

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2015

Romans 13

INTRODUCTION

Two American Heroes

I. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE

A. The Long View

B. Romans 13

The Audience:

- People: some, few, or no rights at all
- The State: a republic & a dictatorship

What Paul is NOT saying:

What Paul IS saying:

- We owe obedience to authority in every lawful thing:
Taxes - Honor - Revenue - peace/crime/punishment
- Some government is better than none

II. THINKING CHRISTIANLY WITH PAUL & PETER

A. It is God's job to take vengeance

¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12)

B. The Goal is Christlikeness.

¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. ¹⁸ Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹ For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you

endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²² He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³ When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵ For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATIONS

A. We do not curse - we honor and respect

B. Neither the Church, nor the Individual acting alone, may conduct armed revolution.

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" (Matthew 26)

C. We submit to every lawful demand

D. BUT....We owe higher obedience to God whenever government requires of us to do what violates God's commands

IV. THE AMERICAN'S OPPORTUNITIES

- Personal petition
- Election and turn the rascals out of office
- Petition to law
- Free speech and protest
- Civil disobedience

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