

CWA - Epistle Lesson - Pentecost 16 – Sept 28, 2014 - Kieth Bernard Kuschel

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Romans 13:1-10

1Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.
2Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. 8Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."^[b] 10Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Love other by being watchmen
Watchmen on wall sees danger we can't see
Point out sin and consequences
Then to Jesus

IA1 What did Paul's readers think of their government? Not very nice thoughts. Nero was the emperor. He was responsible for the most vicious campaign of persecution ever unleashed against Christians in a particular city. It didn't matter whether they were men women or children.

2 What do we think of our government? Not very nice thoughts. We get pretty cynical after almost nonstop of campaigning. All the candidates say they are going to make everything in our country perfect. We know that they can't do that. So we think they are all liars.

B1 God through Paul tells us what we should think of our government. "1 There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted." Government is God's idea. It is a blessing He gives to us.

2 Therefore, "1Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities. 2He who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right 4For he is God's servant to do you good.. 7Give respect; give honor."

3 Government is God's idea. It is a blessing He gives to us. Therefore: "6 This is also why you pay taxes. 7 Give what you owe, taxes and revenue." Yes. We get angry when our taxes are wasted. Yes. It's OK to demand that government leaders be fiscally responsible. Yes. We can vote out wasters and vote in those who promise fewer taxes. But. Government is a blessing from God. It needs money to operate. When I pay my taxes I am doing something that God wants me to do for the good of my society.

C1 Why does God establish government? 4"He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." When people do something wrong, they deserve to be punished. God punishes with death and hell. He punishes by allowing hardships in this life. He has also set up government to carry out punishment on the wrongdoer.

2 What kind of punishment does God allow government to use? 4"But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing." Swords kill people. It is approved by God for the government to kill people who have done wrong. In the Old Testament God's people Israel were directed by God to carry out capital punishment for a number of crimes. Most societies reserve capital punishment for murderers. Capital punishment according to God is a legitimate function of government to punish wrongdoers.

D1 Why does God allow government to punish people by putting them to death? Society only works when people can be safe. Safety is maintained when boundaries are established between people. Those boundaries are only maintained among sinful people if the crossing of the boundaries make the citizens subject to a penalty.

2 There is another reason God gives government the right to punish. God's primary goal for humans is that they come to trust that Jesus lived and died and rose for them. God wants all people to have forgiveness, holiness, and eternal life. The transmission of the message about Jesus is usually able to be carried out more easily when there is safety and order in a society.

3 If the Gospel is going to make any sense to anybody, people need to have their natural knowledge of what is right and what is wrong reinforced regularly in their daily lives. The message that Jesus is the Savior from sin has no meaning to someone who doesn't realize what sin is or that he or she is a sinner. The concept that Jesus gives us righteousness so that we can be acceptable to God doesn't have any impact on somebody who has no concept of what is right and what isn't right. When government is working properly by punishing wrongdoing, it is reinforcing the definition of what is right and what is wrong. Unless there is a clear delineation of what is right and what is wrong, there is no possibility of calling people to repentance, and then pointing them to Jesus as the Savior from sin. How do I as an individual rebuke a sinful society of its sinfulness? How do I act as a watchman?. One way is to attempt to maintain clear testimony in my society that certain things are right and certain things are wrong. We do that by supporting our government in it's proper role as punisher of the wrongdoers.

IIA1 When Nero persecuted Christians, the populace followed. They ridiculed and maligned people who followed the Jewish slave who was nailed to a Roman cross. They cheered wildly from the Colosseum grandstands when their Christian neighbors were mauled by lions or lighted on fire hanging on crosses.

2 How were Christians to respond? I would have avoided the persecutors. Hated them. And attempted preemptive strikes before they could persecute me.

B1 Paul wrote: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” God wants us to love, that is, look out for the benefit of, take care of, ourselves, body and soul. But God also demands that we have the same level of concern for the well-being of the bodies and souls of all the people around us. Love is beneficial action done toward others. So, by definition “Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.” When we keep God’s Law, we are going to be benefiting our neighbors. Or to put it another way - the commandments spell out for us how we are to benefit those whom God has placed around us.

2 We have to admit that we do a pretty bad job of loving the people around us who do a pretty good of persecuting us. A little ridicule from them wires us for revenge. Jesus’ blood washes away that sin of revenge. Jesus also sets the standard for our actions when He was persecuted. He prayed when He was being crucified, “Father, forgive them.” Then He died to wash away their sins.

3 What does loving our neighbor mean practically? If we are trying to benefit our neighbor, we won’t have sex with his wife, we won’t damage or end his life, we won’t take away the things he needs to live on, and we won’t get involved in schemes to amass things for ourselves which will negatively impact him. Paul put it this way: 9The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

C1 Why does God want us to keep His commandments? It is the only way we can thank Him for what He has done for us. Jesus died on the cross to take away our guilt. Jesus suffered death and hell to rescue us from that punishment we deserve. Jesus lived as our Substitute and never sinned so that He could cover us with His righteousness. Jesus rose from the dead so that we might live forever. We thank Him for what He did for us by doing what He tells us to do.

2 Why does God want us to keep His commandments? It is good for us. How can we get along in this world? How can we have a peaceful coexistence with the rest of the people around us? By living the way God has commanded us to live. When we don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t covet and don’t murder, and when the people around us don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t covet and don’t murder - our lives are spared, our emotions aren’t destroyed, and our trust isn’t wiped out. Life is pleasant and enjoyable and something to bask in.

3 Why does God want us to keep His commandments? Because we are to be watchmen. When we refuse to sin, people notice we are not joining in. That reminds them that their own consciences have told them not to do what they are doing. Our godliness rebukes our sinful society of its sin.

4 Then please don’t forget that the Lord through Ezekiel in the Old Testament lesson has not only told us to be watchmen, but has also told us: “As surely as I live, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather that they turn from their wicked ways and live.” When people have been rebuked for their sin by our godliness, when their consciences have been rejuvenated by our godliness, they have had the soil of their souls prepared for the precious seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ - the good news that God forgives sin and covers with righteousness and gives eternal life through Jesus and doesn’t want to condemn.

Conc: We rebuke sin in our society, not by making a spectacles of ourselves on a soap box on a street corner, but by consistently living a godly life and by supporting our government. Lord, please help us to do this.

HOW DO I REBUKE A SINFUL SOCIETY?

I. By supporting my government

A. Attitudes toward govt

1. Nero
2. Lying politicians

B. Proper attitude

1. God set it up
2. I should obey
3. I should pay taxes

C. Purpose of govt

1. Punish wrongdoer
2. Also capital punishment

D. Why punish wrongdoer

1. Safety in society
2. Allows Gospel preaching
3. Law needed for Gospel to work

II. By living a godly life

A. Response to Nero

1. Everybody persecuted
2. I would retaliate

B. Orders from God

1. Love as yourself
2. Jesus forgives and shows
3. Commandment define

C. Reasons to keep commandments

1. Thank you Jesus
2. Life works better
3. We rebuke world
4. Chance top point to Jesus

Recap