

Sermon #138 — Romans Series

Title: **OUR RULERS GOD'S MINISTERS**

Text: *Romans 13:1-7*

Subject: *Believers and Civic Responsibilities*

Date: Sunday Morning — March 4, 2018

Reading: *1st Peter 2:1-25*

(1) Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (3) If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. (4) To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, (5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even*

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to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (9) But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (11) Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (12) Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. (13) Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; (14) Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the

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ignorance of foolish men: (16) As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (17) Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. (18) Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this *is* thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: (24) Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep

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going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

INTRODUCTION

Here's the title of my message. — **OUR RULERS GOD'S SERVANTS**. My text is Romans 13:1-7. It is work of God's servant is to preach the gospel of Christ. But, as we preach the blessed doctrine of the gospel, we must not fail to declare the duties of life incumbent upon all who believe to “*adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things*” (Titus 2:10). In the 13th chapter of the Book of Romans the apostle Paul was inspired by God the Holy Ghost to tell us plainly what our duty is as members of an ordered society.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

But before I show you how to live as good citizens in this world, I must urge you to make certain that you have a heavenly citizenship in a better country. Make certain that you are a citizen of “*The Heavenly*

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Jerusalem.” Make certain that your name is recorded in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Make certain your eternal citizenship in “*The New Jerusalem.*”

THREE THINGS

If you would enter that Holy City, if you would enter into the City of God, if you would enter into Heaven and live forever in the presence of the holy Lord God, you must have these three things. If you would have God’s salvation, you must have these three things.

1. **You have got to have a clean record.** You cannot enter into heaven with sin. Your sin, all your sin, must be gone. None which are unclean in anything shall enter the gates of the New Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 23:19). And the only way you can have a clean record is by blood atonement (Zechariah 13:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

(Zechariah 13:1) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the

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inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Illustration: *Rolfe Barnard at Old Faithful*

“There is a Fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see

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That Fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away!”

2. If you would enter into The Heavenly Jerusalem, you've got to have a clean record. **And you must be worthy of citizenship in the City of God. You've got to be perfectly righteous.** The unclean shall not pass over the way called “*Holiness*” (Isaiah 35:8) into “*The Holy City, New Jerusalem*” (Revelation 21:27).

(Revelation 21:27) “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

3. **If you would enter into the Kingdom of God, you must have a holy, righteous nature, you must be born again** (John 3:1-16).

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(John 3:1-16) “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: (2) The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8) The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (9) Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? (10)

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Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. (12) If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you *of* heavenly things? (13) And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. (14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: (15) That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (16) For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If, right now, you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, if you trust the Son of God, you are born of God and made worthy of Heaven. If you trust Christ, your citizenship is in Heaven (John 3:36). Come to Christ and all this is yours. — Pardon for

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All Sin (A Clean Record) — Perfect Righteousness
— A New Nature!

(John 3:36) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

CIVICS LESSON

Now, let's look at Romans 13:1-7 In these opening verses of this chapter we have an inspired lesson in civics. Let's read the lesson together.

(Romans 13:1-7) “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt

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have praise of the same: (4) For he is the 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 the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. (5) Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. (6) For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

God the Holy Ghost commands every preacher of the gospel to teach these things to those who trust the Son of God (Titus 3:1).

(Titus 3:1) “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and *powers*, to **obey** magistrates, to be ready to every good work.”

Rome was the seat of the imperial government.

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Roman government was a government of debauchery, corrupt at every level, and a government that instituted laws to promote every form of moral decadence and did everything possible to resist the influence and spread of the gospel of Christ. By law, the Roman Empire promoted and accepted every imaginable form of idolatry, while persecuting Christianity, imprisoning those who professed to be followers of Christ, and executing them with barbaric cruelty. **It was in his letter to the church of God at Rome that Paul was inspired of God to give us the fullest and most minute instructions about civic duty to be found in the New Testament.**

In chapter 12 the apostle taught us the duties, responsibilities, and proper attitudes incumbent upon believers with respect to one another, with exhortations in reference to our conduct in the world and our attitude toward all men. **In this chapter he deals with our duties and attitudes as members of an ordered society. This chapter has to do with our attitude toward all authority, especially civil authority.**

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Proposition: Here, God the Holy Ghost teaches us that as believers, as men and women who are the representatives of God in this world, we are to be the most exemplary citizens of the land in which God has placed us.

When the Lord God sent his church into Babylon, he told his people how to live in that wicked city under the rule of their wicked tyrants, and told them specifically to pray that wicked city and seek its peace (Jeremiah 29:1-7).

(Jeremiah 29:1-7) “Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon; (2) (After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from

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Jerusalem;) (3) By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying, (4) **Thus saith the LORD of hosts**, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; (5) Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; (6) Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. (7) **And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.**”

In precisely the same way, our God tells us to pray for and seek the peace of the land in which we live (1 Timothy 1:1-8).

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(1 Timothy 2:1-8) “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (5) For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (6) Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (7) Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. (8) I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

Divisions: As God the Holy Spirit will enable me, I want to show you three things from these seven verses of Inspiration.

1. We should always look upon our rulers as God's ministers (vv. 1-4).

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2. We must take care to treat those who rule over us as God's ministers (vv. 5-7).
3. Let us walk worthy of that better kingdom of which we are citizens.

GOD'S SERVANTS

1st — **We should always look upon our rulers as God's ministers, as God's servants for our good** (vv. 1-4). — **“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers”** (v. 1). Kings, presidents, governors, policemen, even dictators, are the “*higher powers*” spoken of here. They are, by the hand and will of God, given authority over us.

- To be subject unto them is to show respect, obedience, and honor suitable to their stations and to obey their lawful commands with submission.
- This subjection also involves praying for them and prohibits railing against them (Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13).

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(Titus 3:1-2) “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, (2) To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”

(1 Peter 2:13) “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme.”

All civil magistrates and rulers are ordained of God and placed by God in their positions. — “**For there is no power but of God**” (v. 1). — It is our God who is the fountain and source of all power and authority. All are by his purpose, decree, and appointment. **Paul’s primary reference here is to to civil authority, but all that he says is true of all authority, such as husbands, parents, employers, and pastors.** They all get their right to rule and lead from God. Evil men may abuse, misuse, and corrupt authority; but government and leadership is necessary and must be obeyed.

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- Parents are rulers to be respected and obeyed (Ephesians 6:1).
- Civil authorities (magistrates, policemen, teachers) are rulers to be respected and obeyed.
- Employers are rulers to be respected and obeyed (Titus 2:8-10).
- Faithful pastors are rulers in God's house to be respected and obeyed (Hebrews 13:7, 17; I Thessalonians 5:11-13).

(Hebrews 13:7) “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.”

(Hebrews 13:17) “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:12-13) “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among

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you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; (13) And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.”

To rebel against God's ordained authority is to rebel against God (v. 2).

(Romans 13:2) “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”

The person who resists, rebels against, or sets himself against any God-ordained authority resists the order and ordinance of God. Authority resisted, in the faithful and right discharge of its office, will bring God's judgment on the offender.

Obviously, this does not mean that we are to obey the laws, rule, and orders of men which are contrary to the revelation of God in Holy Scripture.

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- Holy Scripture says, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:1).
- Wives are to submit themselves unto their husbands as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24).
- When men in authority set themselves in defiance of God, they are to be resisted (Acts 4:19).
- Peter and John
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- Daniel
- John Bunyan

Not only are they ordained of God, all powers, all rulers, all magistrates are made of God to be benefactors to his people (vv. 3-4). God appointed rulers are appointed by God to govern, restrain, and punish evil (v. 3; 1 Timothy 1:9).

(Romans 13:3) “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.”

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(1 Timothy 1:9) “The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.”

Authority in any area is not a terror to people who obey the law. Authority is only hated by those whose works are evil. Would you have no dread or fear of those in authority? Then do what is right and you will have their approval.

- Magistrates
- Employers
- Parents
- Teachers

Those God has placed in authority over us (whoever they are) are the servants of God for the general welfare of all (v. 4).

(Romans 13:4) “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil,

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be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

What would a home, school, office, factory, city, or country be like without authority? Think about a game without a referee. What chaos would reign if there were no laws and no power to enforce them! When every man does that which is right in his own eyes, chaos and wickedness prevail.

If we are not willing to follow God's order and his proper chain of command, if we are not willing to submit to authority, then the authority is designated by God to deal with us by his own hand, and in so doing he is God's instrument of wrath and judgment.

OUR DUTY

2nd — **We must take care to treat those who rule over us as God's ministers, as the servants of God executing his will and purpose** (vv. 5-7).

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Whether to execute judgment or mercy, they are God's servant.

(Romans 13:5) “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”

We are to subject ourselves to authority not through fear of punishment or to avoid wrath, but as a matter of conscience, wisdom, and principle. Our consciences not only tell us that God's way of rule and order is right, but we approve of and love his way.

And we are to support God's rulers over us both by respect and by paying tribute to maintain them

(v. 6). — Pay your taxes.

(Romans 13:6) “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.”

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We are to pay our taxes for the support of governing officials. They are ordained of God for the general welfare of society and are to be supported by the taxes of the people.

It is our responsibility to render to all their due (v. 7).

(Romans 13:7) “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

Any authority a person has entrusted to him is a sacred trust for which he shall give an account to God. That is his business. But our responsibility is to obey, respect, and submit to them as unto the Lord. Pay taxes to whom taxes are due, give respect to whom respect is due, and give honor to whom honor is due.

WALK WORTHY

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3rd — **Let us walk worthy of that better kingdom of which we are citizens.** Children of God, you and I are citizens of Heaven. Let us live in this world as such.

Be thankful for the land in which you live. — In no other nation under heaven is there a greater measure of liberty combined with the same measure of security and strength. The extent of our civil and religious liberties is the boast of all who have the happiness to live in our favored country.

Our nation is the envy of the world. We have many friends in other countries. Many of them are listening to this message. I would say nothing to offend them. But, I repeat, the United States of America is the envy of the world.

How different our condition is from that of the Roman Empire in the days of Nero, the time when Paul wrote this epistle! In our blessed and happy land, the poorest man among us is as much protected in his person and property as the richest. The

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opportunities of one are the opportunities of all. Let us be thankful for these mercies of Divine Providence and rally to the defense of our nation against all the devices and the conspiracies of wicked men.

If Christians under such a government as that of Nero were commanded of God to prove themselves loyal and faithful, much more it is our duty to be loyal, faithful citizens of such a country as the United States of America.

Having said all that, let me say this and I will be done. — **We are citizens of a better country. Let us walk worthy of that better kingdom.**

The Lord God, our heavenly Father, is the great Governor of all the universe. He has established a kingdom, even the kingdom of his dear Son, who is “*King of kings, and Lord of lords.*” **We profess to be the subjects of Christ.** We owe unreserved obedience to him. Under him, by him, in him, and with him, we enjoy perfect liberty and protection, from sin and Satan, death, and hell. Honor him in all

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things. Serve him in all things. Do everything you can to promote and advance his kingdom. Be faithful unto death, and he will give you a crown of life.

If you are yet a stranger and alien without hope, without life, without Christ, and without God, I bid you now, in Christ's name, come into the kingdom of God. The Door is open.

- Bow to Christ the King.
- Believe on the Son of God.
- Take his yoke upon you.

“Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Amen.