



Government – February 12, 2020

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Verses Covered This Week

1 Timothy 2:1 – 4

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – 19

Romans 13:1 - 7

Acts 4:18 – 20

Exodus 1:17 - 21

So we are going to start so none of you did hear, except you three ladies heard my baseball stories, but OK y'all, I will give you a chance to leave without hurting my feelings. We're going to talk about the government. Don't all get up at once, though. Just sort of trickle out as I'm talking and you're not looking. Yes, just take your plate like you're going to get more food like this and then, you know. I'm just kidding.

This day and age, this subject can get, oh for lack of a better word, hairy. Oh, I do want to share with y'all, if y'all could keep Michelle in your prayers this week and tonight. They've had some family emergencies, medical emergencies, that's why she's not here with us tonight. So just be praying for her and for her family and all that they are working out.

So, what does the Bible say about the government? And do we even want to know with our current government's state? Well, we better because that's the only way we're going to figure out how to navigate it, right? So we are going to just jump right in and you may get a little more of my opinion tonight than normal. So filter accordingly and take it or leave it and all that stuff. Filter through the Holy Spirit, etc, etc, etc. And once again, if the Lord speaks to you tonight, it really has nothing to do with me because again, hot mess express.

So let's start in 1 Timothy 2:1.

¹First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead tranquil and a quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth.

So if you were here for Calvinism last week, you might recognize that word, who desires all men. But we won't reopen that. But let's go back to who we are supposed to pray for. For kings and all who are in authority. That's pretty clear. All, again, but why? It's so we can live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. So the reason we need to live this sort of life is not so life is not hard, right? It's so that the glory of God can reflect easily on us from us and the life that we live and others, again, will come to know God. Again, every single time all the way through, it's not about us. It's about living out the life so that others can come to know Christ. And so we're going to see that again as we talk about the government. So if our prayers are going to be affective, they've got to be specific. So we're going to be praying specifically for all the kings and all in authority. That can go on and on and on and on, right? Technically, authority, that goes a long way. It can be a whole lot of people. So one of Christ's recommendations for tackling that is taking the people that are directly related to you. People that come into your life. Bill Flores, he attends here. Things like that that we are more connected to and may be able to pray more specifically for. I say that it's like living and walking in the Spirit, right? If we're praying in the Spirit, then the Spirit is leading us in what and who to pray for. So sit there long enough to be prompted who we're going to pray for. But if you don't include that subject category, you're not going to probably specifically think of who we need to be praying for. Obviously the president should probably be on everyone's list regardless of who's in office. He doesn't actually have as much technical power as we think, but he wields a lot of influence in how things go. So we definitely want to be praying for him specifically. And so it may be the school board in your area. It may be the city council in your area. It can be anything that you are prompted to pray for and that the Lord directs you.

So if we're going to know who to pray for and how to pray for them, because most of these are going to be men and women that we don't actually know, so thinking of how to pray for them, again, we have to be walking in the Spirit. So besides the fact that every bit of this is about bringing people to Jesus, every bit of how we walk it out is about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and connecting that. It does not matter what subject we are talking about, that is going to be the thread that runs throughout all of the topics and again here. Because we need to pray for what kind of wisdom to pray accurate and specific prayers for them. You don't have to go there, but if you go to 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – 19.

¹⁷pray without ceasing,

And two verses down after pray without ceasing it is

¹⁹Quench not the Spirit.

So if we are living in things that are quenching the Spirit, we're not going to be able to accurately pray for our government. Because it all is connected. I'm going to read this kind of slow.

Our leaders are a reflection of us. Our prayers and what the Lord is working out for us and for His glory and our sanctification.

So if we don't like the leaders that we have, why do we have them? Why is that leader in place? Probably because of the condition that we're in. Whether that's the condition of the church, the

condition of our prayers, the condition that we are walking through. Let's look at that a little longer. Let's go to Romans chapter 13 and break this down a little bit more. I will read 1 – 7 and then we will go a little more verse by verse.

¹Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same, ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good, but if you do what is evil, be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing. For it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. ⁵Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷Render to all that is due them: tax to whom tax is due, custom to who custom is due, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

OK. So first of all, we've already said we're going to pray for them, right? We have to pray for them. Then we have to obey them. It's our authority. And then we're going to talk about disobeying them which sounds like it would be the opposite but not exactly. So all authority is from God. We're seeing a lot of all in everything. For there is no authority (in verse 1) except from God. None. Not even some of those that most of our Facebook memes have plastered all over. OK. Even those are in, are placed there by God. Sometimes that's hard for me to swallow. The same people who vote to kill the unborn are in office by God's hand. Sometimes we have to apply more faith than what our logic can follow out when we're looking at what God's word says. Because it's pretty clear. So and at the time that this is written, Nero, is the emperor. We're not talking about someone that, "Oh, this is all going to go nicely for." We're talking about an absolutely, one hundred percent, certifiable, insane man. So this is not, these verses are not coming in a culture where they're like, it's peaceable and it's free. So they are fully understanding the ramifications of this type of government. In history, if you look through to history, the types of governments that come into play that we would go pure evil are at times when the church was in great decline. So if you take a look at Hitler and the Holocaust, at that time the church in Germany had been all but dead. They had watered down the word of God and were just coasting and going by as this was going on. So if you look at various times, look at the Old Testament. When did God's people have the most horrible rulers? When they had walked away from the Lord. So you might could say that the horrible leaders that we have might not be so much a reflection of our society, but could be a reflection of what the condition of the church is during that time. I did not do statistics to prove that. But if you take some pieces together, you could at least make a solid argument that changing society is not really the key to a better government. Changing the way the church is, or what, and maybe changing the way the church is, is not the way we would think changing the church is, right? Because the New Testament, people, the reason the Jews had such a problem is because they thought the Messiah was going to come to make a new government. So maybe what being the church and being where we're supposed to be might not be totally a good government other than that government was in place to move us where we need to be. That government at the time of Christ had created an environment where they could live peaceably. They could. I mean Nero was still crazy. But at the time of Christ, the roadways, you could travel freely, the Jews were not, they could do

whatever they wanted really. They could worship the way they wanted. They could act the way they wanted. They didn't like the Roman environment they were living in, but they were free to share the gospel up to a point. And they were free to move about. So when we are frustrated with the condition of our government, we might take a check in the mirror first. When the church leaves the Scripture, when it leaves prayer, when it leaves relationship with God, often times the Lord will use a government adjustment to help that. Because what happens when we think someone scary is coming into office? Suddenly we remember to pray for the government. Was there a lot of government prayer over Reagan? We could pretty much all do maybe some. But like if you go back to some of these, but when some more scarier topics came up, you might suddenly, there's a lot more prayer about us being free.

OK. Verse 2. Let's talk about what the government role is.

²Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³For the rulers are not a cause for fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear over authority? Do what is good and you will have praise (or be blessed in another translation), ⁴for it is a minister of God for your good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid, for it doesn't bear the sword for nothing. For it's a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

So the government's job is to bring terror and wrath to those who do evil. We might have been broken here for a while. But that is their job. So if that's the government's job, is it the churches job to bring wrath or evil? No. It's definitely not. OK. That is the government job. Our job is to love those people and draw them to Christ. Not our job; terror and wrath, government's job. So sometimes when the government is not doing what they're supposed to be doing, bringing the terror and the wrath, sometimes we're like, "Let us pick that up for you and we will bring the terror and the wrath." So, not our job. So, he used the example of Isis because that's what was going on at the time. But it's not our job to hate Isis, it's the government's job to handle the evil. Our concern is loving those people and drawing them to Christ. So it's easy to say, Isis, because they're far away. But take that down to a more personal level and see how that plays out. So if you live in obedience, they will bless you. My friends who know I'm not a rule-follower know that I struggle here. But I may or may not have been working on my speeding ticket this week. So I promise, y'all, everything I'm saying goes to me too. But the real point of obedience to following the law is so that we can peaceably live out our following for Christ. So the more violent we are about our views on what goes on in the government the less peaceably we're able to live out our lives and how we walk and our voice.

So to bring it kind of maybe too close to home, if our social media platforms that we use to give our political opinion may be the very thing that keeps you from being able to speak into the life of someone else. It may be that although it's funny or true or way too true, what we're posting, it might be the thing that offends someone so greatly on a matter. You're not going to change their opinion, right. Has anyone seen a meme and gone, "Oh, yes, I'm so right to life now." They don't. Occasionally you can get someone who if they see an emotion or a story or something along those lines, but if we are posting our impeachment opinions, we may lose the ability to share and love people in the situation. So we do have to be careful there.

Ok, moving onward to the disobeying part. So Acts 4. As we're getting to Acts, let me reiterate something that I'm pretty passionate about. You can take it or leave it. We do not live in a dictatorship like is referenced largely throughout the Bible. We have a lot of freedoms that God worked through a lot of people. And so I am in no way saying we should not activate those rights and freedoms that we have already fought for, the Lord has already given us and we have already won, because if we sit by and do nothing, that peaceable living live might go out. I'm just saying doing that in a way that doesn't damage your peaceable living with those around you. So just to clarify, there are some issues out there that if we don't address those, my pet peeve one is Parental Rights. If we start losing the right as parents to make decisions for our children, it's going to get very difficult to follow what we're going to start talking about in two weeks, parenting, under the guidelines of Christ. If we start losing our parental rights and not our ability to teach our children, our viewpoints on transgender situations, we are not going to be adequately able to share the Bible with them like we want to. So that segue into, we can peaceably fight for those things, right? We're not being forced on a lot of things right now and that's good. You're going to find that to be the distinguishing factor of what we're about to talk about. So Acts 4:18 & 19.

¹⁸And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than God, you be the judge, ²⁰for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard."

So essentially, he said to them, they were trying to keep him quiet after he had healed someone who they deemed not healable and they're like, "Maybe if he'll be quiet out this. Can we just keep this on the down low and send you on your way because we're in a rock and a hard place. If we do things to you, the people will be angry and if we let you go, this thing is going to keep going." And so they respond and say, "Do what you will, but we cannot be silent." Why? Because that was an exact directive from the Lord, right? To go and to teach and to be. So we cannot, if the government forcibly asks us to do something, we cannot comply with that, that goes against God's will. That's clear. While y'all turn to Exodus 1. So right now some of the things that frustrate us, same-sex marriage and such, no one is forcing anyone into a same-sex marriage, right? Doesn't make it right. But even some of those issues, Chris brings up, no one has a forced abortion right now. It's still bad. It's still wrong. And you can argue about coercion, but forced isn't really happening. That doesn't mean it's not around the corner. Does not mean it's not around the corner. But speaking of forced abortions, Exodus 1:17, this is one of my favorites, I'm not going to lie for a lot of reasons.

¹⁷The midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but they let the boys live.

So the king of Egypt had, after Joseph and all of the tribes of Israel have come over into Egypt and they're living in the land of Goshen and they have multiplied greatly. That's part of their Genesis directives that they've had is to multiply. They didn't have Genesis at the time, I don't mean to imply they did but what had been passed to them was, be fruitful and multiply. So they did it. They multiplied greatly. And so now all of Jacob's sons have gone. The next generation is mostly gone. And now we have this Egyptian king who knows nothing of them. He just sees this large group of not Egyptians over here in the land of Goshen. So he's like, "Oh no, the

people are going to come and they're going to fight us and these guys are going to join our enemy." I don't know, did he have any reason to think that? No idea. But anyway, he wiggled out and so he's like, "Ok, let's do this. Let's go over to the midwives and tell them to kill all the baby boys. Let the girls live. They're fine." And so the midwives were asked to kill the baby boys as they came. And they said, "We can't." They feared God above all else. They feared God above what the Egyptian pharaoh could do to them.

And did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded, but let the boys live. ¹⁸So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?" ¹⁹And the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not as Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and they give birth before the midwife can even get to them." ²⁰So God was good to the midwives and the people multiplied and became very mighty. ²¹And it came about because the midwives feared God, that he established households for them.

So because of their obedience to God, they were not child-bearing before that point, but He gave them children out of their disobedience to the government. So we have really fine lines of when we are to actually rebel against the government. They lied and disobeyed and God blessed them. OK, I don't have proof that they lied. They averted the truth, to say at least, that these women were vigorously having babies.

So we have to pray for our government, obey the government, disobey the government when they want to go against God's word. And we have to stand on the sovereignty of the word of God regardless of the circumstances around us or what we like or what we don't like. Because our faith is in the Lord, not in our government, right. And not in politics. That doesn't mean we don't, we abstain, but it does mean that whatever that outcome is, we can rest in knowing that the Lord orchestrated that outcome and that it is for good. It's for the good of the church. It's for the good of His people. And it's what He wants to bring about. So I don't know how you get any more hope than that in the dark politics that we live in is to know that it is all centered in the hand of the Lord and for our good.

So, I'm afraid, but you may ask any questions you want.

Questions

- A. Just to clarify, I'm not saying that our goal or our role is to change culture. OK. I don't want to misinterpret that. But there is a direct correlation between the church as a whole and how they're acting and behaving and the government that is in place. Because at certain times, there have been various times in history where Christians were loved and appreciated. If you go back to the Revolutionary War, the atheists said, "We need Christian people in government because of the way they carry themselves, their ethics, their integrity, the way they love people, the way that they do this." So there are times in our history where Christians were living in a way, and I'm not saying that what's going on necessarily has everything to do with our we live. But we have to say that from other times in history, we've gotten kind of watered down on our Bible, on the church as a whole in the US. And so there have been times where Christians, despite whether you

believe them or not, they were appreciated and respected. And other times we're seen as haters in our current day.

- A.** I definitely think that some of the problems that we had 70 years ago kind of started some real problems. Because the church wasn't handling what we were directed out of here. Absolutely I do.
- Q.** Sometimes I think we get the government we deserve, not the government that we need or want. Because as a whole across the country Christians, they sit back and they watch and don't say anything. And if you're not going to do anything, and voting is the thing, that's how we say, "No, this isn't right." If you go across the board and people don't vote anymore. I know people who have never voted and it makes me crazy. A lot of our young people don't vote. They just don't. And I think that's a lot of the problem is that God's up there going, "Alright."
- A.** I think if we go back to the first step, if we follow Timothy and he says, "Pray for our government." If you're praying for your government, would you ever not put your vote on a ballot? I'm not saying every single every little tiny thing necessarily. But you're going to be cognizant, right? So if we are, unless the Lord, I don't want to presume on what the Lord might tell you to do. But it would seem to me that if you're praying diligently for the government like we're asked to, you would probably engage a little bit. If you're going to pray, you have to know who's in office.