

The Power of the Sword (Romans 13: 3,4)

- We come now to consider a word that is on the tongue of many people: Power
- Everyone is interested in power. We want to have power over our own lives
- We speak about empowering people. We refer to empowering trips
- Even the church is into power. M. Horton wrote against this “power religion”
- The subject of power comes out of Paul’s words to the Romans in vs 3, 4
- This is the reason why Christians should submit to human authorities

I. Government by Force

- The power of the sword means force. This is why the state has been given by God & it is the very basis for how the state conducts its affairs
- We may not like it, but our government is based on force, all governments are
- The right to enforce laws by force is a right given to the state & not the church
- The power of the sword has been given to Caesar & not to the cause of Christ

II. Civil and Social Order

- Though the state has the sword, it cannot be used by the state however it wishes
 - Nor do we mean that the state can do by exercise of power what the church alone can do by proclamation of the Gospel & the Truth
1. The state’s power, however legitimate it may be when used in the areas for which God has given it, cannot be exercised in any way whatsoever.
 - The state cannot use its power for evil: i.e. it cannot massacre its citizens
 - a) 1st the state is given power to defend its citizens from enemies without & within
 - b) 2nd the state has been given power by God in establishing, exercising & maintaining justice: i.e. rewarding the good and punishing the wicked
 2. The state cannot reform evildoers by power: the power of the sword has been given by God to defend its citizens & to punish wrongdoing only.

III. Where Are God’s People?

1. Government cannot develop morality: Government can only punish it
 - It is concerned about morality, for its power from God is to uphold His law
2. Morality comes from revealed religion: it makes its way into national life through those citizens who know & sincerely desire to please God (2 Chr 7:14)