

Have You Paid Your Taxes? Rom 13:1-7

For tax purposes, Helene and I are both considered self employed. We have to pay both ends of our social security as well as all the other taxes that come out of a paycheck. So we pay the full percent of taxes taken out of a paycheck. If I have figured out the percentages right, we pay over 40% of our check just in Federal, state, and local taxes. If there was a way to get out of paying taxes, I would be all for it!

I had a friend in college who was an older student. He had been working for a few years and had some very strong political and religious opinions. One of those opinions was that he refused to pay taxes on religious objections. He would tell us we need to do the same thing because our government used our tax money for things that were against Christian values. He was very passionate in his beliefs. The perfect way to get out of paying taxes!... or is it?

There continues to be many who believe exactly he does. My friend is right in saying our government uses our tax money for things that are appalling to Christians. So, should we quit paying taxes? Let's see what Paul has to say about this issue

PRAYER

I. Let's Rebel! ... Or Not

A. Should we mix politics and religion?

1. I'm not much one for mixing politics and sermons.
2. I'm called to teach you about Christ, not a political stance.
3. Yet at every political cycle, churches are called on to be more politically active. We saw that in the last presidential election as many

churches divided along lines of socially liberal and conservative views and supported this candidate or that one.

4. Many churches and individual Christians see it as a civic duty.
5. And Paul spends the first 7 verses chapter 13 talking about politics.
6. However, he says some things about politics that don't go over very well among American Christians.

B. Should we overthrow our government?

1. In 2010 a phenomenon happened called the Arab Spring. Over the course of a few months, people from several Arab nations rebelled against their governments and overthrew them.
2. In the 1860's we fought a war to keep the Southern states from seceding from our government.
3. In the 1770's we had our own rebellion against the British Crown.
4. For the most part, we like the idea of freedom from oppression on a national level.
5. But imagine yourself a Christian in one of those nations or one of those times. Should you be involved in the uprisings?
6. We need to realize something before we begin to look at this question.
 - a) We have a democratic government in which people can change the government by a voting process.
 - b) Much of the world doesn't live under that reality and almost NO ONE in Biblical times lived under that reality.
 - c) You either accepted the government or led a rebellion against it.
7. Paul tells the Christians in Rome that they were to submit to the authorities.
8. Why? They were there because God put them there.
 - a) Wait a minute, God put a brutal repressive government in place at the start of Christianity? Yes.
 - b) We need to accept a government even if they take away our rights? Yes.
 - c) We can't rebel and put our own better people in? NO.

9. Romans 13:2 (ESV) — 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

10. As much as it sounds un-American, Christians should not have participated in our fight for liberty.

11. What we have to remember, is that we need to be about teaching people the gospel, no matter who is in charge, not getting caught up in politics and forgetting our main purpose.

C. God, Christianity and Politics

1. American Christians are blessed. We have a system in place where we can work WITHIN that system to affect change.

2. I am all for trying to get God centered people into our political positions.

3. However, God isn't contained in a political party or a country.

a) He is neither Democrat or Republican

b) Christians can be Democrat or Republican and be faithful Christians.

4. God isn't American. He is God of all people.

5. He loves the people of Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, North Korea and China as much as he loves Americans.

6. Let's not forget that very important fact.

II. God and Government

A. God uses governments

1. The Romans for all their faults were the perfect tool for God to bring Christianity into the world.

a) In "Pax Romana" or Roman Peace, there was a universal language, the ability to travel most anywhere in the world, and the freedom to express various points of view.

b) When they began to stop those things, the Roman Empire fell.

2. God has always used governments to serve his will

a) God used Egypt to build the nation of Israel.

- b) He used several nations to punish Israel.
- c) He used several nations to protect Israel.
- d) Even nations that seemed to be the worst human rights violators you could imagine.

3. Paul writes that when a government works right, we should have no fear of them.

4. If you are doing right, you shouldn't have an issue with the government.

5. Verse 4 is even an indication that God uses the government and capital punishment as part of HIS judgment on the wrongdoer.

6. The only time you should act against your government is when their dictates are directly against God's will.

- a) If you are forbidden to worship on Sunday, you should do it anyway.

- b) If you could be imprisoned or executed for spreading the gospel, you should do it anyway.

7. Peter reminded the Jewish Sanhedrin of that in Acts 5:29

B. Why we pay taxes

1. At the beginning of the lesson I asked why should we pay taxes to a corrupt government?

2. Short answer: Because God said so!

3. Verse 6 and 7 fill in the answer a little deeper for us. Romans 13:6–7 (ESV) — 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to

them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

a) They are God's servants.

b) We may not understand how or why, but we have to accept that they are.

4. Our main goal is to bring honor to the name of God.

5. If we are in opposition to our government as Christians; If we are disrespectful to our leaders as Christians, they associate those actions with Christ.

6. How does that help the cause of Christ?

7. The Cause of Christ is the first in EVERYTHING we do. Col 3:17

C. Christians IN politics

1. I encourage Christians to be involved in politics as long as we can help promote Christ.

2. But if we forget that main mission, then we are just activists using the guise of Christianity.

3. On CNN shortly after the Arab Spring, they were talking about a very dangerous trend among British Muslims. They considered themselves Muslims first and British second.

4. While that is dangerous from a political point of view, it is correct from a spiritual point of view.

5. God has called us to be Christians first, everything else second.

6. Don't lose sight of that.

7. Even when you hate everything your government stands for, do what is right and proper so there is no cause given by us for people to think less of God and Christianity.

8. Serve in office and honor God in that service.

9. Vote your conscience on each individual candidate.

10. Constantly ask yourself, "Do they honor God?"

11. And, as much as you don't like it, pay your taxes.