

2.28.21 ~ 1Peter 2:11-17, God's People Serve God Alone!

Read 1Peter 2:11-12... God gave us (through Christ), all we need, to know and to serve Him, now and forever, and also to enjoy our life as aliens and strangers in this world. We are not to partner with the world's philosophies and practices.

God has provided His eternal and sovereign Word to everyone who believes and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. What do the Scriptures say?

Romans 3:23-24, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 10:9-10, "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation." **13**, "for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

The world we live in is rapidly throwing off moral restraints and putting away what it calls old fashioned, out-of-date, traditional values, especially any morals or values that are rooted in the Word of God concerning gender, marriage and sexual behavior. Why is that?

1Corinthians 1:18, "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

1Corinthians 2:14, "But a natural man [without the Spirit of God] does not accept the things of the Spirit of God [God's Word], for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised [discerned]."

Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

Matthew 7:21-23, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

So, you see why Jesus commands us, "Enter through the narrow gate" [that being God's Son]. The reason that only a few find the narrow gate [Jesus Christ], is because only a few are willing to trust in Christ, and Him alone, for salvation.

John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 8:24, "Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, 'you will die in your sins; unless you believe that I am *He [Messiah, God's Son, Savior]*, you will die in your sins.'"

Jesus claimed (**John 10:30; 11:25-26; 14:6-7**), to be the only way to, the only truth of, and the only life from God; there is no other way to receive forgiveness for sin, eternal life, and an intimate relationship with God.

There is a wide road of belief and behavior that presumes to lead to heaven; don't be deceived by it! When you trust in Christ you make a spiritual and willful decision about sin, self, and God; this total change in purpose and authority begins with repentance [turning away from your old way of living [without Christ] and turning toward your new way of living [through Christ].

Ephesians 4:22-24, "In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Read 1Peter 2:13-16... Christians are new creations in Christ (cf. **2Corinthians 5:17**), for we have been purchased and purposed, we are eternally protected by Almighty God, so that we might know, honor, and serve Him, with our whole lives.

Jesus Christ is our example and authority, we must turn from all that is bad according to God's standard (the Bible); no matter how politically correct or culturally acceptable SIN may become, we are to honor and obey God, first and foremost.

We must fortify our minds and control our bodies with the Word of God as our authority and our shield.. We must (cf. **Romans 12:9**) hate what is evil (by God's standard) and cling to what is good (by God's standard)!

1Peter 2:17, "Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

God is the ultimate judge, not the Pope, not the Supreme Court, not the President, nor any other form of authority, for God's people will seek to please God above everything and everyone.

Titus 3:1-2, "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men."

Romans 13:1, "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." **7**, "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."

The leaders of Israel were continually at odds with Jesus; in fact, in **Matthew 22:15-22**, the Pharisees plotted together with the Herodians [Hellenistic Jews], to try and trap Jesus in His words against Rome by asking Him, "'Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. Tell us then, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?' But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, 'Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the coin *used* for the poll-tax.' And they brought Him a denarius. He asked them, 'Whose likeness and inscription is this?'

They answered, 'Caesar's.' Jesus said to them, 'Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's.' And hearing *this*, they were amazed, and leaving Him, they went away."

All authority comes from God, whether it be civil or religious; and therefore we must always obey God's Word above any law or authority placed over us.

In **Matthew 23** Jesus confronted the religious/governmental leaders of Israel; it is a masterpiece of rebuke, in which He calls them "hypocrites," "sons of hell," "whitewashed tombs," "blind guides," "brood of vipers!"

In **Acts 4:18**, Peter and John are called before the Council [Sanhedrin, Supreme Court of Israel] and they are commanded "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus." They were then threatened and let go. Did they stop proclaiming Christ? Absolutely not!

It is recorded that because the apostles continued to preach Jesus, the high priest sent for the captain of the temple guard, ordering him to bring Peter and the other apostles before the Sanhedrin (see **Acts 5:27-42**). So, the apostles were ordered not to speak in Jesus' name anymore, and what was their response (**verses 29-32**), "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

What can we learn from the apostles' experience?

1. We should disobey civil laws only when it is absolutely necessary, i.e., when we are commanded to do what the Word of God forbids, or when we are forbidden to do what the Word of God commands.
2. We should try to peacefully resolve any conflict that arises between God's Word and civil law; but when there is no acceptable resolution to the problem, we must be willing to suffer for our disobedience to civil law.
3. We are to obey and honor God, to do what is right according to His Word, and that may not always line up with what is acceptable in our culture, or made lawful by our government; but God's Word has supremacy.

Romans 8:28-39, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised,

who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's people, as law-abiding citizens, are to willfully submit to the authorities who govern us; in fact, we ought to set an example for others to follow.

Romans 12:18, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Romans 13:8, "Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law."

Jesus said (**Matthew 7:12**), "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

So, in summing up today's lesson, let me be very clear, if the laws of our county, state, or federal government demand that we violate the clear and revealed teachings of the Word of God, "We must obey God rather than men" (**Acts 5:29**). **Colossians 3:17**, "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." **23-24**, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that... ..It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Pastor Mike
>'(((><