

Romans 13:1-10

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[0 : 00] But we're in Romans 13, verses 1 through 10 this morning. Romans 13, verses 1 through 10. If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in Romans 13, verses 1 through 10.

Paul writes to the church at Rome. Always keeping its proper setting, right? The church at Rome. Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities.

For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

For 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. For 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 on the one who practices evil. Therefore, it is necessary to be in subjection not only because of wrath, but also for conscious sake.

[1 : 12] For because of this you also pay taxes. For rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them, tax to whom tax is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet.

And if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you so much for this day. God, we rejoice in everything we've been able to do, the things we have been able to hear. Lord, the worship we've been able to proclaim. But God, we are most thankful for this time to be still. Lord, we pray, God, now that the truth of your word would sink into our hearts. Lord, that it would permeate our very being, that every distraction would be cast aside.

[2 : 12] Lord, that you would help us to see you, your truth, and its application in our life for your glory. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. We have been making our way through this great book, the book of Romans.

And as we have made our way through the book of Romans, we have seen it divided very distinctly into three major sections. Romans chapters 1 through 8 really show us or give to us the justification by faith and faith alone.

It is really the theology of salvation. How man is saved. We find in Romans 1 through 8 that you are not saved because you are good enough. You're not saved because you've done enough.

You're not saved because you're going to be good enough. You are saved because someone did it for you. And by faith you accept that offering in your place. And you are freely forgiven, not on the basis of your works, lest any man should boast, but on the basis of the works of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary.

And then in Romans 9, 10, and 11, we saw that great truth that God saves through faith and faith alone. That he holds them eternally secure as we find in Romans 8.

[3 : 21] We find that truth displayed throughout history, namely in the nation of Israel. As Paul shows us an illustration to display the truth, he just took eight chapters teaching us about.

And then we make a transition once again in Romans 12 to the end of the book, which is Romans 16. And it is applying the truth of salvation. It is not just an illustration to a truth, rather it is an application of the truth.

They say an illustration is like a window to open up to shed light on the great truth that has been shown. But an application would be the marching orders that you take because something is true. And by the way, though the gospel comes to us and offers us salvation free of charge, it also comes to us and gives us charge. That is, marching orders to do because we are saved.

We say that in the book of James, that we do not work for our salvation, but true salvation always leads one to work. It always leads to an application.

[4 : 22] Because something that good that frees us, freely forgiven, freely redeemed, completely transformed, completely made new, will always move us.

And Paul takes Romans 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 and gives us the application, what this looks like. In Romans 12, he applies this truth of salvation in our relation to one another.

How are we going to live differently because we are saved? How are we going to behave differently? Remember, he says to be transformed by the renewing of your minds. That we ought to have this different relationship.

We begin to think on different things, act on different things, and to live in different ways simply because of this great truth that when we are in the hand of the Father, nothing can snatch us out of the hand of the Father, and we are only there because the Father wants us there.

And what a great truth it is. But now we come to Romans 13, one really, that if it wasn't in there, we would not put it in there, and we would not seek to have it in there, but it is in there, so we must respond to the fact that it's there.

[5 : 26] And it is the redeemed citizen in the world in which he lives. How does the truth of your salvation find its application in the world in which you live in?

You know, the gospel never isolates an individual from the world. As a matter of fact, the early church lived in the world, worshiped secretly from the world, but they were really a part of the world. And we saw that as church progressed and became recognized in national identity, and we don't have time to go through all of this. Some of the segment of the church would seek to separate themselves and to live in isolation.

That's not a church history thing. That was actually going on during the times of Christ. Remember, let me just point it out to you. John the Baptist went out into the wilderness and lived. Remember that truth, right? After John the Baptist was raised, he got older and he went out into the wilderness. He didn't just go into the wilderness and live alone. John the Baptist, I'll get it out there in just a minute, almost in a remix of his name. But John the Baptist went and lived what was probably known as a group of Essenes.

[6 : 29] They are there in Scripture, though they are not there by name. The Essenes were a group of communal men who would separate themselves completely free from the world, live off of the land, by the land, by themselves, in order to maintain their purity.

The Essenes died out. You know why the Essenes died out? I just said it was a group of men who isolated themselves from the world. You're going to die eventually, right?

There's none of this multiplication thing there. They died out. But John the Baptist probably went and lived in an Essene community with these men. They were great devotees to the truth of the Old Testament and came to this understanding of what was going on, and God just used that.

But God never intended his people to be separate from the world. I mean, separate in actions, yes, but not isolated. Because if God's goal was just to completely isolate us from every influence, from every outside force, then he would have been much more gracious had the moment we accepted him he called us home to glory.

But rather, he chose to leave us here in the world he's put us in. So it is very becoming of us to try to understand how we are going to live as citizens of the world he's allowed us to remain in.

[7 : 41] We live at a great, great time to be a believer, but at also a very difficult time to be a believer. But I want you to see this morning the redeemed citizen.

Number one, I want you to see the believer's observation. That is how we see the world, really.

Now, when we speak here of the world, we're not talking about the world's forces, right?

Not the spiritual forces of the air, the power and principalities of the darkness, not the world system that is run by Satan, but the world physical that we live in. What is the believer's observation?

Look at what Paul says. Every person, every soul, literally it says, is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. Now, where is this church that Paul is writing this letter to?

What says it right there in name? Rome, right? He is writing to the church at Rome, which was the seat of the world's power at that time.

[8 : 40] When you read a text, always take it in context, lest you try to make it be away from its text, and you try to misapply that text, and you use it as an excuse to do something else or not to do something else.

Because we could read this and say, well, yeah, but Paul doesn't know about our leaders. Paul doesn't know about the corruption in our government, or Paul doesn't know about the corruption around the world, or Paul surely isn't talking about the evil forces that are going, wait a minute. He is writing to the church at Rome. Any corruption found in the world today, by the way, was found in Rome, the city of Rome, and especially among the rulers of Rome.

It was rampant in Rome. More than likely, he is writing at the time of one of Rome's strongest leaders politically, but one of its worst leaders for Christians, and that would probably be Nero. It was Nero who decided they needed street lamps in Rome, so what they did is they would tar the believers and put them on a stake and set them on fire, so that they would light the streets so that he could walk down it and not have to walk in the dark while they were alive.

[9 : 50] It was Nero who decided it would be fun to have pools of piranhas, and when they had parties, they could bring believers in and throw them in the piranhas and see how long it took the piranhas to eat the believer.

It was Nero who decided that when Rome caught fire, he decided to blame the Christians rather than to take responsibility for his own actions. And it was during this type of rulership that Paul says, each of you, every person, is to be in subjection to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Here we see the believer's observation. The redeemed individual living in the world in which he has been kept in knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that no matter who is sitting in what seat, it is ultimately God who is in charge.

It is the observation that we find rampant throughout Scripture that the hearts of every king are in the palm of his hands, that no one ascends to a throne, to a place of authority, or to a place of prosperity or position apart from the sovereign rule of a holy God.

The believer knows beyond a shadow of a doubt this thing called God's sovereignty. Now, the word sovereign is not something very popular in our own nation, but we understand that sovereignty means that he is complete ruler over all things.

[11 : 19] Now, before you go too far, we'll get to this. Stay with me, okay? That God is ultimately the one in charge. That God himself established this thing called rulership.

He says, Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior.

We'll get to that in a minute. But for evil, do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise for the same. Every authority, every position, every rulership is the process that God has established to reign upon the earth.

That does not mean every ruler. Okay? Stay with me. God is a God of order. And if you read scripture, you see that God always operates in a way of order.

God himself has established that there would be this thing called lordship and headship. That God is over all of creation. He created the heavens and the earth. He created every animal to see.

[12 : 20] Then he formed man, and he fashioned lady, and he put them in the Garden of Eden and told them to what? Rule. He did not tell them to own. He told them to rule. Take place of preeminence over them.

Man forfeited his rulership when he chose to walk in disobedience to a holy God. So he gave up that rulership to Satan. Do you understand that when Jesus was tempted of Satan?

Stay with me. I'm running this great theological thread throughout scripture, and I'm running it fast, but it's so good, right? That when Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights, Satan told Jesus this amazing thing.

He said, Jesus, if you'll bow down and worship me, I will give you the keys to the kingdoms of the earth, right? Not to the keys to the kingdoms of the heavens, but I will give you the keys to the kingdoms of the earth, for they have been handed over to me.

Do you know that Jesus didn't argue with Satan and say, Satan, they're not yours? See, sometimes the great truths of the Bible are the things it does not say just as much as it is the things it does say. Jesus didn't say, they don't belong to you, Satan.

[13:17] Satan says, they've been handed over to me. Well, who handed them over to Satan? We did. Adam. Adam is a word that literally means man. Man was given the keys to the authorities of the world.

They handed them to Satan, and Jesus says, I don't want those. I'm not going to worship you because by my sacrifice, I will eventually win those back.

They will be mine. So God allows order and rule and authority to stay in place even when it is walking contrary to his initial design and his initial plan. But here's what I want you to see.

The believer understands this. God establishes order, which means everyone is in submission to someone.

Man longs to be the king of his own empire. This is what happened with the Tower of Babel, right? Let us build for ourselves a tower. Let us make for ourselves a name.

[14:15] Let us make for ourselves this ziggurat, this tower that would reach to heaven so that everyone would hear about us. And God says, you fools. I'm going to scatter your languages.

You won't even be able to understand yourselves, let alone make for yourselves. Man wants to build his own kingdom. And God says, you must operate under the kingdom. One of the great sins of man is not necessarily the bad things we do.

It is the stepping out of the sovereign rule of God. And we begin to see here the believer's observation. Now, we have to be careful because this does not mean that God has established every evil ruler.

For the great works that Martin Luther did for the Reformation some 500 something years ago, the great works, there were some terrible things that came out of that even in the German people. The German people used some of the writings of Martin Luther as a reason to completely obey the Nazi regime during that terrible time of World War II.

Because Luther had said that man needs to live in complete subjection to the ruling government over him, without question, without doubts. So you ever wonder why there were so many German believers that read that and said, okay, if that's what we're supposed to do, that's what we do.

[15:34] Because they were adhering to that. But what we see is that God is not the author of evil. God is the author of rulership. Man takes that thing he has created and uses it for their own good at times and does evil with it.

So, the observation of the believer is, as long as we can, first of all, before the king of kings, we must walk in obedience to the temporary king.

We have an obligation. We'll get to that in just a minute. But we have an obligation, first and foremost, to live as good citizens, understanding God is over all.

The observation of the believer is, he sets it all up. Number two, not only do we see the believer's observation, we also see the believer's opportunity. Do you know, we live in a great time of opportunity.

And you tell me that, well, right now, there are more believers dying around the world for their faith than any other time in history. And I say, you're absolutely right. And also, we live in a time where we know about those believers who are being persecuted for their faith more than any other time in history.

[16:46] And we can find out about them quickly. Numbers of believers died throughout history. Scores and scores and scores of believers died under regimes that persecuted the faith, and no one ever knew about them.

Today, we live in a time where there are more people dying for their faith than any other time. But we're also living in a time where we hear the stories of those people who are dying for their faith than in any other time.

And we begin to hear the testimonies of those people who are paying the ultimate price for their faith, which means the world begins to take notice, because people will not die for a lie.

They'll live for one, but very seldom will they die for one. They will only die for what they know to be absolutely true. Look at what it says. For 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. For it is a minister of God to you for good. Now, that seems weird, right? Paul says that authority is a minister to the believer.

[17 : 44] It ministers to us for his 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 on the one who practices evil.

By the way, many Bible scholars will agree that this is scriptural support for corporal punishment. Okay? Because God establishes rule.

God also establishes order. And God says that if a man takes life, a man gives life. And they point to these passages. I just want you to understand them. Okay? This is how they point to these passages, and they see these things.

They see this is true. It says, therefore, it is necessary to be in subjection not only because of wrath, but also for conscious sake. We're talking about the believer's opportunity. Here's a believer's opportunity.

The believer today, the redeemed man today, has the opportunity to do good. Seems simple enough, right? But to do good. You know, there are a number of people that can tell you what the church is against, but they do not tell you what the church is for.

[18 : 43] Because the church is very loud to be in opposition, but it is not very bold to be in agreement and to be in good. The church is very loud to object and very rampant to say, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong, this is wrong, and not so loud and bold to say, that's right, we want to give ourselves to that cause.

You know, there are some things in the world that are right. There are. There are some things in the world that are good. And if the believers would take the opportunity to do good, in the name of Christ, if they would take the opportunity to live justly, in the name of Christ, if they would take the opportunity to live righteously, in the name of Christ, if they would take the opportunity, to be of a good service, to their community, in the name of Christ, what a testimony, it would be, to a wicked world, in which we live in.

I had the opportunity this past week to take a group of men, and we went and saw a kingdom man rising, Dr. Tony Evans, kingdom man rising. Tony Evans has a thing called Adopt the School Initiative.

Now, I know the church over the years has already talked about the reality that, well, everything in the school fell apart when the school kicked the church out. Well, we don't understand that. The school never kicked the church out, right?

The church just quit going there. So we need to be careful where we say, well, yeah, this school kicked the church out. I know I've got a lot of teachers and everything in here, and I understand that. Well, not necessarily. Tony Evans and his church, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, noticed that a lot of the churches around Dallas, a lot of the inner city churches had major problems in the churches, I mean in the schools, had major, major, major problems in the schools.

[20 : 18] A lot of rebellious young men, a lot of rebellious teenagers, and a lot of, as you can understand with Central Dallas, one of the only places I've ever been a little concerned about walking back and forth to the Southern Baptist Convention was downtown Dallas.

As I had to make sure I had a hand on Braden, we walked through some very rough areas. Well, they decided they were going to go to a school and do good. They asked the school, we understand you're having a lot of problems keeping kids in school, and people aren't graduating, and we really feel like the church could do good.

How can we help you? The church presented itself, and they said, well, yeah, it'd be great. We need tutors. We need mentors. And the men of the church, by the way, the men of the church decided to spend time with the teenagers of the school and made such an impact on the school, the school superintendent invited the church to go to another school.

It made such an impact on that school, they invited the church to go to another school. I think that they have adopted every school in their county. And the school, the public school says, we want Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship to come into our building.

We will put you in an auditorium with all of our kids, and you say what you want to say to them because you're doing good and making an impact. Friend, listen to me. They took the responsibility to lay hold of the opportunity to do good.

[21 : 38] Rather than saying, man, that's messed up. I'm going to get away from that. But they said, there's some good that could be done there. And they took the opportunity to do good.

The church lives in a wicked world. I'll agree with you. The church lives in a world that is post-Christian, post-truth. That is, it doesn't accept truth anymore. So it catches the attention of that world when someone believes in the truth enough to do something about it.

And they see the good that is being done. What an amazing thing. Remember the book of Acts, right? People came to faith in Jesus Christ based on what? Two things.

Based on what they, I'll give you the first one, saw and heard. Which means the message was never separated from the good works. What an amazing thing.

What an amazing opportunity. The worse the world gets, the greater the opportunity to do good we have. Rather than hang our heads and go, man, it's so terrible out here. One thing that Martin Luther's wife told him, he used to go through these fits of depression.

[22 : 46] He was going through these fits of depression and was going through this dark time. And his wife went to the back room and she came out and she dressed in black. And she was in complete black. And she walked in there and Luther said, what are you doing?

She said, haven't you heard? He said, what? She said, well, evidently God died because you're so depressed. And it hit him. The world may be falling apart, but God's not dead yet.

There's still a lot of good to be done. So he got up off of his face and said, God is still alive and God will always be alive. He will not die.

He does not change. He does not falter. He does not fail. If he is just as good today as he was yesterday and if he's just as good tomorrow as he will be today, it doesn't matter how difficult it gets in the world.

God is still God. He's still king. And I still have a great opportunity to do good. Changed his whole attitude. Here we see the believer's opportunity. Third and finally, we see the believer's obligation.

[23 : 42] I'll be through. I promise I'll be through. The believer's obligation. You see this. Verse 6 says, for because of this, because of this, because you understand God rules, because God is overall, you pay taxes.

That's hard, right? For rulers are servants of God devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them tax to whom taxes do, custom to whom custom, from fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Let me just stop right here and say, you know, I don't like the tax system as it applies to pastors. I don't. It's hard. My tax system is very difficult.

You take a pretty big hit because you're considered a self-employed. So you pay a self-employment tax. You pay all of your social security tax. I mean, I could go into it.

You make a little bit more. You can make the same money in the world and keep a lot more of it. And there's a reason why a lot of pastors get in trouble in that loophole. And when it was pointed out to me that I needed to change it, I changed it.

[24 : 47] Because I had made a mistake. And the CPA said, well, you know, they may not ever know about it. The IRS probably won't ever know about it. And I said, yeah, but I'll know about it. So we changed it, right? It's my opportunity to do good in the world.

So it says, render to all what is due. Look at verse 8. Here's your obligation. Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. It doesn't mean you can't have, you know, loans for like lands, houses, and things of that nature.

No, it doesn't mean that. It just means your continuous debt that you owe, your unsecured debt to all men, owe nothing to anyone except to love one another. Your obligation to all men is to love.

For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet. And if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, you shall love the Lord your God as yourself.

The Old Testament is full of laws, and those laws, every one of those laws can be condensed to two things. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus said that's the fulfillment of the law, right?

[25 : 52] If you love God and love everyone else, you'll fulfill the law. So he says, why? Because if you truly love your neighbor, you will not commit adultery. If you truly love your neighbor, you will not murder.

If you truly love your neighbor, you will not steal. If you truly love your neighbor, you will not covet. Whatever it is that says you should not do to anyone else, you will not do it if you love them. This is love. Your obligation is love. Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. What is the redeemed citizen's obligation to the world in which he lives in? It is to love it. And to love it supremely. Not to love the world system. Not to love the world forces. Not to love the darkness and all those other things. Not to love sin. Not to love action. But to love the individuals. To love your neighbor. To love the people you come into contact with. Not just to love your brothers and sisters in Christ, though you should. [26 : 53] We should have a great love for one another. But to love the world enough. To take the opportunity to do what you can for it. And to minister in the name of Christ.

To extend that name. What an opportunity. What an obligation. We are obliged. Friend, listen to me. We are scripturally obliged to love those we come into contact with. The Bible says that there's only one thing we can hate about an individual.

We can hate the sin and even the garment stained by sin. But we have to love the individual. We have to. That is our obligation.

An ongoing debt that we will never pay in full. Is to love those we come into contact with for his glory. And what a difference it would be.

[27 : 50] If every redeemed believer lived as a redeemed citizen. What a difference. Let's pray. God, I thank you so much for this day.

I thank you that we've had this chance. This opportunity to come and to worship. Lord, I pray that you would begin to impress upon our hearts and minds. What it is you would have us to do for your glory. Lord, that we would give our lives to you.

Not just our Sundays or Wednesdays. But Lord, our lives for your glory. Lord, for your purposes. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.

[29 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.