

## Limits of Submission to Government 7

*Resistance to Tyrants*

By Shawn Mathis

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2675 S. Downing (Yale & Downing)

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Our break last week and the class when I went over the Reformation and its impact upon Western civilization, that was recorded as well for you to, well, for the whole world to see. I'm continuing on day 2 for the class on "Limits of Submission to Civil Authority." This is day 2 of submission. Perhaps you thought, "Hey, he's going to talk about the limits of submission so we get to talk about when we can overthrow the government. Alright. Yeah." No, it thought it would be a good opportunity to cover, because it's relevant, submission, that there's a lot more to submission that we realize at times. We can submit a lot, as it were, or be under bad government, bad bosses and the like, and what that meant was last time we met, I covered, you don't have this in your handout, but earlier I covered the broad idea of submission under the fifth commandment, of course, in general or in specific, however you want to look at it, towards God first and foremost. Our submission is towards God and we're supposed to submit to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you, James 4:7. I talked a little bit about that and what that implied and then, of course, submission towards each other, and I had a sermon about that in the evening as I'm going over the "one another" passages Sunday night through the New Testament and there are dozens of those passages. Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 5:5 tells us to submit to one another in general and I explained what that looks like. You submit by listening to proper rebuke. Even a little child can rebuke you if you're in sin. That's hard to swallow but it's true. Of course, ideally the little child should do it correctly but they're little children, they're still learning. You're the adult, you need to suck it up. And in particular, submission towards the word.

So towards God, towards each other in the Christian fellowship and towards the world, even, and that's what we're going to mostly emphasize, we're going to completely cover in this class right here. Romans 12:18, "If it is possible as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men." As much as it is possible with you, live peaceably with all men. That's very broad, sweeping. That means you have to do a lot on your part because you might realize or you may not realize, there's a lot you can do. It says if it's possible and you'd be surprised how much can be possible for you if you put your mind to it, as opposed to your sinful flesh. It's more than you may think, is what it means at the end of the day. But it's not unlimited, of course, because it says "as much as is possible," or if it is possible as much as depends on you, and it doesn't always depend on you, especially as you go into bigger issues in life where you have authorities over you and laws.

Matthew 5:39 is another general passage talking about submission towards those in the world. Matthew 5:39 in particular tells us, "But I tell you not to resist an evil person but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other cheek to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two." So he's saying not only should you submit to some wrongdoing and we're not going to go over this in detail here, we will cover that at the end of the class when we go over some of these texts and how they relate to resisting the government, this is more or less for private citizens as a rule, private individuals. Clearly he doesn't mean magistrates are supposed to turn the other cheek. Didn't he just say they're supposed to have the sword in Romans 13? Well, what happens if a Christian is a magistrate and that's happened a lot of times in the history of the church? They're supposed to exercise the sword. So this is not a *carte blanche* declaration and that's not how language works and, again, we'll go into the details of that later in the defense of the proper use of resistance to unlawful authority, under what conditions and the like.

Matthew 17:24, we're getting more particular now. This is also relevant for us in Matthew 17:24 and following. I call this freedom without offending. This is not in your handout. We covered this last week so I'm doing a recap a little bit, since it's been two weeks. "When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, 'Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?' He said, 'Yes.' And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?' Peter said to Him, 'From strangers.' Jesus said to him, 'Then the sons are free. Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.'" Quite interesting. He basically said, "We're free but I'm not going to use my freedom to cause problems." Christ says, "I'll pay the temple tax." So that's a very good example for us, that we have freedom but it doesn't mean freedom to sin, it's freedom we should use so that we do not offend if possible, if possible within our means. Of course, it wasn't in their means unless they had Christ to give them money out of a fish because they were poor. Freedom is not a cloak for sin. We should not use our freedom to offend.

Matthew 22:14-22. This one we went over in some detail so I'll slow down a little bit here. Matthew 22:14-22, here we have submission without offending. The first one is freedom without offending our freedom, and then here it's submission without offending because, you know as you were all teenagers at one time, you could submit to your parents and offend them very well. "Yeah, I'll listen to you, mom," and just saying it that way. You're submitting but you're not submitting. No, we're supposed to submit without offending. It's the wedding garment parable he gives just before this that offended the Pharisees and he said, "For many are called, but few are chosen." That really rankled them. And he gives the purpose of what we know in this section where they take the money from Rome and they grab some of their own disciples as well as some of the Herodians, which are the Jews that were really big for Rome, and they thought they

would trap Jesus with their question, this false dilemma, verse 18 through 22 where Jesus knew their false dilemma.

Now we're on page 13 which you should have. At the top it says hypocrisy implies, so he knew they were hypocrites, implies that they are claiming one thing but doing another that they denounced. That's that they violated one or both parts of the dilemma. The dilemma was if you say yes you're supposed to pay this, then you're submitting to a false ruler over Israel and it should be God over Israel. And of course if you say no I shouldn't submit and pay, then the Herodians are going to say, "Oh look, you're in rebellion. We're going to come after you, mister!" And he said, "Well, give me some money." And one of the disciples of the Pharisees, the ones who thought they gave him a dilemma, gave him the money and it has an inscription of Caesar on it. What's it doing in his hand? Because he's admitting that they are paying tribute to Caesar; that they are under his control, more or less, politically. So they lost. They themselves were doing the very thing they were trying to trap Jesus in.

Jesus gives a principle at the end in verse 21. We've all heard this principle, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." From a particular case of paying tribute money to a general case, Christ makes an argument for all things relevant with respect to politics. That it's a relative rendering, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." It's relative. It's not absolute. We don't give everything to Caesar. That's what I mean by it's a relative rendering. If Caesar tells us to curse God, we're not supposed to curse God just because Caesar said it. That's not what Christ is saying. He gives a general principle. There are no particulars behind it, is there? There's nothing in here, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," what does that mean? What are we supposed to render to Caesar? Christ doesn't give you any particulars, does he, except for paying the tribute money, a tax. Paul expands upon that in Romans 13 when he says, "Give tribute to whom tribute is due, honor to whom honor is due, fear to whom fear is due."

Christ is assuming a broader, common, theological and moral context for his audience to understand what he means when he says that. What does it mean to render to them and render to God? Does God have a little circle this big and Caesar has everything else? He doesn't say, it's just a general principle that we have to flesh out the details from the rest of the Bible and general revelation. That's important because people have a tendency to read into texts what they think the general means and the particular. Does that make sense? So when it says, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," people will say, "Well, there you go. If Caesar says you're supposed to take Obamacare and throw your money towards abortion, do it! You shouldn't stand up and resist that. That's Caesar's call." Christ didn't say that. He just said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," he never said what things are Caesar's. That wasn't the point of that text. Don't read points into texts of the Bible that aren't there. His point is to show them that they're arrogant, of course, and that there is a proper place to submit to Caesar, in this case tribute money and, of course, there are proper places which is all of life you submit to God. As we know when we get to Romans 13, as all good Christians know, submitting to

Caesar properly is submitting to God because there are no authorities except of God. It's all derivative from him anyways. Again, Christ knows that, the Pharisees even know that, but the Pharisees were just that, a bunch of Pharisees and they got caught in their own trap.

So that's Matthew. Those are the general passages. So I'll just take the next half hour to cover the last two biggies, as it were. 1 Peter 2:11-20. So we have submission without offending, here we have submission for witnessing. One of the purposes of submitting even to unjust authority is to be a witness to the world, that we do it for God's sake and not for man.

So 1 Peter 2:11-20, submission for witnessing. Here we have the purpose of the book, to comfort and guide Christians during time of physical and legal persecution. They were a minority in Rome. We say minority in the American scene, and you're like, "Okay, we've got all kinds of minorities, so what?" No, they were an unrecognized minority. They had an official list of accepted religions in Rome, as it were. They accepted the Jews. They were such a pain anyways, as long as they were quiet, they let them alone. They didn't know what to do with Christians. They weren't the Jews, or maybe they thought they were Jews. They came from the Jews. They were a Jewish sect, they even thought at one time, but we know, I think many of us, the history of the persecution of the church for a few hundred years after the New Testament of martyrdom and destruction. Nero even blamed the burning of Rome upon them.

The historical context, as I just explained, a non-approved religion of Rome. No known political leaders to protect them. No laws to protect them. Nothing, as such, short of something that Paul does, "I'm a Roman citizen," and of course, we know most of the Roman Empire were not Roman citizens which means more likely most Christians were not Roman citizens at the time.

The immediate context is to live such that your actions glorify God before unbelievers. That starts in verse 11 and 12 and 13, and then he goes into the detail of what that looks like.

So the first reason, verse 11, as sojourners and pilgrims, resist sin and live uprightly. Temptations of the world but you are not of this world. So he reminds them at the end of the day although you're human, you're Christian and as Christians, you are pilgrims in this world. Don't get so hung up on this world. That's important on this issue of the limits of submission because there are people who are very eager to find those limits of submission so that they can jump over those limits as they are very frustrated with life. They shouldn't do it because they're frustrated with life, they should do it with a good conscience before God, that this is the right thing to do. I am protecting people who need to be protected and I'm standing up for the right thing. Not because you're angry and frustrated and Paul mentions that in 1 Peter and in Romans, that is the phrase "conscience towards God," that is in obedience before him, your heart saying, "I'm doing it for the right reasons, not out of the motivation of anger, not of the motivation of power, not out of lust." And that's significant, isn't it? You're supposed to really examine yourself. That's

why historically we've taught before big decisions, and certainly if you're going to stand up against the government, that's a big decision, you fast and you pray and you take a fair amount of time to decide these issues and, in fact, there is wisdom in the counsel of many and this should not be done so easily and flippantly.

Well, I got ahead of myself. So the first reason is to remind everybody we're sojourners and pilgrims in this life. Of course, that doesn't mean we're so detached that we can't do anything politically. Clearly Christians throughout the ages, those called by God, did things and worked in the government and did things in society and the like. It was perfectly acceptable. God made that. Paul, in fact himself, appealed to Caesar, to Rome. He didn't say, "Well, I'm a pilgrim. I have nothing to do with this world. I'll just be so holy and godly, I'll do no such thing to contaminate my body." Well, it's a proper balance and it's a hard thing to strike.

The second reason, verse 12, external relation. We are supposed to be sojourners and pilgrims, resist this world in order that unbelievers may see your good works, and we're supposed to, therefore, submit. "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles," verse 12, "that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation." So he's saying in general live an upright life, and even if they're going to make fun of you, slander you, besmirch your name, it should be because you're worthy of slander and besmirchment and, in fact, they'll at the end of the day perhaps they would see that you were right and they were wrong, if indeed you were living uprightly. It says live uprightly. That's the point. Don't give an excuse. Don't give the enemy ammunition by your lifestyle. You live in a glass house. It's not going to make any difference crying out, "Well, it's not fair!" You guys live in glass houses, too. Why are you throwing rocks? The pagans aren't going to listen. You have to take care of your own life, your own family and our own church, that we live uprightly as best we can by his Spirit.

So he has a conclusion from that, verse 13 and 14. The word "therefore," a specific word. "Therefore," because of this general truth that your actions in general, whatever it is, being a good housewife, being a good husband, being a good child, being a good worker, being a good citizen, so that the world cannot slander you, or shouldn't. They will if they want to, as he says that they will.

"Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance." Why should you submit to every ordinance? Because the world is watching and you want to make a good witness. Your submission is a picture of witness, of witnessing before the world of who you are in Jesus Christ.

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man," or rule, or citing of what is the way we're supposed to do things, "of man for the Lord's sake," not for their sake. Do it for their sake in one sense, they are made in the image of God, but you're saying at the end of the day it really comes down because if God tells you to do it, do it.

Yes, sir? You seem to be getting ahead of the curve. I'm just covering... He asked, "What if it's a simple ordinance?" These two days are submission in general to hammer home to the NSA or whoever else is going to be watching this, that a Christian's first position because this is where we're born, we're born in submission, aren't we? Born in submission to our parents. Born in submission to society. We're born in submission to God. That's the standard position that we are in. It's the default position of Christians, is submission. The question of when you stop submitting is what we will cover after today. So, hang on to that, sir.

"Every ordinance," and the like, of course, "whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers." So very type of ruler. Clearly he's not saying, "Well, you know, it's only kings and governors but not sheriffs. He didn't say sheriffs." You'd be surprised how Christians can twist the word of God. That's not how English language works. That's not how Greek language works. What's the intent behind the organization of the words? The intent is clearly any kind of leader.

The function of leaders, he gives us, "as to those who are sent by him," by whom? By God. God sent these men and what kind of kings and supreme governors did the church have in the New Testament, were they Christian? They were unbelievers sent by God as rulers. That's very significant.

For what end? "For the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good." That's the purpose of the kings. That's the purpose of governors. That's the purpose of sheriffs. Whatever layer they are, however much responsibility they are, that's what it is at the end of the day, and even unbelievers believe that. They might have a different definition of praise and punishment and the like, that may be, nevertheless they're made in the image of God and that's how they think and that's how they try to organize society unless they're anarchists, in which case every man, himself, becomes his own governor and punishes whomever he wills.

That word there "sent by him," a particular verb as Freiberg points out, it focuses rather on the sender who is being represented and on the act of the sending, who is emphasizing God sent him. God sent him, authorized him.

The second reason, verse 15, another external relationship: live such that the unbeliever is silenced, "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." So that's related, again, back there in verse 13 and like, do good, obey God enough so that even if they do slander you for doing good or accusing you of doing wrong when you didn't, they know at the end of the day that they're wrong and they're sinning before God. So your witness is still pure even if they lie, and this is a similar idea of witnessing, "For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men," perhaps those who are slandering him he thinks of in the previous verses or the like. You are standing upright as a citizen and at least those who are foolish and wise enough to see how upright Christians have been like Jacob or

like Daniel, they'll eventually be quiet. That's not always the case but that is certainly our goal.

As free men, verse 16. This is the mode in which we exercise our submission to others. Verse 16, "as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God." He's saying the reason you're supposed to submit and submit so that your witness stands pure before God is because you're free. Christians are a bunch of nutjobs. What does freedom have to do with submission? It has everything to do with submission because you're free from the world ultimately and, of course, behind that what he's saying is perhaps even and certainly elsewhere in the Bible, you're free from sin but you're free from the world insofar as they cannot bind your conscience. They can't come to you and say, "I'm your President, I'm your Senate, I'm your Congress, I'm the Supreme Court, and as such I can tell you what is right and wrong and you will obey." You say, "No, God is my Lord. I have freedom with respect to creation but not with respect to God. With respect to him, I'm supposed to submit to him." And I go to God and God says, "That's right, you submit to me, what I'm telling you. I'm telling you to submit to them." In other words, we're not submitting to the laws of the land because we believe they are God's and they can dictate right and wrong for us. We submit to the law of the land because God tells us to, for God's sake. He says it a couple of times in this text. Okay? That's significant and important because God defines right or wrong and that partly gives your answer of what are the limits of submission, doesn't it? Man doesn't define it, God does.

He goes on in verse 17, in general, "Honor all people." He makes a general conclusion again, "Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh." Well, okay, now it's kind of getting more personal. Who has ever had a difficult boss? The people that haven't raised their hands, oh wow, I'm impressed. It happens. Pardon? You are a difficult boss? Oh, okay. Some people are. They know who they are.

Third reason down there, are you supposed to take wrongful punishment patiently even? Second conclusion, J, H, I, excuse me, I there, second conclusion: honor everyone, in particular 18 and 19, submit to masters, servants, domestic servants is that particular word, although it's not to be taken literally as though he only means servants who work in a house. We know later he says, verse 19, "For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief," not the servant but "one," one in general, anybody, someone. You, yourself, even though you're not a slave are supposed to take even from a bad master. And that word "master" is "despot" but "domestic leader" generally, but even more just any kind of leader during that day and age, but a bad leader, a harsh leader, one who's unfair to you even. He doesn't give you your just due, he gives you bad hours, whatever the case is. Now of course, he's talking to slaves. We think of the word "servant," no, they were slaves back then. They didn't exactly have the opportunity to say, "You know, I think I'll give you my two week's notice and leave." This is important. We have to remember there is still overlap, of course, but there's a distinction. We have freedoms they don't have.

The third reason we're supposed to take, verse 20, wrongful punishment patiently he says, "For what credit is it," the same phrase that Christ used in Luke 6, was it? Yeah, 6:32, "What credit is it if you love those who love you? Even pagans love those who love you." Right? That's selfish human nature if you do good to those who do good to you, but to do good to those who don't do good to you, is that natural?

"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?" Of course, you're a servant, a slave, and you messed up, it's your fault and you're beaten for it, he says, "That makes sense. You messed up." Now he's not answering the question whether you should have been beaten or not, he's just saying you did something wrong, you're going to get punished for it, that makes sense, that's what the world does.

"But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God." Wow. Can you imagine being a slave and being beaten for cooking the meat the right way but the master just decided on a capricious whim he wanted it well done and not rare? Was it your fault at all? He just had a bad day and Paul says take it patiently. In that context I think he's saying clearly, "Don't go grabbing a stick and trying to beat him." What would happen? Look at the circumstances. What would happen if a slave does that living in a master's house? Master back then who had slaves, were they poor? How can you afford slaves? You have to be rich to have a large swath of land, they had lots of servants and perhaps even guards and the like. If a Christian did that, what do you think would happen to him just practically speaking? He'd probably get killed. I don't know the particular Roman laws, I wouldn't be surprised if one of them was that if a servant beats the master, he himself gets killed.

There is certainly wisdom in that but at the end of the day Christ here is arguing, "You're actually having a witness to the world and this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." Christ is the principle reason to put up with a lot. It's for his testimony. This is relevant to deciding how much do you put up with. Paul didn't say, "Hey, if he's killing you, eh, you know, it's okay. Just die." No, because that could happen. I mean, if you have no decision like the martyrs and you're grabbed and you're rounded up and you're thrown into the lions' den, you're going to die and one way of explaining this passage is they shouldn't be out there in the middle, cursing them saying, "I hate you! Go to hell, Caesar!" as the lion is devouring them. That's not taking it patiently. That's not what Christ did. What did he do? "Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do," if they know not what they do. Some do and you pray for their repentance anyway. You pray God would change their hearts. That's different. The unbeliever and you in your flesh will say, "I curse you!" Your first thought isn't, "God, save them from themselves and maybe if my death will bring about their conversion." I'm not saying I could pull that off, brothers and sisters, I'm saying I believe that's to add more particulars to this text and what he's saying about being a witness. Your submission is a witness before the world, that they won't have one more excuse to go out to Christians and kill them.



Romans 13. Submission not only for witness' sake or for a witness before the world, but for wrath and conscience sake. The purpose of the book of Romans is to teach the Gospel and reinforce Gospel duties. Page 15. The historical context is a people without political or legal representation, of course, the Christians in Rome in particular. I'm just trying to apply it to the social case where we are right now.

The immediate context is duty of submission to earthly political authorities likely to rebuff, I say likely to rebuff, I'm not going to make a big argument about this, antinomian tendencies. Buchanan in his book that he wrote for young King James before he became King James of historical fame, he argued that Romans is actually Paul writing against the antinomians, those against the law saying, "Hey, just because you're free in Christ doesn't mean you're free from Roman rule." He doesn't really give much of an exegetical argument for it, it just isn't there in his book, in the pamphlet, but there is some internal evidence in the book of Romans of that because Romans 3:8 and then Romans 6:1, and Romans 6:15 as you recall, he says, "If we're not in sin, if we're under grace, we're not under the law, does that mean we can sin?" So he brings it up three times as a concern. If this is for God's glory, my sin is for God's glory, chapter 3, verse 8, then shouldn't I sin all the more? If I am free and justified, free from sin and justified by grace alone and Christ alone, does that mean I can sin all the more? God forbid, he says. So it's conceivable that he is arguing against antinomians.

The command, verse 1a, subject yourself to governing authorities, to submit, that's simply straight up what that word means. A little more complicated than that. Examples there: are disciples called to submit to the Pharisees? As you recall in Matthew 23, Christ says, "They sit on the seat of Moses." So submit to them, but only to the extent that what they say is following the word of God. Who cares if they're Pharisees, he's saying, they're hypocrites. They're still authorities over you so submit to them in the church or in the world.

The first reason for the submission, verse 1b: all authority is from God and all earthly authority is appointed by God. He doesn't say earthly but that's obviously his meaning here because he says submit to the kings, give tribute, give honor. We don't submit to angels. We don't submit to the devil. So it's earthly authorities.

The first conclusion from this, reason that he gives overall is that, therefore do not resist if all earthly authority is from God in verse 2a. I'm going to flush out what he's saying. If all earthly authority is from God and is appointed by God and God should not be resisted and anyone appointed by God should not be resisted because their appointment presupposes real authority given by God. So he has a syllogistic reasoning there and he actually skips a few of the premises but it's all of a piece and it makes sense. God is the only source of all authority and these people have authority, therefore, it's derived authority but it's real authority, and if you go against God, he's going to punish you. If you go against God's authorities, he's going to punish you. These are God's authorities, you go against them, he's going to punish you. A little more complicated than that.

Again here in Ephesians 6:5-7 it reminds us to obey earthly matters just as you would obey Christ. So you do it for the Lord's sake. He's arguing, in other words, that, "Hey, don't just sit there and think they're pagans and don't just sit there and submit to them because they're stronger than you. Submit to them because God tells you to submit to them because all authority comes from God." It's derived from God therefore do not resist.

The second conclusion, G, verse 2b: resistance brings judgment because resistance to an authority of God is sinful and sin brings judgment. So he says this over and over in different ways and brings out some different nuance but he's hammering home a simple point and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. So that makes sense if you resist those whom God has appointed, and he explains why in 3, the second reason to submit: rulers are a terror to evil, not to good works. The continuity of the argument here. 4. Why, why is it about this punishment? Why should you submit? 4. Rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil.

The first motivation here. Do you want to live without fear? Do good and receive praise instead. So this is the other half, "For rulers are not a terror to good works but to evil." Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Who wants to live in fear of authority, please raise your hand? Who likes to live in fear? I didn't think so. It says if that's the case, then do good and you won't be punished, right? If you want to be unafraid, do good and you will have praise from the same.

This is already flushing out something going on here if you read it very carefully because the first thing you even think of is, "Really? Does that always happen? Do people really get praised by the government when they do good? Does that always happen historically? Can I do good and be punished by the government?" 1 Peter just said that. He says you can do good and be punished by your master. So apparently Paul is speaking in principles. What's the general thrust? What's the purpose of leaders? Leaders are supposed to do good and praise the good and supposed to punish the evil. That's what they're supposed to do. So as much as he's using this text to tell those to submit to submit, what's behind it is an assumption of what is right and what is the duty of the rulers that we're supposed to submit to.

The third reason: they are God's minister for your good and for, A, for he that is the servant, that word is servant, God's minister to you for good. He is God's minister to you for good. Do you believe that? Or more precisely, do you believe that the office of civil magistrate is for you and for your good, for the good of the whole, actually? He's clearly not saying any given person in the office. Was Nero there for the good of the Christian when he cut off their heads and put them on pikes, you know? Well, yeah, even evil God uses for good but he's talking about them. The particular point of the office, just like a parent, their office is supposed to do good for their kids. Do all parents do good for their kids? No. Is that the office's fault or is that the parent, that is the human person who is a parent's fault? I'm using the word "parent" as an office because that's what it is. It's a duty. It's an office. It's a servant before God, diakonos is that word there where we get deacon. They are servants of God, supposed to be servants of God and Paul's writing this

way as a matter of principle, not of actual fact because the fact is many many leaders in the world are wicked and punish the good and praise the wicked, as we see even in America.

Then page 16. A second motivation, another motivation, you don't want to be afraid, do you? Of course not, so do good. The second motivation: doing evil will bring fear because a magistrate will punish so it's kind of the flipside. 4B, "for he does not bear the sword in vain for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. But if you do evil, be afraid," he says in the middle of verse 4, if you do evil be afraid. That's another motivation. In other words, if you're not motivated enough that God tells you to submit, I'll tell you, if you don't want to be punished, do the right thing, and that's a bare minimum motivation that many many people in the world have, right? And that's one of the blessings of government, God has so designed it that there is physical punishment as we find out, he uses the sword. You can actually die. That holds back a lot of wickedness in society. That's why the Christian church for many many centuries, I can't say all of them but in my readings especially from the Reformation, preferred if they had a choice between a despot and anarchy, a despot. Have you lived in anarchy before? Where every man for himself, every family for himself? You wouldn't survive and it's usually in that case it creates a vacuum and creates a worst despot because a power will come along and grab people who are fearful and say, "We want your protection," and they get it. That's why anarchy doesn't last very long, it ends up usually falling into despotism and the like.

So do good and he says again in verse 4, "For he, that is the diakonos, the servant of God, "does not bear the sword in vain." He's supposed to bear the sword? Of course he bears the sword. He's supposed to punish, "for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." He has authority from God. Even the unbelieving pagan has authority from God if he's a duly appointed civil magistrate to execute somebody.

So historically Christians have been very strong proponents of defending government. We're not the ones that undermine government as a rule. We put up with a lot and we have put up with a lot historically. You see some of the writings such as Calvin and others, they write to the king saying, "Look, you know, our doctrine isn't as bad as you think and nor is our practice. We're not here to cause problems, in fact, we will support and do what we can to help you within biblical reason," as Daniel did and as Jacob did. Can you imagine what kind of despots they lived under.

A fourth reason, 4C, more of a sub-reason to carry off the idea of a motivation. I just mentioned God's ministers are called to avenge wrath on evil, to vindicate God's judgment upon evildoers. Here's the third conclusion now, something new, verse 5a, "Therefore," that tells you he's coming now with a new conclusion here as he did in verse 2, "you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake." He's saying, "I gave you some wrathful reasons," that is, judgment and vindication and the avenger coming along. That's fearful. You don't want the wrath of a king upon you so he says, "If you don't want to live in fear, do good. To do evil, you will be punished, you

will be in fear." That should be a motivation but he says, "I have another motivation for you, another reason, another conclusion why you should submit." He hasn't changed the topic of submission yet. "And that is because of God, for the Lord's sake, for conscience' sake, conscience before God." Our conscience is supposed to be bound to God and God alone. That's what he's saying, because God says so. Because God is the Lord and the Master, not simply for fear of punishment because God himself has said so. So paying taxes, tribute to a foreign ruler is supposed to be done for conscience' sake, not really out of fear, for example.

He gives another reason again, verse 5B. That's a typo. Not only because of wrath but for conscience' sake, "For because of this you also pay taxes," that should be 6, "for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing." That should be 6B, excuse me. 6A and 6B. Because they are God's servants, the fifth reason. The fourth conclusion, "Render to all therefore their just due." My verses are off. That should be verse 7. My own typos. That should be 6 and that should be 7.

He gives a general conclusion from these premises that God is the Lord of all things and you should submit for wrath's sake as well as for conscience' sake, he says, "Therefore render to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." And the overview and the short of it is, obey the civil magistrate because his duty is to punish evil. You should do good lest you be punished by him and it should be done for the Lord's sake.

So pray about that, brothers and sisters, and keep that as your mindset, as it were, the default Christian position of submission as we go into the more heady and deeper waters of the limits of submission and how our founders explained and argued from natural revelation to biblical revelation and logical deductions thereof, that there is a time and a place in which you can rise up and resist the government.

Let's pray.

*Almighty Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, we are thankful that you are our Sovereign God for you are a loving God, you are a just God, and if we had right and wrong defined by man alone or by the state alone or by anarchists alone, we'd live in a most hellish world, but by your grace and mercy you hold back much of that wickedness in how much we could fall down that rabbit hole. Nevertheless, Lord, we're still not in heaven and we pray, Lord, that we remember that we are indeed pilgrims on this earth and we should take it very seriously, our calling, as much as within our ability to submit to those who are over us. In your name we pray. Amen.*

## I. Arguments from Forefathers

### A. A Short Treatise on Political Power, Ponet

1. "By this ordinance [given to Noah] and law He instituted political power and gave authority to men to make more laws."
2. Decisions to die, flee or fight are issues of the conscience.

### B. How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed, Goodman

1. You ought to obey God rather than man. God commands you to follow His commandments first.
2. We are to help the ox in the ditch, how much more our neighbors being oppressed by tyrants?

### C. Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos

1. Two types of covenants: between God, magistrate and people; and between the magistrate and the people. [cp. 2 Sam. 5:3; 2 kg. 11:17; 2 Chr. 23:16]"

### D. On the Rights of Magistrates, Beza: "peoples were not created for the sake of rulers, but on the contrary the rulers for the sake of the people"

1. If in lesser contractual law, the one violating the contract can be repulsed to save one's life, how much more against a nation?
2. Just resistance when: overt tyranny "thoroughly obvious"; if no recourse save arms; carefully thought through to avoid making things worse.

### E. Lex, Rex, Rutherford: "Every man by nature is a freeborn man..."

1. "What is warranted by the direction of nature's light is warranted by the law of nature, and consequently by a divine law; for who can deny the law of nature to be a divine law?"
2. Not defending oneself can be a form of suicide
3. Prophets complained about the lack of help: "they expressly cry out against the sin of non-resistance [Jer. 22:2, 3; 5:31; Is. 58:6]"

## II. Arguments from Bible

### A. Romans 13:1-7: Only describes lawful authority (not tyrants)

1. The magistrate is directed to reward good and punish evil only; nothing is stated about resisting magistrates who do *not* punish evil; therefore, “resist” is only forbidden against lawful authority

2. If “resistance” is absolutely forbidden (instead of relatively), then when a magistrate becomes like a devil, he cannot be resisted. But James 4:7 commands resistance to the devil (his works not his person as such); therefore, some resistance is allowed and submission is relative not absolute.

3. If one can “resist” a righteous man (Gal. 2:11), then one can resist a wicked man on certain occasions (like tyranny)

**B. 1 Peter 2:11-17: similar reasoning as Romans**

1. Submission is the default position; much can be bore (see Matt. 5)

2. v.14 (like Romans 13) gives the definition of the magistrate as an office for punishing evildoers.

**C. Luke 22:36: Christ commands disciples to purchase a sword. If an instrument of violence is allowed, then the purpose of the instrument is allowed: violence.**

**D. Hebrew 11:33, 34: “who through faith subdued kingdoms... became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” [That act which is from faith is pleasing to God; war was from faith; therefore it is pleasing]**

**E. Old Testament**

1. Defensive: Gen. 14:12 1 Sam. 14:44: Jonathan protected by army from Saul; Neh. 4:8-14: Jews defend wall while trusting God; Est. 9: Jews defend themselves

2. Deut. 20:10-20 (war laws); Prov. 24:6; Ecc. 3:3; Proverbs 24:11-12 “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?”

**F. Sixth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt preserve life**

1. Large Catechism Question 99: How to apply the Law. Especially 99:7, 8.

2. LCQ 99.5: what is forbidden is always forbidden (suicide, even by indirect means); what is commanded is not always done all the time: when to fight and die and flee is circumstantial: the people, their ability, opportunity and potential outcomes.