**The Book of Romans**

Part Five: God’s righteousness is revealed in His Loving Demands Upon His People. (Romans 12-15:13)

***Rendering Unto Caesar***

***Or, How should we interact with government?***

***Romans 13:1-7***

When Jesus made the famous statement, “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar and to God the things that are God’s,” He was helping His disciples understand that they lived in two kingdoms, one earthly and one heavenly. Both of these kingdoms make demands upon us, but how are we to balance them? What do we owe our government, and how should we relate to those who rule over us in national, state, and local governments?

***Submit to the rightful governing authorities. . .*** v. 1a

Because the very source of all authority is God Himself. v. 1b

God is a God of Order.

And because institutional authority is God’s idea. v. 1c

God has built order into human society.

***For rebellion sets you on a course for judgment. . .*** v. 2

Because the authority is there to punish evil, not good. v. 3

Because the authority is doing God’s work in punishing evil. v. 4

***Further, submission is a matter of conscience. . .*** v. 5

 For conscience brings you to obey the law and pay taxes as supporting the structure God has

 established. v. 6

This means that we pay the government what we owe, both in taxes and the appropriate respect. v. 7

**How shall we think through these principles?**

***1. Paul speaks generally, about one side of this issue.***

Virtually any principle can be taken too far and misapplied. This passage was used by some European monarchs in the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries to support the “divine right of kings,” which they took to mean that subjects owed blind obedience to their leaders. But Scriptures show that sometimes believers must disobey or at least plead their rights. Daniel 3:16-18; 6:10-13; Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29; 16:35-40; 22:24-29; 25:9-12.

***2. God does not command mindless obedience.***

During peaceful times, it may be obvious, but what “side” do you choose in a civil war? Which government is legitimate? And what about a rebellion? Do you “obey” the far away (perhaps oppressive) government, or the “new” and local authorities which may have been established or allowed by the far away king or emperor? Such questions are fitting for we who are made in God’s image and often must make hard choices. 1 Chron. 12:32

***3. Even if we oppose “bad” rulers, we can respect them.***

Soldiers learn to salute the uniform, not the person. In a republic, voting, learning about issues, and hearing all sides of key questions are all ways in which we can respect our governing system. Our prayers are another. And we must not hide behind either “tribal interests” or our government in order to evade per-sonal responsibility. 1 Timothy 2:1-4; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17.