

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #19: The Church and the State.

February 16, 2020

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: How do God's church and the State coexist?

Read Romans 13:1-7.

1. How similar is your attitude & response to civil authority (local, provincial & federal) to what God commands through Paul in these verses? Do you tend to have too high a view, or too low a view of the authorities God has established over you?
2. Pastor Ken noted that both government & church have unique responsibilities given by God.
 - How do our civil authorities fulfill their God-given responsibility to prevent anarchy & chaos by ensuring peace & social order?
 - How do our various levels of government encourage the Church in its responsibility to express Jesus to the world? Where are they interfering?
3. Read Daniel 3 & Acts 4:1-31. Also, on the internet go to the Voice of the Martyrs (Canada) website and view one of their short videos on North Korea, Nigeria, Palestine or Kenya.
 - What similarities do you notice between what the books of Daniel and Acts describe, and what Christians around the world today are going through?
 - Take time this week to pray for your brothers & sisters across the world who are pressured, imprisoned and killed for their faith in Jesus.
4. Now, consider our nation, Canada, again.
 - In our democratic system of governance, how can individual Christians and local congregations lend their voices and active participation towards encouraging good government without crossing the line between separation of church and state?
 - When God calls an individual Christian to government is their mission to express Jesus or maintain social order? Is there such a thing as *godly* social order within government?
5. Pray for your local civic leaders. Pray for your provincial leaders. Pray for your national leaders. They are responsible to provide godly leadership to all Canadians in increasingly difficult days. Pray for wisdom, humility, courage, and a love for God and their people.

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.