

1Tim 23-10-29b

We're ready to pick up our study, we're in 1st Timothy chapter 2, and it becomes more meaningful, the more we look at this exhortation, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. And verse 3 gives the reason, this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, that's 1st Timothy 2, 3. And the reason it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior is that He desires all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.

It is an interesting concept that the presence of evil and the presence of governing authorities is woven into the fabric of the plan of God in such a way that the issue of salvation is brought to the forefront and the opportunity to be saved is made evident. So our prayers for all men, kings and those in authority, the endeavor we have to lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence is part of that goal of the instruction, love, pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith. And it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, our Savior, we have been saved and His desire is that all men be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

So we have gone from there to another passage where Paul addresses this same issue which is Romans chapter 13. Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. There is no authority except from God.

However oppressive, however evil, however despotic, it is of God that they are in authority. The authorities that exist are appointed by God. This is pretty emphatic in that first verse.

No authority except from God. The authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordination of God, resisting what God has ordained.

You may be in a state of subjugation. You think about the Jews being conquered and under the boot heel of Rome and the Roman authorities. You think about the other territories, whether it is the western extent to Brittany, whether it is in Asia, whether it is in Gaul, whether it is in the Middle Eastern areas, wherever it is that Rome had conquered, subjugated, heavily taxed, met opposition with violence.

Paul says that is ordained by God and to resist the Romans is to resist the ordinance of God. The Romans are not noted in history as beneficent, kindly, gracious rulers. Remember in the vision that Nebuchadnezzar has, the Roman Empire is legs of iron, hard, unyielding, strong, virtually irresistible.

Legs of iron, that is the iron of the Roman Empire, the iron of the Roman Army. Whoever

resists the authority resists the ordinance of God and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. Isn't it something? You say, well, but it is evil.

If you resist it, you are bringing judgment on yourself. This is a two-fold judgment. It can be judgment from that governing authority itself.

You can be arrested. You can be punished severely. You can be executed by that government.

What is it that you don't get arrested and executed for? Doing good. 3. Rulers are not a terror to good works. Now, there are exceptions.

These are general principles of government. The Lord Jesus did nothing but good works. He was arrested by the authorities, but in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, like a lamb to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth.

He didn't condemn the Roman authorities. He didn't criticize and despoil the Jewish authorities. He didn't tell Pilate, you know the reason I'm here.

It's this religious bigotry and hatred. This is all a put-up job. I've been framed.

These guys are accusing me falsely. They've got lying witnesses. The whole trial was a sham.

It was done in violation of the very law. Jesus didn't accuse anyone of anything during his trials. And it was as unfair, unjust, and evil as it comes.

And Jesus didn't publish a diatribe. There's not a book in the New Testament dedicated to Jesus railing against evil government authorities. Nor is there one by Paul or Peter or John or James or anyone else.

These rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. When churches establish orphanages and charities and minister to the homeless and to the orphans and to the widows, does government come in and trounce them and arrest them? Government is interested generally in stopping crime, not in stopping charity.

And the goal of our instruction is love. The goal of our instruction is a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. The goal of our instruction is to live a peaceable and quiet life in godliness and reverence.

It's pretty hard to be oppressed by the government if you're going out of your way to never pick a fight with the government and not skyline yourself as opposing them and calling them out and making yourself a thorn in their side. And that kind of opposition doesn't do any good anyway because you're pitting human strength against human strength. Use spiritual power.

Go past them to the throne of grace for help in time of need. Appeal to God in prayer and supplication and request when it comes to issues related to kings and all those in authority. This is what Paul is emphasizing to Timothy as a first priority.

Do what is good and you will have praise from the authority, Romans 13, verse 4, for he, the authority, and notice it is singular here, he. Who is the singular authority in the Roman Empire about which Paul is writing and in which Paul is dwelling and in which his recipients of this letter are dwelling? Who is the he? This is Caesar. This is the emperor.

This is either Nero or his immediate predecessor. He is God's minister to you for good. Really? How is this possible? Well, what was the aim and goal of the Roman government as they stationed troops in regions and cities and towns? What were they trying to maintain? Civil peace and obedience.

Right? When there is a ruckus, when there are riots, when there is opposition, the shields and swords of the Roman legions and the Roman centuries come into play. When people are peaceable and quiet, do their work and pay their taxes, there is civil order and there is civil peace. You may not like the way they do it.

You may not like the fact that they are present at all. You wish for a different government, a different Caesar, a different set of laws and ordinances. Maybe their taxation is confiscatory.

Maybe their rule is oppressive. But Paul says here, he, the Roman Caesar, is God's minister to you for good. And every authority between the individual hearing the words of this letter and Caesar, he is God's ordained authority.

The governors, the centurions, the rulers, the overseers in every place that Rome has conquered, he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid. He does not bear the sword in vain.

He is God's minister. Notice twice in verse four, this oppressive, unkind, unfair, forceful, godless in many cases, governmental authority is God's minister. He is God's minister to you for good and he is also God's minister and avenger unto wrath on him who practices evil.

Therefore, verse five, you must be subject not only because of wrath, not only because of what the government will do to you because you are overtly in opposition, but also for conscience sake. Conscience sake. What do we know about conscience? The goal of our instruction is love.

Part of the source of that love is a good conscience. Paul says in verse 19 of chapter 1 of 1 Timothy, having faith and a good conscience. Some who have rejected faith and a good conscience have suffered shipwreck.

And those, Paul delivers over to Satan, that they have suffered shipwreck. They may learn not to blaspheme. Abandoning faith and a good conscience is blasphemy.

It is opposition to God himself. You must be subject, Romans 13.5, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Because of this, verse six, you also pay taxes.

They are God's ministers. This is a third time. Who are we talking about here? The Iron Roman Empire.

This is the Nero that will burn Christians like torches and send them into the arena to be slaughtered by lions. That invades and conquers harmless, hapless villagers. Look at what happens in Britain.

Look at what happens in Wales. Look at what happens in any number of these countries. You pay taxes.

They are God's ministers. This is the third time he has emphasized this. Whatever you want to think of the government, the first thing to remember is God put that government there.

God has allowed that government to exist. And that government is God's minister, both for good and for wrath, attending continually to this very thing. God orchestrates.

God oversees. God controls and limits. God ordains and allows what happens in governments all over the world.

The worst governments you can think of, the best governments you can think of. They are ordained by God. Verse seven, render therefore to all their due.

When is the first time we had this issue arise in our New Testament? Rabbi, teacher, should we pay taxes to Caesar or not? What was Jesus' reply? They were hoping to hang him, get him for a political opinion. Aha, he's opposed to the Roman government, the confiscatory and oppressive taxation. He's against it.

We'll get him to say so and then we can hand him over to the Romans for punishment. Do you remember what Jesus said? Show me a coin. Whose face is on that coin? They said, Caesar's.

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. If it's fair and if you think it's just. He didn't add any qualification.

Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and render to God the things that are God's. We obey, we submit and we function under whatever government exists. You and I basically had no hand.

We call it a democracy, but the grain of sand in the Sahara Desert that is our vote did

not determine what government we have. God determined it. God determined where and when we would be born, in what country we would live, what state, what region, what our family and friends are associated with, what those would be.

God determined all of those and God determined to put us at this place at this time in this country with this government and all of the governmental levels between the federal government and ourselves. God determined every single detail. He specified it.

He ordained it and he is watching to see if we are going to respect what he has ordained or not. We can discern that policies are not comporting with the ethics and the morality that we learn from the word of God. It doesn't change our responsibility to submit and to obey.

Render therefore to all their due. This is the very same thing the Lord Jesus said. In the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established.

We are going to see the third witness here momentarily. Render therefore to all their due. Taxes to whom taxes, customs to whom customs.

Notice this is the monetary side. Anybody who claims to be a Christian and says I'm not paying my taxes, it's not in the constitution, it's illegal, I'm going to go out and join some kind of conclave out in the wilderness and fly below the radar and get ready for the great overthrow of the government. There are people who do this and they don't know their Bible.

It doesn't matter if taxes are 90 percent, pay them. Custom to whom custom. These are a different form of taxes.

You've got federal tax, you've got property tax, you've got sales tax, you've got excise tax, you've got all different kinds of taxes. Whatever they are, pay them without question, without noise, without flailing and sweat grenade throwing and opposition. It's from the government.

God ordains the government. If he wants my taxes to be different, God will change them. Do you trust God or not? Do you submit to the ordained authority that God has put in place and has put you under? By divine fiat, every governmental authority under which we function is there at God's behest.

So to oppose them is to oppose God's plan and purpose. It is blasphemy. Hymenaeus and Alexander are going to be delivered to Satan to learn not to blaspheme.

Render taxes to whom taxes, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear. This is respect. You don't have to respect the individual, but you respect the office.

If somebody is the president, he should be addressed as Mr. Throwing around epithets

and massacring someone's name, calling them by unkind and unflattering nicknames is unbiblical for believers. Our current president is Mr. Biden. The preceding president was Mr. Trump and before that it was Mr. Obama and Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton and so on.

Fear to whom fear, this is respect. This is an authority that God has put in place and has put you under? By divine fiat, every governmental authority under which we function is there at God's behest. It is blasphemy.

Render taxes to whom taxes, customs to whom fear, calling them by unkind and unflattering nicknames and before that it was Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton and so on. Fear to whom fear, this is respect. He is certainly not acting like one.

Do you claim to support the law and you command me to be struck in violation of the law? But when he found out he was the high priest, he was respectful. The Lord Jesus was respectful to Pilate, to Herod, to the high priest, to Caiaphas and Annas and all of those that wrongfully, brutally mistreated him, arrested him, had him beaten and flogged, he was not disrespectful to anyone at any time and that is our guide and our model. Anybody that runs around savaging governmental figures doesn't know their Bible and isn't functioning in love.

They're not pursuing a peaceable and quiet life in godliness and reverence and that's just a fact of scripture. Fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. You can say well this person is such a rascal, they don't deserve fear and they don't deserve honor.

Yes they do by the office that they hold. People in the military learn this right away. You will salute a superior officer, he may not be superior in anything other than rank, he may be a complete fool, he may be costing the government money, he may be getting people killed by bad training and bad decisions and bad implementation of his orders.

You will render fear and honor because of the rank, because of the office, because of the position. God put them there and put us under them and it's respecting the ordained structure of God himself. To respect them is to respect God and that's how we have to look at it.

Never mock and savage these people that are picking on various governmental leaders for their foibles or their failures or their weaknesses or whatever it may be. That is unbiblical and to the extent that we have done it or participated in it, we need to confess it and repent of it and stop doing it. Well, this is not only something that is addressed by Paul, it is also addressed by Peter.

Turn with me to 1 Peter chapter 2. We've seen the Lord Jesus emphasize that respect and tax and whatever else that is due to Caesar should be rendered. You go to 1 Peter chapter 2. Peter says, beginning at 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 11, Beloved, I beg you, as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. The soul is

what counts.

The spiritual conflict, the spiritual victories, the spiritual battle is what counts. If we let fleshly desires achieve victories against our soul, we're in trouble. Fleshly desires war against the soul.

Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles. Remember, Peter addresses this to the Jewish Christian converts. These are Messianic Jews, if you will, of the Diaspora.

He says, You have been pushed out of the land. You have been scattered. That's what Diaspora is.

You're throwing the seed through. The spores have been scattered, have been blown by the wind. You need to have your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

This word, visitation, is really interesting. Remember, the word visitation is the word in these pastoral epistles. Paul is going to tell both Timothy and Titus, If anyone desires to be an overseer, an episkopos, episkopos, this is where you get your episcopal church, episkopos, scope is to look over and epi is upon, so to look upon.

You can see where you get the idea of a visit. I want to see you face to face. I want to look upon you in person, so it is a visit or a visitation.

But the primary meaning of epi, and this is the word, translated visitation, this is episkopos, epi-s-k-o-p-e, episkopos, the day of oversight, the day of watching over, looking over, looking upon, that's what it means. It isn't so much a presence, you would have the word for appearing, of apocalypse, the unveiling, or the presence that we've seen in other places, that they, the Gentiles, these who are unbelievers and are looking at you, you are salt, you are light. We're hoping that they will see your hope and ask you a reason for it.

Well, why would they ask? They will speak against you as evildoers, but when they look at you, when they watch you, they will glorify God. Notice, good works which they observe, you could reorder this sentence and it would make a little more sense. It sounds like God is going to have a day of visitation.

The sense of this is, these Gentiles that speak about you generally as evildoers, oh those Jews, why did we let them into our town? They've bought up property, they're a presence, they've got their peculiar ways, they wear funny clothes, they talk about their God, and in general, the group is spoken of as evildoers. Notice it is plural. But they may buy your good works which they observe in the day of episcopos, in the day when they are close enough to God to visit and see you in person and watch you, and they observe that your life is good.

There are people that want to condemn white American evangelicals for all kinds of sins of the past and hang the dead carcass of slavery around our necks and bigotry and lynchings. It's interesting to me that so many people who are critical of modern day evangelical Christianity can't seem to find much we're doing wrong in the present, and so they're dragging up the 1920s and the Tulsa race riots and the slavery in the 1800s and the crusades. They're digging through history and saying, look at what a terrible thing, white Christian nationalism and this, that, and the other.

It's the same thing that happens with people that are engaged in current conflicts and they want to drag up sins of the past and hang them around people in the present. It is a straw man argument. You create this straw man that you in the present need to pay reparations and you need to be guilty and you need to confess the sins of your fathers.

The Bible itself says, no, no, no. This idea that the fathers bit the bitter grapes and the sons' teeth are going to be set on edge, we're going to pay the consequences for these bitter grapes, the Bible says, no. Everyone is responsible for his own actions.

I've never held a slave. I've never oppressed somebody because of race. And they say, as soon as you say, I'm not a racist, that's proof that you are a racist.

Well, this is a human idea and sort of a clever little riposte, and it's not true. I didn't know what a Jewish person was until I was an adult. I suddenly discovered all of these people that have Goldstein and these other names, these are Jewish names.

I never knew it. I grew up with all kinds of people in California. I had no notion that they were Jewish or that people thought of them differently.

I had black kids in my grade school classes in California. I didn't have a thought that there was anything any different about them. I've served with what they call dark green Marines and people of color.

I served in the Naval Service and in the Marine Corps and in the Army and never had a shred of doubt that they were every bit the equal and in some cases superior to anybody else in the area. You know, are they a good Marine? Do they do their job? Can you count on them? Are they dedicated? Are they faithful to their wife? Are they balanced and have self-control? Are they believers in many cases? It's not an issue. People can accuse me all they want, but I am actually not racist.

You can comb through my history from birth till now. I've never done anybody wrong, never looked askance at anybody because of their race. I have looked askance at plenty of people of all colors because they're rascals, because they don't do what they say.

They don't have personal integrity. They want to rent from you and then they don't want to pay. I don't care what color or stripe they are.

If you make an agreement, you keep it. Your word should be your bond. The fact that I look askance at someone because they can't be trusted and don't have integrity and they are of color, the color is neither here nor there.

I don't begin to draw conclusions about all people of that particular persuasion or ethnic background or whatever. There is a spectrum from extraordinarily bad to extraordinarily good in any sort of arbitrary category you want to name. Are all Marines good? Are all Army bad? Is all Navy good? Is all Air Force bad? It's nonsense.

Any other category that you want to assign, ethnicity or color or whatever else, anybody with three neurons to rub together doesn't judge simply in a knee-jerk response because someone is of a particular color or speaks a particular language or comes from a particular place. That's just not even common sense. Common sense says evaluate the individual.

The Word of God says evaluate the individual. Separate from those who have made shipwreck of their faith. Let Satan, they want to choose the ways of Satan, let Satan teach them not to blaspheme.

That's Paul's response in that passage. So when you get to 1 Peter and you come to chapter 2 verse 11, I beg you, you are sojourners and pilgrims. Why would you try to fix your country? Why would you try to solve all of the world's ills when you are a transient? We are transient.

Now, nothing wrong with shining a light, you know, brighten the corner where you are. Let the lower lights be burning so that some fainting, struggling seaman can be rescued and saved as the old hymn says. Let the lower lights be burning.

Send a beam along the way. Shine as a light so that people can find salvation. That's a wonderful thing.

But it is a spiritual goal. It is a spiritual conflict. Nowhere in the New Testament, and I have said this, I will say it until my dying day, neither Jesus, no disciple, no apostle, no author of New Testament scripture ever exhorts Christians to go and quote unquote get involved.

And people say this is progressive Christianity's big rant is that, well, you are so heavenly minded, you are no earthly good. And dispensationalism just has everybody sitting around waiting for Jesus and not taking care of the poor. Not at all.

Fundamental dispensational churches have all kinds of ministries. Most of the charity in this country is done by white evangelical Protestant Christians. Look it up.

I've looked it up. I've got the facts and figures. I got in a debate with somebody a few years back and they were saying, oh, you know, you Christians are no earthly good.

And if it wasn't for government programs, everybody would starve. You go look at the numbers. It is amazing the amount of charity that is accomplished quietly without fanfare in small communities and large by collections of Christians who look around and see a need and they are salt in their point of contact.

We've got some homeless people nearby. Let's see what we can do for them. We've got jobless people in our fellowship.

Let's see what we can do for them. Here's somebody that needs a hand up and has fallen down. Let's see if we can raise them.

Here's somebody that's in the group of addiction. Let's lead them to Christ where the only power to overcome addiction resides. Let's be active in our community.

Our com-unity. Con is the first syllable. Con means with.

Con is the first syllable. Our with-unity. Those we are unified with.

Those we are in contact with. That is the nature of the goal of instruction. Love.

We have to be squared away first. Pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith. We have to be leading a quiet and peaceable life in godliness and reverence and we are then equipped to be a blessing to those in our immediate periphery.

So, as a sojourner and pilgrim, Peter says, verse 12 of 1 Peter 2, have your conduct honorable among those who are not the people of God, the Gentiles in this case, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they broad brush you, they are bigoted, they are insensitive, they treat you in a racist way. They, by your good works, which they observe in the day that they are looking you over, the day of episcopate, the day of a visit and a contact and observing over your life, will glorify God. This is what Jesus says.

Let your light so shine before men that they will, what? See your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Not glorify you, not make much of you and give you an award and a certificate and a speaking engagement someplace at the Rotary. They will see your good works and glorify your Father because they know the source of your stability, the source of your strength, the source of your righteousness, the source of your hope, the source of your peace and your godliness and your quietude.

And they will glorify God. What is this God that you serve that you are able to live this way in the midst of this chaos? How can you have this peace and hope and stability and godliness and do these good works when everything about you is a shambles? Who is this God? I want to know this God. This has got to be a great God that gives you this strength.

I could never do this. I don't think you could do it except for your God. Who is this God?

They will glorify God in the day that they get to know you and see your good works.

They have broad-brushed you as an evil-doer, but when they look closely, episcopes, it's a day of visitation, so to speak. It's the day of finding out firsthand. They will see your good works and they will glorify God.

That's the only way they're going to come to God, is seeing your good works. Notice, He doesn't say preach them a sermon. He doesn't say argue them into submission, debate them into compliance.

They'll see what you do. They will see how you live. They will be episcopes.

They will overwatch your life. And if they've got anything like an accepting and seeking heart, they'll glorify God. And they will then connect directly to God.

That is the testimony. That is the witness. It is the good that we do on a daily basis as we live a peaceable, quiet, godly and reverent life, as Paul describes it.

Therefore, verse 13, 1 Peter 2, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. Holy smokes! Why don't I just submit myself to the ordinances of God? We've had the Lord Jesus say this. We've had the Apostle Paul say it in two places.

And now we have Peter saying it. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man. Why? Because it's right and proper and moral and good and I agree with it.

Why would I submit myself to every ordinance of man? There's a 25 mile an hour speed limit here and it's just silly. There's nothing on this road. There's a law that says that I've got to register my weapon and that impinges on my constitutional rights.

I shouldn't have to tell anybody I've got a gun. Submit to every ordinance of man. Why? What does it say? Read it out loud.

For the Lord's sake. I do what I do heartily as unto the Lord, Thessalonians, and not unto men. Whether to the King as supreme, this is Caesar's rule.

Peter's talking about Caesar. Paul was talking about Caesar. The Lord Jesus was talking about Caesar.

And you can't find more oppressive rulers than the Roman Caesars. Whether to the King as supreme or to governors as to those who are sent by him. Why? What do we look to for government to do? Punish evil doers.

What is the biggest failure government can perpetrate? Failing to punish evil doers. When you see this happening in your government, this is a time to pray to God, because the reason for which he has ordained government is not being fulfilled. We've seen it in every passage.

Paul says, they do not bear the sword in vain. People need to fear the wrath of the government if they do evil. Well, if the government no longer punishes evil, we take that to God.

Lord, you put this government in place to protect us from evil and to have them bear the sword and punish those who perpetrate evil. If they're not doing it, that is a godless government that is now not submitting itself to God's ordinance and stand by. The nation that tolerates that kind of government and supports it and encourages it and rallies for it will be destroyed.

That government will be replaced. The land will still be there. Survivors will still be there in the smoking ruins.

But you look at some of the places that are currently on TV as smoking ruins and look at whether or not their government punished evil doers. That is the way of all governments that do not punish evil. God will see to it that some other nation comes in and reduces them to smoking rubble.

Look at Revelation chapter 17 and the Scarlet Harlot's fate. They will stand afar off in ships, can't even get close, looking at the smoking ruin. Why? If a government sponsors evil instead of punishing evil, God will take that government out with some other government, some other army, some nearby neighbor, somebody taking advantage.

It happens other places and it can happen here and it will happen here. Government, those are sent for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of those who do good. What happens in the latter days? Men call evil good and good evil.

That's why you have the biggest destruction the planet has ever seen, worse than the flood. As in the days of Noah, this is the will of God, verse 15, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. He doesn't say by debate, he doesn't say by waving a Bible in one hand and a flag in the other or an AR-15 in the other.

How do we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men? Living a quiet and peaceable life, godliness and reverence, pure heart, good conscience, sincere faith. In the day of observation somebody looks at us and says, well, these people aren't doing any harm. How many protests, how many angry riots have ever been perpetrated about the Amish? You know why? I don't agree with all of Amish theology, but one thing you can say is they are peaceable, they live a godly and quiet life, they keep to themselves, they make furniture, they plow fields, they trade their children, they live a peaceable and quiet life.

And in many ways you can look to some of those communities with profit. They are doing a lot better than a lot of what passes for evangelical Christianity. This is the will of God.

What is the will of God? The purpose is love. What is the will of God? By doing good you put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for

vice, but as bond-servants of God.

I am a slave of God. Everything I see, everything I say, everything I do is as a servant, a bond-slave of God. Honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

It doesn't get more direct and clear than that. Honor all. Can you mock and deride figures in government and be honoring them at the same time? No, you can't.

And that attitude will leak out in conversation and it will alienate and it will divide and it will distract from the issue. What is the issue? We should be doing good. People should look at us, see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven.

These are the words of Jesus, word for word. Let your light so shine. He doesn't say let your club so swing.

Let your voice so shout. Let your debate and your arguments and the force of your diatribes so suck the air out of the room. Let your light shine so that others will see your good works and as a consequence glorify your Father.

Honor all. It says people, people is not there. Honor everybody.

This of course puts any kind of racism or bigotry or ethnic opposition to bed. If you're honoring everyone, how can you be a racist? How can you be oppressive? How can you be unkind and unjust? If you're honoring all, treating everyone with honor, they are there because God put them there. They are the way God made them.

This goes the same for people with disabilities. This goes the same for people of various persuasions by whatever choices they've made and politics they've espoused and social issues they have embraced. They are still to be honored.

They are to be respected. They are not to be spit on. They are not to be attacked.

They are not to be vilified, not to be insulted, not to be abused verbally, not to be punished, taking vengeance on them because I don't like their opinions. Honor all, period. Love the brotherhood.

Our love, which is the goal of instruction, is aimed at the brotherhood, believers. We live peaceably with everybody else. We do not want our good to be spoken of as evil, but love is directed to the brotherhood.

We discern, is this someone I can benefit because they are a brother or sister in Christ? Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

In that order. Our fear of God should lead us to honor all of those who are in authority and to submit because they are ordained by God. Then he goes on, and you can read that section, servants, be submissive to your masters.

What? Servants, flee your masters and go to a brotherhood community where you can be protected and shielded. I'll write a letter like I did about Philemon and so on. We'll treat them as a brother and not as a slave.

All through the New Testament there is no opposition to slavery, under the banner of which all kinds of heinous evils have been perpetrated. Masters sleeping with female slaves and all kinds of awful things happening, beatings and abuse. There was also kindness.

You seldom hear about those servants who were called aunt and uncle and were embraced and treated as a member of the family and buried in the family cemetery when they passed away because they were as dear as close blood relatives. That gets diminished and all you hear is the bad. It's like when you go to reviews online.

Well, what do you think of this blender? There are 19 bad reviews and 2 good ones. Well, people are not nearly as motivated to write a review when they're happy with a thing as when they're upset with it. You have to take that into account that negativity breeds noise.

Satisfaction breeds peace and quiet. In any case, honor all. Notice honor and respect everyone.

Love is reserved for the brotherhood. This is going above and beyond. This is love that is sacrificial and beneficial.

This is the care that is familial in its nature and in its self-sacrifice. Honor all. Love the brotherhood.

Reverence God. Fear him. Respect his judgment and what he has ordained.

And honor the king. Notice honor is the bracket. The king is not in the brotherhood.

Honor all. Honor the king. That's the bread on the sandwich.

In the middle, love the brotherhood and reverence God. The environment in which we do that is being awash in a sea of humanity, many of whom are not brothers, and we're under governmental authority, many of whom are not brothers. So honor to what is outside, love and reverence on the inside.

Well, food for thought as we watch the news, as we see world events unfold, as we hear opinions right, left and center, people advocating for this and decrying and condemning that. What is our course? What is our point of application? How can we live a life that pleases God, that reflects these values we've seen in these four passages? Well, that's fruitful reflection, meditation and prayer for ourselves, even as we pray for these others that are indicated in these passages. But this is the path to life.

It is the path to peace. It is the path to fruitfulness and having an effect. Do you want to have an effect on circumstances? Do you want to have an effect on the world? Live a life that draws attention to the glory of God.

Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for its pertinence, its traction, its applicational value for us every moment of our waking lives. We pray that as we reflect on these truths from Your Word, that God the Holy Spirit will light our path, convict us where we need conviction, guide us where we need guidance, encourage us where we need encouragement, comfort us where we need comfort, that in all things the Lord Jesus will be manifest and glorified.

We ask it in His name. Amen.