Sermon Notes for December 29, 2013

The Christian Response to Government

I Peter 2:13-17

Introduction

“On my honor, I will do my duty to God and my country…”

Out of respect for God, we are to submit to the authorities God has placed over us.

I. A Christian is to be submissive. Verse 13

What does it mean to submit?

It is a military term that means to rank under.

Sadly, submission is a word that makes many people bristle.

We want to be our own boss.

“People who think they know everything are really annoying to those of us who do.” Isaac Asimov

Yet Peter uses the word submit 4 times in this letter.

- To leaders in government. 2:13
- To our boss. 2:18
- To our husband. 3:1
- To leaders in the church. 5:5

Government – work – home – church. Those are 4 major areas of our life.

Our example is Jesus who lived his life in submission to his Father.

- “He humbled himself and became obedient unto death – even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:8
- “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me.” John 6:38
- “I do nothing on my own, but speak just what the Father has taught me.” John 8:28
- Peter points to Jesus as our example – “that we should follow in his steps.” I Peter 2:21

II. A Christian is to be submissive to every authority instituted among men. Verse 13

To the King (President) and to governors.

Each of these authority figures have been place over our life by God for our good.
They are there to keep order in our world.

To rebel against that order is to rebel against God who has placed them there. Romans 13:2

But there are limits.

We are to be submissive to the authorities over us to the extent that they do not ask us to violate the law of God.

“We must obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29

“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.” Verse 17

We are to honor the king, our president, those in authority, but only God is to be feared.

III. A Christian is to be submissive to the governing authorities for the Lord’s sake. Verses 13-17

The Christians in Peter’s day were viewed with suspicion.

That’s why Peter urged them to:

- “Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” Verse 12
- “Silence the talk of foolish men by doing good.” Verse 15
- “Live as free men.” Verse 16
- “Show proper respect to everyone.” Verse 17

Peter’s exhortation is to win them to Christ by your life.

Conclusion

What is the Christian’s role in public life?

Jonathan Edwards wrote these points over 250 years ago.

- Christians have a responsibility to society beyond the walls of the church.
- Christians should not hesitate to join forces with non-Christians in the public square to work toward common moral goals.
- Christians should support the government, but be ready to criticize when the occasion demands.
- Christians should remember that politics is comparatively unimportant in the long run.
- Christians should beware of national pride.
- Christians should care for the poor.