

A few moments ago, we read the entire chapter of Romans 13. In presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God, there are certain obligations that we are required to perform on this earth, for we belong to Christ body and soul, and our service to Him on this earth is in the body.

The key to this passage is verse 8: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” This does not mean that a human emotion satisfies all your obligations. If you owe somebody some money, go pay them the money. Don’t send them a greeting card telling them how much you love them. But love is the strong motivation to fulfill all our obligations and is the first and primary debt laid upon us by God our Father.

I would divide this chapter into three major categories: 1. Service to our State; 2. Service to our Society; 3. Service to our Savior. State, Society, Savior.

I. **Service to our State.** [verses 1-7]

A. General things.

1. There are higher powers; powers in all institutions: government, education, church, family, etc. Every man is not equal, but we are all obligated to live in the order that God has provided for us.
2. Only God’s power is absolute: all other power is ministerial and limited. The king must not usurp the office of father in the family, or pastor of the church, or employer and employee.
3. All relationships are defined by covenant, which is made in different ways in history.
 - a. Conquest, election by nobles, universal suffrage, some combinations, but all by the law and custom of the state.
 - b. We are to live within the constitutions and laws of our state.
 - c. In America we have the right and privilege and duty, powers given to us by God and confirmed in the Constitution and Bill of rights that were undreamed of in the pagan world, and only won in recent years by the blood of Christian men and the labors of scholars. [I plan to do some of this in Sunday School in my last year here at Trinity].

B. Specifics:

1. The magistrate is to reward the good and punish the evil. He is the minister of God, and must not reverse this order by punishing the good and rewarding the evil. In America each citizen has the right and duty to call the magistrate to account, under the law.
 - a. The magistrate is to be a terror to evil works: open transgression [crimes] of the second table of the law: anarchy, murder, sexual abominations, theft, slander. He is not to punish those who speak against homosexuality, idolatry, theft, disobedience to parents and transgressions of the constitutions and laws that even the magistrate is bound to obey or he commits crime against his neighbors as surely as the burglar and pickpocket.
 - b. Lawful tribute and taxes are to be paid to achieve this orderly and just society. Everyone is to receive his due [his just pay for his service]. “Due” here means

"debt." That which is justly owed. The man who sticks a knife at my throat and demands my money will receive my money, but not because it is owed, but because he has taken it by force. Governments become outlaws also and take by force and coercion, because they usurp the place of Christ the Savior. We may pay because of the force, not because of the honest debt, but in America we have the right to protest about the wickedness of the unlawful seizure. Caesar has his due, but he does not have the right to my wife, my children, my church, my inheritance, and my lifeblood.

2. "All their dues" qualifies the other statements in verse 7. We are to honor good men and good magistrates and rebuke evil men and evil magistrates; We are to pay tribute for the lawful activities of government under our constitution and laws, and to rebuke those who take unlawfully; We are to fear and honor those to whom it is due, but we are not to fear or respect the blasphemy and evil of those who despise laws and constitutions and covenants. We do not honor that man who cheats on his wife, and we must not honor the king or magistrate who cheats his citizens.
3. If we do evil and break the laws of God, then we are to fear the power of the magistrate; but we ought not to fear the magistrate for doing and speaking the truth and rebuking sin and iniquity wherever it appears, for that is the duty of ministers and the people of God.

II. Service to Society. Vs. 9, 10.

A. We serve our neighbors by keeping the commandments in love.

B. He illustrates from the second table of the law: kill, steal, false witness and other commandments that restrain not only the body, but also the soul, for he also speaks of covetousness, the inward lust that moves us to break the other commandments.

1. Obeying the lawful commands of those in authority over us, for the magistrate is our neighbor. See HC 104
2. Murder: HC 106, 107 We are not only to not hurt our neighbor, but also to prevent his hurt. This puts an additional burden on citizens in states like America, based upon the priesthood of the believer, where each citizen is empowered to speak and acts on behalf of his neighbor.
3. Adultery: HC. 108,109
4. Theft: HC 1109, 111
5. Slander: HC 112 I must defend and promote my neighbor's good name. Civic responsibility.
6. Covet: not even the thought: HC113

C. This is summarized: love works no ill to his neighbor. He rebukes all those actions that in the name of love caused grief to our neighbor. We are not to love in name, but indeed and in truth.

III. Service to My Savior: vs. 11-14. Wake up; rise out of sleep; because of your salvation; Christ is at the door.

A. Cast off the works of darkness; put on light.

1. Darkness: unbelief, ignorance, wickedness, sloth

2. Light: Faith, knowledge, godliness, energy in the day.
- B. Honestly: decently. We are not to be indecent, in our body.
1. Rioting: the Greek was specific: a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus [god of wine] for some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry. Why? It is indecent and not honest.
 2. Drunkenness: this goes with rioting. It is not a sin to have a drink; it is wicked to be drunk and out of your mind. It is wicked to endanger the lives and wellbeing of others because of your drunkenness and indulgence. God didn't give you a body so you could get drunk; He gave you a body to serve as a temple of the Holy Ghost. We are not to be drunk with wine, or anything else, that keeps us from being filled with the Spirit of God. Why? It is indecent and not honest. This is not who you are as a child of God.
 3. Chambering. This means men and women living together without marriage. It is a sin to live together before you are married. You say, "We are not having sex," well, then get separate places, so that your life is honest. Don't play house until you are legitimate. It is the chambering or living together that is forbidden. Why? It is indecent and dishonest. This is not who you are as a child of God. We are to make no provisions for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.
 4. Wantonness. All kinds of sexual unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence. Christians do not live out of control in thought, word, or deed. Why? It is indecent and dishonest. This is not who you are as a child of God.
 5. Strife. Always picking a fight. Running from house to house. Stirring up trouble. Magnifying small things; and minimizing great things. Why? It is indecent and dishonest. This is not who you are as a child of God.
 6. Envy. Never content, jealous of the success and achievement of others. Why? It is indecent and dishonest. This is not who you are as a child of God.

Summary: we are to put on the Lord Jesus and put off the flesh, which means make no provisions for it. Do not supply the flesh with opportunity, thought, or plan. Flee from the deeds of the flesh, for its desires are wicked.

"⁵ ¶ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: ⁷ In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. ⁸ ¶ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. ¹² ¶ Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. ¹⁴ And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." (Col 3:5-15) May God bless you. Amen and Amen.