

FBC POWELL, 7-2-17 AM NOTES
"A Biblical Worldview of Authority"
Various Scriptures
3 in Series, "A Biblical Worldview"

"As the word itself suggests, a worldview is an overall view of the world. It is not a physical view of the world, but rather a philosophical view, an all-encompassing perspective on everything that exists and matters to us. A person's worldview represents his most fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the universe he inhabits. It reflects how he would answer all the 'big questions' of human existence: fundamental questions about who and what we are, where we came from, why we're here, where (if anywhere) we're headed, the meaning and purpose of life, the nature of the afterlife, and what counts as a good life here and now. Few people think through these issues in any depth, and fewer still have firm answers to such questions, but a person's worldview will at least incline him toward certain kinds of answers and away from others...Worldviews also largely determine people's opinions on matters of ethics and politics. What a person thinks about abortion, euthanasia, same-sex relationships, environmental ethics, economic policy, public education, and so on, will depend on his underlying worldview more than anything else." —Ligonier Ministries

Acts 20:21b "...repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Authority—the official legal right to act, control, or command

I. The Unlimited Authority of God

Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'"

Luke 4:36b "And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, 'What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.'"

Romans 13:1 (NIV) "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."

II. The Limited Authority of Government

Romans 13:1-7 "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."

Isaiah 33:22 "For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us."

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

A. The Purpose of Government

1. Protection (**Romans 13:3a**)
2. Punishment (**Romans 13:4-5**)

B. The Response to Government

Romans 13:1 "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."

1 Timothy 2:1-2 “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

Matthew 22:21b “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.”

Romans 13:7 “To all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

“We may not disobey authorities because we disagree with them or because their mandates inconvenience or even oppress us. The Biblical principle is to render obedience whenever we can unless our doing so conflicts with our obeying God.”

—R. C. Sproul

III. The Limited Authority in the Home

Colossians 3:20 “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.”

Ephesians 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Ephesians 5:23-24 “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”

Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

IV. The Limited Authority in the Church

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV) “We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.”

1 Timothy 5:17 (NIV) “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”

Hebrews 13:17 (NIV) “Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.”

A. The Church Is Deacon-Served

B. The Church Is Elder-Led

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV) “...respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you...”

1 Timothy 5:17 “...elders who direct the affairs of the church ...”

Hebrews 13:17 (NIV) “Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority...”

C. The Church Is Congregational-Ruled

“Congregationalism is simply the understanding that the last and final court of appeal in the local church is not to the bishop of Rome or Constantinople or Washington. It is not some international body or some national assembly, conference, or convention. It is not the president of a denomination or the chairman of a board of trustees. It is not a regional synod or ministerial association. It is not a group of elders inside the local church, or the pastor. The last and final court of appeal in a matter of the life of a local church is the local congregation itself. This seems to be evidenced by the New Testament in matters of doctrine and discipline, as well as in matters of admission of members and the settling of differences between them.”

—Mark Dever

First Baptist Church Powell 07 02 17 AM
Sermon 3: A Biblical Worldview of Authority

Various Scriptures

What is a *worldview*? I like this word from Ligonier Ministries.

As the word itself suggests, a worldview is an overall view of the world. It is not a physical view of the world, but rather a philosophical view, an all-encompassing perspective on everything that exists and matters to us. A person's worldview represents his most fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the universe he inhabits. It reflects how he would answer all the 'big questions' of human existence: fundamental questions about who and what we are, where we came from, why we're here, where (if anywhere) we're headed, the meaning and purpose of life, the nature of the afterlife, and what counts as a good life here and now. Few people think through these issues in any depth, and fewer still have firm answers to such questions, but a person's worldview will at least incline him toward certain kinds of answers and away from others... Worldviews also largely determine people's opinions on matters of ethics and politics. What a person thinks about abortion, euthanasia, same-sex relationships, environmental ethics, economic policy, public education, and so on will depend on his underlying worldview more than anything else.

[Ligonier Ministries, Ligonier.org/blog/what-worldview/]

The goal of this series of messages is that if you are a Christian, you will seek diligently to have a consistently biblical worldview of every area of life. Another important goal is that if you are not a Christian, it would be revealed to you that the biblical worldview is the only worldview that is based on truth and that you would experience what is described in Acts 20:21b as "...repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Allow me to share a very sad statistic when it comes to a biblical worldview in the church. A prominent Men's Ministry [Patrick Morley, *A Look in the Mirror*, quoted in Philip Ryken, *What is the Christian Worldview*, page 11] says, "For every ten men in your church, nine will have kids who will leave the church, eight will not find their job satisfying, six pay the monthly minimum on their credit card balances, five have a major problem with pornography, four will get divorced, and only one has a biblical worldview." We desperately need to hear and apply this series.

In the first message in this series we saw an overview of a biblical worldview. Last week we looked at a biblical worldview of origins. Today we are looking at a biblical worldview of authority. As it is used in Scripture, what is authority? The Greek word translated "authority" in the New Testament is, "the official legal right to act, control, or command." The concept of authority is prominent in the Scriptures. It is vitally important that you have a biblical worldview concerning authority.

I. The Unlimited Authority of God

Our Triune God has all authority. Listen to what God the Son, Jesus Christ said about His authority. Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'" Luke 4:36b says, "And amazement came upon them all, and they began talking with one another saying, 'What is this message? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.'" Jesus had "the official legal right to act, control, or command." We are told in Romans 13:1 (NIV): "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by

God.” All authority belongs to God and any legitimate authority on earth is legitimate only because it has been delegated limited authority by God.

Let me explain why only God has ultimate authority. All genuine authority must have power backing it up. Authority without power cannot function very long. Let me illustrate. A 6’ 5” 280-pound defensive lineman on the UT football team has more power than a 5’ 9” 150-pound referee. If the 150-pound referee kicks the 280-pound lineman out of the game for a serious violation of rules, the lineman leaves the field because the referee has authority. However, the referee’s authority (the legal right to act, control, and command) is backed up by the power of the government – the UT Police, the Knoxville Police force, the Knox County Sheriff’s Department, the TWRA officers, the State Highway Patrol officers, and probably others. Ultimately the power of the US government backs up that 150-pound referee. If the 280-pound lineman refuses to leave the field then theoretically, the referee could call for the multitude of police around the stadium (maybe 200 or so) with their stun guns and hand guns to remove him. While the 280-pound linemen may have more power than the referee, he does not have more power than a large number of policemen with weapons. Only our triune God has *all authority* because only He has *all power*! Only He has the ultimate, unlimited legal right to rule, command, and control every situation. But He also has the power to do whatever is needed to enforce His authority.

As we will see, God has delegated limited authority to government, the home and the church. The authority given to each of these three entities is limited and they are not to encroach on the areas God has not set apart for them and they are not to contradict God’s ultimate authority.

Let’s examine those other three realms of God ordained, God delegated authority.

II. The Limited Authority of Government (Romans 13:1-7)

A biblical worldview acknowledges that human government is God’s idea, but the government’s delegated from God authority is not absolute. Government must not encroach on the areas of authority given by God to the family or to the church. The government is called God’s “minister” in Romans 13:4. That can be translated “servant.” How is the government God’s servant? The government is God’s servant when it carries out its assigned role. The government has its realm and responsibility. Any government loses God’s blessing and brings suffering upon its people when it gets out of its realm and begins to usurp authority from God, the church, or the family. Government derives its existence, its authority, and its boundaries from God alone. The role of government is very clearly laid out in Scripture. When any government begins to thrust its power into more and more areas, there is confusion, corruption, turmoil, inefficiency, and increasing repression. Often governments forget their role and realm, and begin to think that they have all authority and all power. In other words, they begin to try to even usurp the authority of God.

As we prepare to celebrate the birthday of our nation, let’s go back to the establishment of this nation. Our forefathers knew what the Scriptures said about government whether or not they were Christians themselves. Even those early leaders who were not Christians were influenced by the Scriptures. Fifty-three of the fifty-six men who attended the Constitutional Convention and formulated our nation’s guiding document indicated some adherence to orthodox Christianity and personal support of biblical teaching. In fact, some of these men were responsible for establishing the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the Philadelphia Bible Society. These men were hardly neutral toward Christianity!

A few years ago two professors from the University of Houston, Donald Lutz and Charles Hyneman, wanted to discover who our Founding Fathers quoted most often. After ten years of studying over 15,000 documents, they found that more than a third of the Founding Fathers’ quotes came directly from the Bible and another sixty percent came from those authors who had their writings based on the Bible. Here is an interesting fact: The separation of powers of the government laid out in the

Constitution is based on Isaiah 33:22: “For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us.” From this verse our forefathers established the Judicial (“our judge”), the Legislative (“our lawgiver”), and the Executive (“our King”) branches of government. The main reason they set up this system of checks and balances was because they knew that man was fallen and they knew the truth of Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” My point in sharing all of this is to say that our Founding Fathers were far from ignorant and neutral when it came to the Bible.

A. The Purpose of Government

The reason government exists is because of sin. Had sin not come into the world in Genesis 3, there would be no need for government. So many Americans have such warped ideas of government because they have bought into the lie that mankind is basically good. Out of that lie we have such illogical and unscriptural views as pacifism. Those who continually call for the government to drastically scale back on the defense budget, play right into the hands of evil people and soon we would lose the liberties we have left.

Something else I must say about the purpose of government is that government is not God. In America we look to the government for way more than government was set up by God to provide. Columnist Cal Thomas said, “Salvation and the Savior will not come to us on Air Force One.” Henry Blackaby defined an idol as anything or anyone you look to for what God told you to look to Him for. By that definition, the government has become a full-fledged idol. Psalms 146:3 (NIV): “Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save.” The government’s role in Scripture is very limited. What is the Biblical purpose of government?

1. Protection (Romans 13:3)

The government is to provide protection for its residents in several ways. First, there is protection from aggressive countries who would seek to conquer us. A strong military protects us from nations who would do us evil. Second, the government protects us from fellow citizens who would do evil. This protection is through a police force. The government is to protect us from injustice through a legal system. Until Jesus comes to rule and reign, judges and lawyers have job security because there is no shortage of evil people. I think regulating agencies, fire departments, and road work can be defended as a means that the government protects its citizens. The purpose of government is to restrain and protect from evil without and within.

2. Punishment (Romans 13:4)

The government does not just restrain evil; it punishes evil doers (Romans 13:4). The sword speaks generally of punishment, but specifically capital punishment. The common method of execution was decapitation. If the government is to protect its citizens, it must have the ability to punish evildoers.

B. The Response to Government

We can summarize the expected response to government as submitting and praying. Romans 13:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-2: “First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

The question often comes, “What about when submitting to the government would be a sin before God?” Remember that the authority of the government is limited. I am not talking about just submitting to governments that are obeying the Scriptures. I am talking about submitting to all governments that we live under. Keep in mind that the government Jesus submitted to was filled with slavery, injustice, and was ruled by evil men. Taxes were oppressive and corruption was common. Yet, Jesus said in Matthew 22:21b: “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s.” The Roman government at the time that Paul wrote Romans was led by one of the most evil men who ever existed – Nero. Yet, Paul wrote to us to submit to the government. That

submission includes paying taxes even if you don't approve of what the taxes are being used for (Romans 13:7).

The only exception to obeying the governing authorities is when we are commanded to do something or not do something that is a direct contradiction of what God has told us to do or not do. Dr. R. C. Sproul said it well, "We may not disobey authorities because we disagree with them or because their mandates inconvenience or even oppress us. The biblical principle is to render obedience whenever we can unless our doing so conflicts with our obeying God." [R. C. Sproul, *Liferviews*, page 200]

III. The Limited Authority in the Home

God, who has all authority, has delegated authority in the home. In the home, parents have authority over their children. Neither the government nor the church is given the primary responsibility of training and disciplining your children. Certainly the church comes alongside the parents to assist them and equip them to raise up disciples of Jesus Christ, but it is the responsibility of the parents to see that it is done. The command to children in the home is found in Colossians 3:20: "Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord." We see a similar command in Ephesians 6:1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Is it ever appropriate to refuse the parents direction or commands? As with government, only when to obey a parent or the husband would be to disobey a clear command of God.

In marriage, the husband is given limited authority as the head of his wife. Ephesians 5:23-24: "For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything." To insure that these verses are not misunderstood as a loveless and dictatorial approach by an ego driven jerk, the Lord shows what this headship of the husband should look like in his relationship with his wife in the next verse. Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." He is a servant leader who always puts his wife above himself. Having said all of that, he is to be the leader and the wife and children are to submit to that leadership.

Is it ever necessary for a wife to refuse to submit? Yes! Remember our principle – only God has unlimited authority. When a husband demands something that involves disobeying a direct command of God, we are to obey the One who has unlimited authority.

IV. The Limited Authority in the Church

Listen to the following passages that relate to authority in the church.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV): "We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves."

1 Timothy 5:17 (NIV): "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

Hebrews 13:17 (NIV): "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

I realize that we need a series just on the offices in a New Testament Church, but in the time we have, allow me to give a summary of authority in church polity (definition – a particular form of government). Here is a one sentence statement of what we believe about church offices and authority. The local church is deacon served, elder led, and congregational ruled. All authority in the church belongs to God, but He has delegated limited authority to the elders and the congregation.

A. The Church Is Deacon Served

The Greek word we get “deacon” from means servant. The role of deacons is not to run the church. The role of deacons, based on Acts 6:1-7, is to minister to needs within the church and deal with fusses, hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and complaints. Our deacons minister to the widows, and all senior adults with needs, visit nursing homes, lead in physical projects being done on church facilities, and other tasks that require a servant heart.

B. The Church Is Elder Led

In the New Testament leadership, there is a plurality of elders or pastors. The elders may be paid by the church (staff elders) or non-paid (non-staff elders). In the verses we looked at above, the leaders referred to are almost certainly elders. Notice their limited authority from God. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (ESV): “...respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you...” That word “admonish” means to give instruction. 1 Timothy 5:17: “...elders who direct the affairs of the church ...” Hebrews 13:17 (NIV): “Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority...” Elders lead and direct the church. They have a limited authority from God to do so.

C. The Church Is Congregational Ruled

The Scriptures certainly do not teach that the congregation votes on everything! When it comes to the everyday functioning of the church, the plurality of elders makes decisions. However, when it comes to decisions that affect the long term direction of the church, church discipline, setting budgets, and adding elders, the congregation has authority. Our church constitution states the exact items that the congregation votes on. Here is a great description from Mark Dever of congregational rule under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Congregationalism is simply the understanding that the last and final court of appeal in the local church is not to the bishop of Rome or Constantinople or Washington. It is not some international body or some national assembly, conference, or convention. It is not the president of a denomination or the chairman of a board of trustees. It is not a regional synod or ministerial association. It is not a group of elders inside the local church, or the pastor. The last and final court of appeal in a matter of the life of a local church is the local congregation itself. This seems to be evidenced by the New Testament in matters of doctrine and discipline, as well as in matters of admission of members and the settling of differences between them.

[Mark Dever, *Understanding Church Leadership*, page 35]

Conclusion

Our God is indeed an awesome God. All authority resides in Him. He is the ruler over all. We are called to surrender to His authority without reservation or exception. But our sovereign God has delegated a limited authority to government, a limited authority in the home, and a limited authority in the church. Anytime the government, the home, or the church demand that which contradicts the clear commands and direction of God in His Word, we are to obey God rather than man and accept the consequences knowing that God will give us the grace we need to endure the consequences of obeying Him.