

Honor The...*President*

The title of this article is a take-off from the admonition by the apostle Peter when he wrote "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (I Peter 2.17). Obviously we make application of this instruction to our civil situation...we have a president, and the Bible teaches that we honor that office and the man who sits within. I want to consider the wording of some of our prayers that are offered in behalf of our political leaders. I am wondering if perhaps we are at times asking the wrong things for our leaders.

Without doubt, the Bible teaches us to pray for our leaders. This is part of how we honor them. We will address our prayers and their wordings presently. But first, let us consider that we honor them specifically by recognizing that their position in this world is God-given. This does not mean that all leaders are doing what is correct, moral, and upright. Many do not. But it does mean that, even if they abuse their office, they are in power due to God's direction. This is the teaching of Romans 13: (Please take note of my underlining...)

"Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing" (verses 1-6).

Thus, we must recognize that the government is God-ordained. How do we "honor" a corrupt leader? By resting in the fact that God is in charge...He will repay (vengeance) or reward (bless) those who do His will. Don't worry...God knows what he is doing!

Next, let us consider another way to "honor" men or women who may not be what God desires, but are in positions of civil authority. The word "honor" that Peter uses is seen both *objectively* and *subjectively*. To honor something *objectively* is to pay a lot of money for it. To do so *subjectively* is to place a personal, private *value* on something for sentimental or other subjective reasons. For example: I have on my walls at home a number of drawings and paintings that *objectively* would likely not bring much at an auction. But *to me* (subjectively)

they are priceless because of who drew or painted them. Peter tells us to *objectively* honor the political leaders, that is, to place an objective value on them and their position BECAUSE GOD SAID SO...HE HAS ORDAINED IT, not because we think a lot of them or the job they may or may not be doing!

Now what about our prayers? We turn to what Paul told Timothy: "I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications¹, prayers², intercessions³, thanksgivings⁴, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (I Timothy 2.1,2). A brief analysis: these four words for the various types of prayers mean: 1-petitions/requests (to beg); 2-worship before God specifically; 3-conversation/meeting—to make a deal with; 4-gratitude. When it comes to praying for our leaders, I do not find in the Scriptures where we are to pray for their good health, or that they may prosper, or that they "make the right decisions or choices." Question: in whose eyes or opinion will the decisions made be "right"? (Christians in Germany in the 1940's were to pray for Hitler. Was he was making "right" decisions? [See I Peter 2.18...part of verse 17's context.]

A democrat may feel the decisions a republican leader makes are "wrong." An independent may think the choices a republican leader makes are "wrong." Stop and think about this: this type of language and request is not what Paul is teaching us to use and to make. (I am not suggesting that such prayers are wrong.) But just how are we to "lead a tranquil and quiet life" based upon our prayers for our leaders? I suggest it is not because the leaders we pray for are making "right" decisions...many do not! Rather, we will have tranquility and quietness in our lives *even in the face of tyranny* because we did what God said: prayed for the leaders who are God-ordained! We always have "peace with God" (Romans 5.1) when we obey Him! This is what Paul is telling Timothy (and us).

Brethren, let us continue to pray for our leaders: it is ordained of God that we do so. But who is to say that the decisions the government makes which appear to be oppressive and even tyrannical are not the will or providence of God? Who knows whether the current economic, social, and civil distress we are experiencing in our nation is not the will of God, especially in view of the fact our nation has mostly turned its back on God? Let us pray for our government and its leaders...but let us simply pray God's will be done. Whatever comes to pass, let us know that we can continue to have peace with God because we have obeyed Him and are living righteously even if our government officials are not!

Sermon Notes:
“What Shall Be Rooted Up?”

- The kingdom (church) is pictured by Jesus as a _____.
- This tree had a very _____ start.
- But other “trees” are being planted.
- God will not allow these “_____” to grow in His garden.
- These plants shall be _____ up.
- They are the direct result of “the great _____” of which Paul foretold to the Thessalonians.
- _____ is the result...
- And in the 15th century, it gave way to the _____.
- From that time many, many “_____” have sprung up.
- They shall be rooted up...
- And with them all who embrace them!

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study: 9:30 a.m.
Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Evening: 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday:

Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.

Preachers:

James Grayson
614-409-0941

Robin W. Haley
614-751-1082

RAGER ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST



5775 Rager Rd, Canal Winchester, Ohio 43110

Phone: 614-830-0110

Website: www.ragerroad.org

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Wednesday's Wisdom:

“Be cautious with whom you associate; this is good advice for young AND old.” James Grayson
“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals” (I Corinthians 15.33).

Pray for sisters Lisa and Cassandra. We hope to see them in our number again soon!

Fellowship meal and business meeting: next week, the 14th.

March Birthdays: sister June Wiley (12th); brother Grell Gumbs (24th)

Time Change: is next weekend. Be sure to “Spring Forward” on your clocks.

Sermon Preview:

- One of Jesus’ sermons seems to have fallen on deaf ears.
- Not all “churches” are approved of God.
- Jesus equates the “religions of men” with a “garden” planted by someone other than God.
- How did the religious world get into such confusion?