

1Tim 23-10-29a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. Today is the 29th of October, 2023. We continue our study in the epistle of 1 Timothy.

We're in chapter 2, the first paragraph here dealing with prayer and governmental authority. Very timely and pertinent for our understanding and edification and application. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of study and fellowship and we'll begin.

Father, how wonderful it is to be under your care, guided and protected, nourished and given direction and hope. We're grateful for the Lord Jesus Christ who we know at this very moment is seated at your right hand awaiting the word to rise and return and take us to himself as the further events of history unfold. We thank you for this time of opportunity to be challenged, to put what we know into practice and to be fortified in our souls, to come to experiential knowledge of the truths that we learn from your word, guided by your Holy Spirit, enabled and empowered and blessed by the gifts that you've distributed to each one of us.

We pray that as we look at your word together this morning that we will find that truth that is usable in the hands of the Holy Spirit to accomplish all of those goals. To comfort us, encourage us, strengthen us, guide us and bless us in our fellowship and in our walk before you as we await the return of the Lord Jesus and seek to represent him on this earth in the intervening time. We pray all these things in Jesus' name, amen.

As I say, we are in 1 Timothy chapter 2. Let's read our passage. Therefore, based on the importance of the word of God as it has been presented, sound doctrine as it is termed in verse 10 of chapter 1, the faithful ministry of that word in verse 12 and those who are perverting, distorting and teaching other forms of information purporting to be truth, but it is false. The warning in chapter 1 is to identify and oppose these false representations, those who are teaching for other goals and other purposes.

The goal in verse 5 is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith. It is always useful to remember the goal. What is the goal? There are many things that we can do, but what is it that we should do? There are many opportunities, there are many possibilities, there are many capabilities that we have.

How do we sort through those? How do we prioritize? How do we establish our goals? How do we invest our time as good stewards of that time and the resources God has given us? We start with the goal. Is this project, is this effort? Is this undertaking something that contributes to and is a part of the goal? The goal of our instruction, the goal of our Bible study, the goal is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience and a sincere faith. So in pursuing that love, it isn't an abstraction, it's not a Beatles song from the 60s, all you need is love.

It's not refrigerator magnets and air fresheners dangling from the rearview mirror of your car. There is a practical rubber meets the road love that is obtainable, that is doable, that we can practice. How do we get this love? We cultivate a pure heart.

Our heart is not pure by nature. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, Jeremiah says in 17 and 9 of his book. Deceitful and wicked.

We can't understand it, so how do we get a pure heart? It is God's grace and God's power that when we acknowledge our sin, when we seek to be cleansed, when we pray with David, create in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me, we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now we have a pure heart. It is more than simple naming of sins.

If we are flippant, if we are shallow, if we are indifferent to the causes and the effects of those sins, God is not going to hear our prayer of confession. If we walk in the light, walk in the light, establish a pattern of pursuing life in the light, we have fellowship with God and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us. You have to put 1 John 1.7 with 1 John 1.9 in order to have and maintain this pure heart.

So the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart. We have established how to have and maintain a pure heart. What is the second requirement? A good conscience, a good moral sense of what is right and what is wrong, the ability to discern good and evil, to flee lust, to pursue godliness, to live in a way that is pleasing in God's sight, to be constantly aware that the Lord is near.

Let your moderation be known unto all. The Lord is at hand, the fruit of the Spirit, self-control as the culminating virtue. How do we get a good conscience? That's what we're doing this morning.

We refresh our souls in the oasis of God's word. We find the living water that trains us to think as God thinks and to evaluate as God evaluates to understand the better path. Paul says, I beseech you by the mercies of God that you present yourselves a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God.

This is your reasonable service. This is your pure heart. Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

This is your good conscience. Having a good conscience, you understand what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. What I have just quoted is Romans 12, 1 and 2. Pure heart, Psalm 51, 1 John 1, 7 and 9. A good conscience, Romans 12, 1 and 2, among a plethora of other passages.

And a genuine faith, a genuine desire that is self-motivated. We're not trying to please people. We're not going along to get along.

We're not doing it in a subjective fashion. Genuine faith, sincere faith is asking and seeking and knocking out of a genuine sense of need. People don't have an interest in faith if they don't have a sense of need.

Remember the letters to the seven churches? You feel that you have need of nothing when you are actually poor and miserable and blind and naked? A sense of need. When we recognize that we are insufficient, we are incapable, lack the power, lack the ability to overcome sin, to live a productive and fruitful life that is pleasing in God's sight. We throw ourselves on His mercy.

We trust Him for provision, for protection, for guidance, for comfort, for forgiveness to enable us to walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus who is our example of a human being pleasing God, walking in faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. Not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Sincere faith.

We believe what God says. We are guided by the promises and principles and doctrines of His word. That is the goal.

So this charge I commit to you, 1 Timothy 1.18, wage the good warfare. It would be great if we could just do all of these things in quietness and freedom from care, freedom from oppression, freedom from opposition, but that is not the case. To have a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith, we have to pursue them in order to accomplish love in the face of opposition, distraction, attack, deceit, false systems of righteousness, false systems of spirituality, and we are under attack.

So it is a warfare. People decry the violence, the loss, the sorrow, the destruction that accompanies warfare. And anytime you look on your television set or your telephone screen and see the devastating effects of warfare, remember how often the Bible compares our spiritual life to warfare.

It is not a haphazard or accidental comparison. If we fail in the war, the level of devastation and destruction and loss and sorrow that you see on your screen in the Middle East, in Ukraine, and other places where there is active conflict and devastating warfare, that is the effect spiritually. It is not on a screen.

It is invisible. We do not wage war against flesh and blood. We don't wrestle against tangible opponents, principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age.

If it is invisible, it means they're not grabbing us and hauling us away captive or hostage. They're not blowing up our homes and our streets and our businesses and our infrastructure. Where is the devastation? It is in the invisible realm.

How are we taken captive? Remember, later on, Paul is going to exhort Timothy to call out and oppose those who sneak into homes and take hostage women who are unprotected and unprepared and are led away. The spiritual devastation is more lasting

and more permanent than any warfare taking place in the world today. You blow up buildings.

You destroy infrastructure. There is loss of life. There is maiming.

There is devastation. There are orphans, widows, those who lose their families. It is an awful, awful sight.

But remember, this is why. People in the ancient world were well familiar with the outcome of war. They saw it.

They experienced it. And when God tells us in his word that we are engaged in a spiritual war, the consequences in the spiritual realm are just as devastating, just as destructive, just as significant, and the effects are far more long lasting. I've mentioned in the past that I had the opportunity to travel down the Bataan Peninsula and cross the water to Corregidor.

There had been an enormous conflict there between American forces and the Japanese and the American Americans lost. And Corregidor was blown to smithereens. Batarigiri and the other wrecked and destroyed cannons are still there to be seen.

The Malinta Tunnel, where General MacArthur and his family hid out. The destroyed remnants of the barracks and the movie theater and the other elements that were once a thriving base are overgrown. There are trees through the holes in the ceilings and the walls.

And it is now not a place of conflict. Nobody is contesting that ground. Physical warfare in human history comes and goes, but the spiritual battle is ongoing and its effects are eternal.

So, anytime we start getting overly invested in these human conflicts, thankfully they are beyond our shores. We have other kinds of violence within our borders, but these overt acts of warfare with rockets and bombs and airstrikes and missiles and improvised explosive devices and intense loss of life in urban areas so far is not near us. But to remember who we are and why we're here is so essential.

So Paul commits this charge to Timothy in verse 18, wage the good warfare. The good warfare is spiritual. The good warfare has eternal consequences.

It is the outcome for our soul. It is our place in God's plan, our representation of the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth in His absence. And once again, Paul emphasizes having faith and a good conscience in verse 19.

How important is it? Assuming you have purified your heart, you've got to maintain faith and a good conscience. This is why we are a Bible church, why we emphasize regular

Bible study. We are powerless without the Word of God.

That is what the Holy Spirit uses to comfort, encourage, enable, empower, protect. That is our faith and our good conscience. Some who have rejected this are shipwrecked.

And he gives an example. That brings us now to our passage in chapter 2, Therefore I exhort first of all. Now I would expect after that chapter, therefore, and I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, I would expect right after the therefore, therefore I exhort all men everywhere to spend a lot of time in Bible class.

A lot of time studying the Old Testament scriptures and seeing Christ in them to study these epistles that have been received and that are in the process of being incorporated into the New Testament inspired canon. I would exhort that prophecy and the communication of God's truth be the top priority because you need faith and you need a good conscience. And isn't it interesting that first of all, the primary and most important thing that Paul emphasizes to Timothy, a pastor, to pass on to his congregation, and we are doing this this morning for ourselves.

I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in authority, in order that, so that, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. All godliness and reverence. Now, we've looked at this a couple of weeks ago.

We're not praying that the kings and those in authority will grant us a quiet and peaceable life. We are praying for kings and all those in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, so that we can stop thinking about them, so that we can stop worrying about what they are doing, what their policies and their pursuits are, and ask that God grants us the opportunity to live a quiet and peaceable life. Whatever these guys are doing, Lord, govern the affairs of men so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

In all godliness and reverence. Now, this is not the only place in Scripture where we have this exhortation. Write down and then turn to Romans chapter 13, verses 1 through 8. Romans 13, 1 through 8. Paul has just said, If your enemy is hungry, feed him.

If he is thirsty, give him a drink. For in doing so, you will heap coals of fire on his head. Quote from Proverbs 25, 21 and 22.

Do not be overcome by evil. Now once again, this is not a conflict in the physical realm. He's not saying, be sure you're packing your concealed carry, so that you're not overcome by an evil man in the park, or as you're walking from your place of business to your car in the dark.

Do not be overcome by evil. This is conflict in the heart. There is evil in the world, and if we become invested, if we get worried, if we're distracted, if we're deflected, if we lose

sight of our quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence because evil has perpetrated itself hither or yon, near or far.

If we lose sight of the purpose and the goal of the instruction, which is love, that pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith, then evil has triumphed. It has successfully deflected and distracted us from the purpose and the goal. So he says, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Isn't it something that pursuing the good in our personal and individual lives, looking for opportunities to express the stewardship that God has granted to us, the use of our time, the use of our resources, availing ourselves of opportunities to speak the truth in love, to do the things that are within our purview, that may be functions of our spiritual gift, to be a blessing and a benefit to fellow believers. This is overcoming evil with good. And you say, but that's not helping with the wars and the crime and the violence and the bad government and the awful social situations and the distraction and deflection and the deterioration of Judeo-Christian values and all the rest of it.

Actually it is. Why? As Jesus said to his disciples, you are the salt of the earth. You are to shine as light.

Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father. Our effect on others is to live our quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence. This is what opposes evil.

This is what overcomes evil with good. It is counterintuitive. It is the strategy of the indirect approach.

We live a quiet and peaceable life, as Paul says in another place, to the extent that it is up to us to live peaceably with all men. Peter says, be ready to give an answer to those who ask you a reason for the hope that is in you. We live in hope.

Our hope is expressed in our quiet and peaceable, godly and reverent life. We do not oppose. We do not directly go out and try to stir the pot of politics or social issues.

We live a quiet and peaceable life. You don't get that way in a protest full of signs and shouting and law enforcement and pushing and shoving and tearing down of barriers. Regardless of how right you think your cause is, wouldn't it have been great if all of the people who went to January 6th were believers who were invested in living a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence? You wouldn't have barriers pushed down.

You wouldn't have Capitol Police getting battered. You wouldn't have people pushing their way through doors that are marked, don't come in here, John Q. Public, sitting in the chairs that belong to people in government and so on. That was wrong.

The rightness that you believe is a part of your cause does not justify doing things that

violate the word of God. Believers are not to engage in that kind of conflict, certainly not the kind of rioting and burning down of cities that we saw in the year preceding January 6th. Believers should never have any part in that kind of conflict.

That is a complete misunderstanding of our purpose. The goal of the instruction is love, not violence, not active physical protest. You find no sanction for that on either side of the political fence anywhere in scripture.

The one time Peter tried to do physical opposition to those who were doing something wrong, Jesus had to fix it. Remember Malchus and his ear? It's not the way. So, you come to chapter 13.

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. There is no authority except from God and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. I want to pause here and point something out.

Paul is writing in 60-something of this era, A.D. somewhere between, say, very roughly, it's hard to know, but let's just say between 55 and 65, A.D. 55 to 65, somewhere in that decade. Let me remind you of what was going on in the Roman Empire during those years. You can find this out by just going to Wikipedia.

There's a very helpful summary of the decades and it largely focuses on what was happening in the Roman Empire and also in Israel. So you go to the decade of the 50s. This is the 0050s, A.D. 50 to 59.

The early years of that decade saw Roman and Parthian intervention in the Iberian-Armenian War, a conflict which led Tigranes to become king of Armenia with Parthian support. This was unacceptable to Rome. The ensuing tensions culminated in the Roman-Parthian War of 58 to 63.

Concurrently, the Roman conquest of Britain continued with Caratacus being defeated in 50 and the tribes of modern Wales being subdued in 58 to 59. These are the Romans marching into Britain, the hapless inhabitants of Britain being attacked and conquered by Roman legions. The indigenous population of Britain was not attacking Rome, but you have Caratacus and later on in the following years you're going to have Boudicca.

I had never heard of Boudicca until Enya wrote a song about her and then they made a movie about her. I don't know that I can recommend the movie, I can't remember if there's anything salacious in it or not, but I think the movie is largely detailing the conflict between those in Britannia and Wales and so on and the Romans. Boudicca was kind of a Joan of Arc of that period, if you will.

But there was a lot of warfare and a lot of unjust invasion, conquest. You could argue all kinds of moral, social evils were being perpetrated in it. The Council of Jerusalem was held early in the decade of the 50s where they decide that Gentile converts to

Christianity are not obligated to keep most of the fasts and rituals, including circumcision.

They retain prohibitions on eating blood, meat containing blood, the meat of animals that is strangled, and fornication and idolatry. As you go to the decade of the 60s, you have in the Roman Empire the beginning of the Boudiccan revolt in Britannia. Several tribes led by Boudicca rebelled against the Roman occupation.

The revolt led to the sacking of several Roman cities, was ultimately quelled by Governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus. In 63, the Roman-Parthian war came to an end with the Treaty of Rhandia. In 66, the first Jewish-Roman war began.

Jewish rebels were fighting against Roman rule. Near the end of the decade, the year of the four emperors, there is civil war in Rome, political instability. Four different men claim the title of emperor within the span of a year.

You have Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. Vespasian ultimately wins out, and he is the one that sponsors the invasion of Israel and the sack of Jerusalem in 70. The legions of Titus are sent by Vespasian.

In 62, there was the earthquake, estimated magnitude between five and six, struck the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum, severely damaging them. The towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum both suffer major damage, also damage in Naples and New Syria. In 64, the Great Fire of Rome begins in the merchant shops around Rome's chariot stadium, the Circus Maximus.

After six days, the fire was brought under control, but before the damage could be assessed, the fire reignited and burned for another three days. In the aftermath of the fire, two-thirds of Rome had been destroyed, two-thirds of the capital. You can imagine what would happen if two-thirds of Washington, D.C. was destroyed, or two-thirds of Jerusalem was destroyed, two-thirds of Gaza were destroyed.

You think about the loss of life, the hunger, the orphans, the human suffering of all types and shapes. Emperor Nero blames the devastation on the Christian community in the city, initiating the empire's first persecution against Christians. You can read about this, I'm not going to belabor it, but there is a year-by-year breakdown below these articles that summarize what happened in the decade of the fifties and the decade of the sixties.

When Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, when Paul writes Romans to the saints in Rome, this is the political and social context. This is what is going on. So is Paul seriously telling the addressees of these letters, pray for the king, be subject to the governing authorities? The answer is yes.

And you want to talk about some of the hard truths of Scripture? This is a hard truth. People don't think about what was going on when Paul says in Romans 13, let every soul

be subject to the governing authorities. There is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

What if those authorities are manifestly perpetrating evil, murder in the name of the empire? There's people that are throwing sweat grenades about the American empire and Christian nationalism and we're sponsoring violence and we're sending bombs that are blowing up babies and children and this, that and the other, and we've got to oppose the government. We've got to rise up and throw the bombs out and we need to demonstrate. We need to meet violence with violence and we've got to make our voices heard.

This is done in the name of being quote-unquote prophetic. We've got to be prophetic. Let me remind you again, when Jesus said, you are the salt of the earth, how active is salt? Does salt march forth and attack people? Salt is passive.

You sprinkle it into or onto a thing. It is seasoning and it is preservation. That's why salt was used to seal covenants in Old Testament days.

The salt of the covenant, what does it mean? The salt indicates endurance, preservation. It is going to keep, it is going to last, and the flavor of this covenant is going to be apparent any time that substance is revisited. It is a flavoring, it is something that you are aware of.

People that are sensitive to salt, people that, I don't know, retain water or have high blood pressure or whatever and have to limit their salt intake, you can tell when you taste something if it has been salted or not. As soon as you sample it, oh, there is salt in this. Have you ever compared salted and unsalted butter? There is a difference.

Oh, this is too salty, I can't eat this, it will make me swell up like a balloon. Salt is noticeable for its presence, but it is the reaction you have to the salt. The salt doesn't crawl out like an animal and bite you in the leg.

It seasons, you are aware of its presence and its influence, and it preserves. You are the salt of the earth. The earth should be aware that we are present.

We should flavor and condition our own environment. Salt affects what it immediately contacts. You think about a single grain of salt.

If we collectively are the salt of the earth, then each of us is an individual grain. What do I salt as one grain of salt? I salt what I am in contact with, my immediate periphery, my immediate surrounding. Grains of salt don't jump out of your eggs and land on your toast.

They don't land in your cornflakes. Wherever the salt is, that's where it stays, and it seasons what it is in personal, individual contact with. You are the salt of the earth.

Don't lose your saltiness, don't lose your savor. If we are so well camouflaged that we are present and nobody tastes the salt, why would anyone ask a reason for the hope that is in us if we look just as hopeless as everybody else? We're just as blown about by the news and by events and by circumstances as anyone else. We're thrown into just as big a loop by a downturn in circumstance as any unbeliever.

That's salt that has lost its savor. If the salt loses its savor, well, what are you going to salt the earth with? The it there, if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith will it be salted? It's it, the earth. If we can't be salty, there is no other salt.

We are the salt of the earth as followers of the Lord Jesus. Transcends the dispensational divide there. We're the salt of the earth.

If we lose our savor, what else have you got? There is only salt. They didn't have monosodium glutamate and, you know, savory seasonings or these other salt substitutes in those days. It was salt or nothing.

And your salt substitutes do not have the preserving quality that salt has. Salt cured meat and so on. So we are salt and salt is largely passive.

It stays in place and it provides flavor. It is active in that sense. It preserves, it sustains, but it doesn't march forth conquering and to conquer.

It doesn't climb up on one of the four horses and try to bring about the apocalypse. Let every soul be subject, Romans 13, 1, to the governing authorities. Let every soul be subject to Nero, to the Roman emperor, to the Roman governors, to the Roman centurions, to the oversight of the Roman occupying government in Israel and in all of the other subjugated countries and regions that are a part of the empire.

Is the Roman government holy and sanctified? Are their policies beneficent and kind and looking out for widows and orphans? Not in the least. Jesus or Paul or Peter or John could have mounted a diatribe against the Roman empire taking up pages and chapters. There could be a whole book of the Bible called Contra Rome, against Rome, but there's not.

Within our existing books, there is no diatribe against government anywhere. By the way, there is no diatribe against slavery, which sponsors and creates a wonderful environment for evil and abuse and oppression. Nobody in the Bible, Old Testament or New, comes out against slavery.

Nobody in the Bible comes out against evil government, the evils of the Roman empire. Jesus never took his disciples down to a slave market in Jerusalem and said, this has got to stop. Jesus didn't speak a word and the chains fell from their wrists and ankles and the slaves walked free.

And there's Old Testament prophecy that says the Messiah is going to come and free the

captives. Did Jesus free captives? Yes or no? Yes, he did. Yes, he did.

What kind of captivity and what kind of freedom? You will know the truth. You will have a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith and that truth will set you free. It transcends physical circumstance.

Jesus set prisoners free. Genuine freedom is freedom in Christ. Genuine freedom is freedom from spiritual oppression, from bondage to sin, slavery to sin, hopeless serving of Satan and all of Satan's goals.

Jesus freed the captives, but he didn't set a single slave in Israel free from physical bondage. Not a one. Paul never militates.

He doesn't write a letter to any church anywhere in the Roman Empire where slavery is ubiquitous. It is commonplace. It is de facto.

You can assume every community. There are slaves and there are masters of those slaves and there is abuse of those slaves as well as care and slaves that are like a son, as the Roman centurion. But we are so easily caught up in the thinking of the world, well the problem is war.

The problem is slavery. The problem is physical oppression. That's not the problem.

The problem is sin in the heart. You're never going to fix these social evils by attacking them directly. How are these evils overcome? Well, what does Romans 12.21 say? Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with activism, with protest, with revolt, with resistance.

Overcome evil with good. If God is in control of the governments and if governments need to change, then how can we induce God to change the government? I will tell you right now, you cannot change government and I cannot change government. We can't write a very effective letter with an argument that is going to change the heart of those in authority.

We can't protest. We can't march with signs. We can't boycott.

Our individual vote is spitting in the ocean on whichever side. What can we do to affect government? How can the evils of government be overcome? Well, think about it. Who does control governments on this earth? God in heaven.

What would induce God to change government for the better? People who are appealing to him to lead a quiet and peaceable life with godliness and reverence. The strategy of the direct approach is doomed to failure. Go over their heads.

Live a life. If there were ten righteous people in Sodom, what would God have done for that city? He would have preserved it and he would have made the opportunity for a

quiet and peaceable life like he did for Lot. Lot lived in the midst of a perverse, grotesquely evil city.

But Lot was doing fine. Why? Relationship with God. Abraham sojourning, living in tents.

But God blessed him because he was waiting for a city whose founder and builder is God. By faith, in prayer, we pursue a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence. And God will handle the government as only God can.

Do not be overcome by evil. Overcome evil with good. If we get invested in the news, if we get to flailing our hands and wringing towels of sweat about what's going on in the world, we are being overcome by evil.

If there are enough of us who will lift up holy hands in prayer and pray for kings and all of those in authority, we are going to God and asking God to handle the kings. Then we let it go and we pursue godliness and reverence. Quiet and peace.

To the extent that it is up to us, we live peaceably with all men. We are subject to the governing authorities. However bad their policy is, we are subject.

We obey. And if we run afoul of bad policies, bad laws, abuse of governmental power, was the Lord Jesus arrested wrongfully? Did he tell his disciples, well, pull out your concealed carry swords here, these guys aren't taking me. The Lord Jesus committed himself to the hands of the Father and he knew that God had a purpose in allowing his arrest.

It was allowed. The arrest of the apostles. Philippian jailer might never have come to Christ except that Paul and Silas were arrested.

God sent an earthquake, God opened the doors, God guided Paul and Silas to stay there. And the Philippian jailer and his whole household come to faith. God works evil together for good.

And the Philippian jailer who was responsible for beating the apostles ends up dressing their wounds. This is looking to God for our good. Looking to God for our security.

Looking to God for our peace. Not depending on human circumstance. Look at verse 2. Whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God.

And those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. He doesn't say if you resist the good parts of government. Any resistance of lawfully composed authority brings judgment.

Let's say you just want to undercut, undermine and attack verbally the government and its policies. You want to savage the reputation of the president or the senators or the congress or the leaders of our military or whoever else. You want to somehow damage

and punish those who are making decisions because you don't agree.

Well, just read Romans 13.2. This is one chapter after 12.1 and 2. Present yourself a living sacrifice. 13.2 says don't retaliate, don't resist the authority because good or bad it is ordained by God. This is a hard truth.

But whoever is in office, whoever is making the decisions, God's got them there and He has them there for a reason. Look past the immediate to the ultimate. Look past the physical to the spiritual.

Remember God is in His heaven and He is orchestrating world events, world leaders, those who come and go. And we want to be pleasing in His sight and He will preserve, protect and defend us. Well, much more to say about this when we come back from our break.