. Baptism is important.

A lot of times, baptism gets played down today. You'll find that's another tool to play it down. Because if you don't make it important to the big picture of what Christ wants, it makes it easier to just convince people to move forward.

You know, even in the news recently, you see all these, well, we had a thousand people baptized. And you start digging into it and you find out, you got a thousand people wet. Because let me give you a clue.

Whenever you hear, I got a thousand people baptized, and nobody mentions the Word being preached, nobody mentions conversion, that Christ did something in their life prior to, you know what it is?

[26:59] They got wet. That's the reason I think we have a lot of false converts, because their faith is in getting wet instead of being saved.

In Christ, of what Christ has done for us. You know, to identify with Him. Thirdly, and to mature believers through sound doctrine so they're equipped to serve.

You know? In other words, in any of those, do you see any theme there of saying, go take over the government? Is there a political motive in any of that?

Now, I want you to understand, politics are important, but Jesus makes it clear, things have their place, that we need to keep them in the right operation. And we need to operate those things properly.

And to understand, the Great Commission calls us to the transformation of souls through the gospel, not the transformation of nations through legislation. That's a big difference.

[28:03] I want you to understand what's happening, because our power as a church is spiritual in Christ, not political.

Our sphere of influence is spiritual for maturity of the believers and not political. Now, we're going to talk about some things.

So, in regards to this, how it goes, I want you to understand, it grows through the Word of God, prayer, the ordinance of baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Those are essential things that God gave to us.

Faithful preaching and the faithful testimony of individual believers. But I want you to understand, dominionist movement, the Christian nationalist dominionist movement, as we defined last week, because if you remember, Christian nationalism is a term that gets thrown around and tossed around.

So we need to define who's talking about it and what. But I want you to understand, you have people out there that claim to be Christian nationalists by their own term. You will find they follow dominion theology.

[29:07] Dominionist theology is very present within our society today. You get on YouTube, you'll find a ton of them trying to promote their little ideas.

It elevates, the problem is it elevates political activism and cultural control over to the level of the Great Commission. In other words, even replacing the Great Commission.

In other words, our goal is a, they think church is a political movement instead of a spiritual transformational movement. Our nation, you know what? If churches got busy, if people's lives were transformed by the gospel, you know what?

The government would be transformed. That's how transformation changes. So we need to understand, let's take a look here quick, the believer's relationship to civil government.

Now this is rubber meets the road part. You know, what is our relationship if we're not a political entity? I want you to understand the church is not a political entity, but as an individual, we ought to be involved.

[30:14] That's two different things, okay? That's the other reason that separation is important. You know, we looked earlier, look back where we started out here in Romans chapter 13.

Romans chapter 13. Let's consider what's here because the New Testament is very clear and plain in its teaching about the Christian's relationship to civil government.

This is the area where dominion theology and Christian nationalism most practically affect your thoughts and processes of life. Notice what it says here in verse 1 of Romans chapter 13.

It says, Government is God's minister for good.

Believers are called to be subject to it and to even pray for those in authority. You know, think about where to pray for them, where to pay our taxes.

[31:46] You know, I don't like taxes any more than anybody else. But you know what? Jesus made it very clear we're supposed to do what? Pay them.

That's a hard pill to swallow as an American, isn't it? You know, that's where our influencing government can cut the government spending, which means they can tax you less, right? You know, because once they take it, they seem to never give it back.

A whole other topic for another day. I'll get political if I get stomping on that one. But I want you to understand, we are to obey its laws, not to conquer it, not to remake it according to a theocratic vision.

Okay? Now, the limits of obedience. This is an important question. The limits of obedience. When civil authority exceeds its bounds.

You know, there's times that government's going to exceed its bounds. Okay? I want you to understand, obedience to government, it says to be subject to, but obedience to government is not absolute.

[32:55] When civil authority commands what God forbids, or forbids what God commands, believers must obey God rather than men. Acts 5.29 makes it very clear.

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

That's the application. It's not rebellion. It's saying, I cannot subject to that because God is a higher authority.

God has a principle that even though I'm supposed to be subject unto you, God's principle, what you're asking me to do is not in the right order. In other words, God has superseded your authority. The very one that puts you there has a higher authority. This principle you see throughout scripture. You know, you think about the Hebrew midwives, Daniel, Peter, and John.

But I want you to understand, even in such cases, the believers remain subject to the lawful consequences of civil authority. They didn't ignore it and just say, okay, God's going to take care of us.

[34:04] I shouldn't be, I shouldn't have to face any consequences. You know what? They still face the consequences. They just said, no, we're not going to do that, which is contrary to what God has said. We'll face the consequences.

The biblical principle is very clear here. And we're going to talk about this a little more, that biblical principle of separation between the church and the civil state.

You know, it's based and grounded in our Lord's own teaching to render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar and unto God, that which is God's. That's Matthew 22, verse 21.

If you want to take a new, his kingdom is not of this world. You know, he protects both the church's independence and the individual believers, liberty of conscience.

You know, your liberty of conscience and everybody else's is a core biblical principle. You know, historically, Bible believers, when they believe the Bible, it's been its strongest defender.

[35:08] It's not called to a theocratic conquest. In other words, to force religion upon somebody, you're to present truth. And understand, now let's look at this a little bit here, the U.S. Constitution and the believer, because this is an important part.

As citizens of the United States, we need to understand, our context is for us. Some of the context as we move forward might be different for somebody else.

That's under a different form of government. Okay? We need to understand, not everybody operates like American government operates. Maybe we're thankful for that, maybe we're not, but I'm thankful they do have a few guidelines and principles that they have to kind of keep them in check.

You know, that's called our constitution. That's the checks upon our government that our founders of our nation put in. You know, we're blessed to live under a constitutional republic that especially respects religious liberty.

Free speech, the right to peaceably assemble, you know, blessings consistent with historic principles that Baptists have held. Baptists have historically been among the strongest in our nation advocates for separation of church and state.

[36:29] I want you to understand, it's not because they were anti-religious in public life, because they understood that state-controlled church and a church-controlled state are both corruptions of God's design.

Remember, remember, there's separate parallels. God's given us, as an individual, we fall under a lot of them. We need to understand that we have to operate within the scope of each of those, and sometimes those things we have to say which one has a higher authority, and operate in the context.

You know, one of the phrases that are thrown around much today, how about you hear this one?

Separation of church and state. Have you heard people screaming that?

Every time they do, it makes me laugh. Because most of them are so out of context. They try to use a Supreme Court decision wording that the Supreme Court justice used completely out of context.

And how do we know it was out of context? Because that phrase comes from a letter that a group of Baptists in Danbury, Connecticut, wrote to Thomas Jefferson.

[37 : 50] The Danbury Baptist Association, a group of churches, wrote to Jefferson with an express concern about this new government. An express dynamic.

An express dynamic. An express dynamic. Because I want you to understand, they were forced to pay taxes for the established Congregationalist Church.

So their concern was, when they wrote to Thomas Jefferson, and wanted to be affirmed that religion is a matter between man and God, that no civil magistrate has authority over the conscience, even to be forced to give money to a different church.

That's the context. That is there. Jefferson, in 1802, agreed.

Describing the First Amendment as a wall of separation between church and state. The wall, rightly understood, is a Baptist conviction before it was a Jeffersonian phrase.

[38 : 59] Its purpose was to keep the state out of church, no compulsory tax for other denominations, no state license to preach, no civil penalty for dissent, no silent Christian witness in the public square.

You know, I want you to understand that Christian nationalism, dominion theology, is claiming that the wall is a myth, or that Christians should establish biblical law as a civil code.

What are they doing? They're putting in the very thing that causes the problem. They want the government out of church, but they want the church to have full control over the government.

You know what? Biblically, God is against both. Very important distinction, as we understand that, that that's the reason we have the rights we have, because these men took a stand, and were writing and pleading for this right that we can have in our Constitution.

They saw if it's not there, you know what? If something's not in writing, you know how good it is?

We already know that. It's not much good. That's the reason it was important.

[40 : 07] It got put in. It was fought for, discussed. You can look up some of that, but I want you to understand the picture here, because Christian nationalists, to many of us, will say that was a false claim.

The separation of church and state. You know what? They're having a problem already with what God has established. Render unto Caesar, is that which is Caesar unto God, that's which is God's. I want you to see here that there's people, Baptists in the history of our nation, that took a lot of flack and a lot of problems for that, to make that happen. They paid fines, they went to jail, they were beaten.

That liberty is because somebody looked at the scripture and said, we're going to fight to make sure this stays in its right place. A lot of people today want to blend it back.

I want you to understand that might sound convenient, but it's not going to be so convenient once it happens. Because you will delude your liberty greatly.

[41 : 31] When you understand that Christ alone is Lord of the conscience and the gospel does not need the sword of the state to advance. That's another critical thing.

You cannot force conversion somebody. That's part of that whole dynamic. You know what they wanted to do in early America?

What was still happening the same thing happened in Europe. You had a state church. You had to be a part if you were going to function within the society. If you disagreed, you know what happened?

You were put out, fined, imprisoned, beaten. There was preachers who were beaten for doing nothing more but going and preaching.

Preachers in early America were beaten and imprisoned for helping people follow the Lord's commandment to be scripturally baptized. Because they were preaching and baptizing without a

license from the state.

[42 : 38] That's our context that's important to understand those things. We must also reckon honestly with the moral foundation of our nation as it now stands.

Because the civil sphere in America is no longer governed by a broadly biblical conscience. It's governed by secular humanism, the assumption that a man is a measure of all things, that morality is determined by reason, sentiment, and the majority is will rather than God's revealed word. You know, think about what judges. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. You know, the laws and the institutions under which we live are being rewritten on the foundations hostile to Scripture on both ends.

Because secular humanism is a religion that's taking over our government. They're making a religious statement by saying some of the things that they say and want to implement within our government.

I consider them as dangerous as the dominionists. Different sides of the apple, but you know what? Both of them are the root of the devil. We need to identify them.

[43 : 51] You know, if you recall from lesson one that God ordained four distinct spheres. The believer as an individual, the church, the workplace, and civil magistrate, the government.

Each has its own God-given lane and dominion theology and Christian nationalism mainly contest that three of those, the believer, the local church, and the civil sphere, but they want the church as universal in their context, and they collapse all three into one by having the church seize the civil sphere and rule the believer's life through political power.

You know, you'll see the interesting thing that one of them on the internet, a big proponent, actually saw in him interview and he basically said, oh no, if we get this implemented, everybody will still be free to worship God however they want.

Then you see him a little later on, oh no, that's not what we meant. Everybody's going to be, follow what we say. It's like, well, which one is it? I tend to believe from human nature it's probably the latter.

Those restraints are important. That dynamic is critical in that. And so, when we understand they collapse them, and that's one wrong answer, I want you to understand that we can't collapse all three.

[45 : 18] Passive retreat from the public square is another. That's the opposite side. It's either somebody wants to take it over or they want to collapse from. I want you to understand that neither one of those are the answer.

The biblical answer and what we want to defend from the scripture is different. It keeps the spheres of these influences distinct, but understanding that we have to operate within them and we have a right and a privilege as Americans to operate within that.

That's part of your rights as a citizen of the United States. to operate in civil discourse. You know what? You cannot separate your beliefs from civil discourse.

You know, if a politician says, well, I believe that in private, but I'm going to do this for the sake of, you know, everything else, you know what it tells me? They don't really believe what they believe in private. Because if they do, if they say one thing and do another, what's that called?

Hypocrisy. In other words, one is not true to them. When we understand that every believer is governed by the word and the God spirit that dwells within them, we need to understand the church is governed by Christ as a head through sound biblical teaching, civil government does it.

[46 : 42] It's God-ordained work of restraining evil and rewarding good. You know, as Americans under the U.S. Constitution, that's a blessing that we have.

We still have it, yet anyways. We can be thankful for it. So, but the Bible ought to be our sole rule for life and practice. The Constitution is the lawful, civil framework under which we live as citizens. The Bible guides morals and truth and ethic and understanding and belief. The Constitution guides civil government and the restraints of our government.

Neither replaces the other. Neither requires the church a universal mindset to take the levers of state to be faithful to Christ. In other words, a local church does what it's supposed to do where it is and accomplish God's mission and God's task.

And as believers, we'll influence our society around us. Those things are very clear in Scripture. You know, as Christians are encouraged to participate in civil life, to vote, to speak truth in the public square, to advocate for righteousness, these are the legitimate fruits of good citizenship.

[47:57] But the goal is never theocratic control. We are ambassadors of another kingdom. We're sojourners in this world. We're seeking first the kingdom of God.

Never seeking God first. The place that He's going to be translated into. The place that God's one day where we're going to be. In other words, you're looking ahead. You know, we have a lot of things today. People talk about planning for the future.

As a Christian, you ought to be planning for what's going to come. When we understand, we ought to pray for those in authority, be faithful witnesses, and participate in civil life as a servant, not as a conqueror.

I'm out of time. Where will the clock go tonight? Last point quick. We'll just cover it quick. Practical warnings. These are, how do these ideas enter our church and churches as the institution, we might say.

Okay? Dominion theology doesn't always announce itself. Its ideas can enter through songs in worship that imply believers are presently reigning or that the world is becoming the kingdom of God.

[49:06] You know, music is powerful. The music you listen to, when you listen to wrong theology, you notice it begins to ingrain within you. Listen to the music and say, where does it line up with scripture?

There's a lot of gospel songs, I'll just tell you, that are pretty bad theology. Poor theology. I mean, I heard one the other day talking about church in the kitchen.

I'm like, you can't even do that. You can read your Bible in the kitchen, you can eat in the kitchen, you can do a lot of things in the kitchen, but you can't have church in the kitchen. You can't. Sounds good, it rolls off with people, but you know what, it's bad theology.

It influences us. We better move on. Political activism framed as fulfilling the Great Commission. We need to be involved in this, you're going to fulfill the Great Commission. No, you're not, that's another civil responsibility that's separate from the Great Commission.

Prosperity, gospel teaching that presents health and wealth as the inheritance of God's kingdom, citizens now. You know, prophetic ministries that claim special authority to direct individual churches or nations.

[50:25] Ecumenical alliances that unite separated churches with Rome or liberal denominations under cultural dominion agenda. I want you to understand the antidote is not political passivity, but biblical clarity.

We're to be salt and light, then preserving that which is good and shining forth the truth of the gospel by remaining clear that the transformation of the world is not political but spiritual.

The church's task is not to fix the world, it's to preach the gospel to every creature. Dominion theology, in whatever form it takes, is a departure from the plain teachings of scripture.

It confuses the present church age with the coming kingdom, replaces the Great Commission with the political mandate, merges the church with civil government, and distracts believers from their true calling.

You know, I want you to understand we need to take our truth on the word of God alone. To understand, our authority is not our tradition but the scriptures that God has given to us.

[51:28] Our authority is in the word of God. You know, Philippians 3.20 will end here. It says, for our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, your citizenship is in heaven, your mission is the gospel, and our hope is in the return of the Lord Jesus. Those are things we ought to be focused upon.

And so, we better dismiss here, I'm already in trouble with the people downstairs. But, let's close in a word of prayer. for him.