

## Working for Biblical Justice

*What Are We to Do?*

Romans 13:1-14; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 7-26-20

## The Question of the Hour

In our society today, many Christians are asking the question, *What are we to do?*

How do we work for biblical justice in our country? Respond to the pandemic? Respond to the violent protests?

Some in our country seem to think we need to let politicians and protestors do what they want to do to address the pandemic and the violent protests. The problem is our sinful hearts.

*The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.*

— *Ecclesiastes 9:3b*

Romans 13 is 'introduced' by Romans 12:21: 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.' This is the conclusion for the last paragraph in chapter 12, but it also provides the theme for chapter 13 (*overcome evil*) which tells us important things about what that looks like.

## 1. The Government (1-7)

William Willberforce highlights the role of government in supporting the good and opposing evil in society.

- The government is a good thing and anarchy is bad.
- Law enforcement is necessary and defunding/dismantling it is a bad idea.
- When the government praises evil and punishes good, then we have an unlawful authority.
- Is it biblical?* Is a valid question in dealing with the government. (Acts 5:29)
- Is it lawful?* Is a valid question in dealing with the government. (Acts 22:25)

## 2. The Guide (8-10)

God has given us a guide for determining justice and what love for our neighbor looks like: His Word and the commandments in it.; that's why William Tyndale died for an English translation.

- Love cannot be defined by whether or not people feel loved.
- Love cannot be defined by whether or not people think it is loving.
- Love has to be defined by obedience to God's Law.
- Obedience to God is always loving and loving always requires obedience to God.
- We may not always agree on what particular actions are consistent with God's commands to love, but we are never loving in 'disputable matters' when we condemn those who do

what we think they should not do or hold in contempt those who do what we do not think is necessary. (Romans 14:1-13) When it is not clear in God's Word or not clear in everyone's mind what the loving thing to do is (with regard to 'morally neutral matters'), we can apply some principles from Romans 14:

- Acceptance*: Accept one another as Christ has accepted us. (1-2)
- Heart Check*: Do not hold in contempt those who do things you do not think is necessary and do not judge/condemn those who do not do things you think are necessary. (3-4)
- Personal Decision-making*: Every person must be fully convinced in his own mind and be allowed to do so. (5)
- Goal to Please*: We should all make our decisions, whatever conclusion we come to, with the goal of pleasing the Lord with our actions, not necessarily men. (6-9)
- Future Judgment*: It is not our place to judge others in such matters; one day all of us will give an account to God for our decisions. (10-12)
- Causing to Sin?*: We are not to base our decisions on whether others agree with us or not nor are we to not do something because it might offend someone else; the only time we are called to restrict our freedom is if the exercise of our freedom will lead someone to do something they think is wrong. (13)

### 3. The Gospel (11-14)

It is the gospel that sets sinners free from what enslaves them. This is the only ultimate answer to the injustices of society. God has provided His Son to heal our world and it is through the proclamation and application of the gospel that the power for reconciliation between God and man is experienced. The conversion of Augustine of Hippo illustrates this.

- The gospel for the sinner is the good news of salvation from sin and guilt by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
- The gospel for the saint is the good news that all that God is and all that God has promised is given to all those who have trusted in Christ alone.
- The only hope of reconciliation between God and man and between man and man is the gospel. (Galatians 3:28)
- The only hope of a transformed heart that gladly submits to the Law of love is the gospel for the sinner and for the saint. (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 12:1-2)

### Support, Submit and Spread

So, what must we do?

- Support* the proper role of government and law enforcement.
- Submit* our lives and our definitions of 'love' to the Word of God.
- Spread* the gospel of Jesus Christ for the heart change and reconciliation needed.