

Sermon Title: **God's in Charge!**

Written: November 5, 2016

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Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Romans 13:1-2**

Thesis: **Paul advises the Church of Rome to submit to the governing authorities which is instituted by God;**

Purpose: **On this Sunday before the elections it is good to be reminded of God's rule for our government and our lives.**

Key Word: "Christ's Rule"

Key Points: #1 Be Informed

#2 Be Involved

#3 Be Realistic

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Romans 13:1-2**

A) The Setting:

1) **Want to talk politics this morning?**

- (a) If you are like me; you have stopped watching at least the national news.
- (b) And you are tired of all the ads, each depicting their opponent as a horrible human being.

2) **Issues are no better; with each side depicting the other side as lying, ignorant or uninformed.**

- (a) How is anyone to know and understand what is true and what is right?
- (b) I find that even on most issues both sides say they want the same thing . . . they just have very different opinions on how we can achieve it.

3) **I find there is room for respect, humility, gentleness, patience, and the love of Christ as we seek unity even in the most different of opinions . . .**

- (a) Even if we feel strongly about an issue.
- (b) We can allow that another person has another perspective.

4) **But as Christian we are to begin by remembering that God's in Charge.**

- (a) Paul spoke about this in his letter to the Romans
- (b) While it is true that Christians are Citizen's of Christ's Kingdom; that is a spiritual kingdom.
- (c) It is equally true that we are citizen's of an earthly kingdom while we remain on this earth.

5) **When Jesus was ask if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar; Jesus said to "render to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's." (Luke 20:22-25)**

- (a) Clearly, the answer indicated that we have responsibilities to the earthly government to which we belong.
- (b) **To understand this point further let us pick up our story here with our scripture reading for today in Romans 13:1-2.**

B) *Sermon Prayer*

C) (The Hook)

1) **This election has certainly been one of the most cantankerous, verbally assaultive, mud slinging, disgusting campaign seasons in my lifetime.**

- (a) You might be surprised to learn that there have been election seasons just as bad or worst in the history of this country.
- (b) I will spare you the details; but let me say this, there is nothing Christian in the way people are acting in this election.
- (c) Instead of promoting why those running for office are the best candidate it has turned into promoting all the bad things you can say about your opponent.
- (d) I think had there been a candidate who rose above the mud and just talked about the issues and what they could do about them they would easily have gotten elected.

- 2) **I don't blame Christians for feeling as though there is no one worthy of our vote and electing to stay home and not cast a vote for anyone.**
 - (a) The problem with this attitude is that there is a lot more at stake than the people running for this election.
 - (b) There are moral and ethical battles for rights and freedoms that are being eroded and it does make a difference who is elected regardless of how bad a choice you feel they are.
- 3) **In the last election 20-30 million Christians did not vote.**
 - (a) Imagine the power and influence we can have as Christian citizens if we are engaged in and voting for those whom we feel best represent the issues that are important to us.
 - (b) Issues that are also important to God
- 4) **Billy Graham once made these statements,**
 - (a) *"I think it is the duty of every individual Christian at election time to study the issues and candidates and then go to the polls and vote!"*
 - (b) *"I believe this country is facing today one of the most serious and crucial elections in history. I do not believe there has ever been a time--even in the days prior to the Civil War that we as Americans have gone to the polls with greater issues than those at stake in the coming presidential election. I am convinced that the direction we take from this point on will determine not only the ultimate fate of our nation, but also the fate of the entire democratic world as we know it today."*
- 5) **These statements were quoted from a 1952 interview with Christian Life magazine and seem more timely today than ever.**
 - (a) The October issue of Bible Baptist Tribune magazine had an article on finding Biblical wisdom for a contemporary world by Kevin Carson who said, *"This election highlights our social decay and cultural rot. This election serves up exactly what we deserve."*
 - (b) **So in light of all this what is our responsibility as Kingdom citizens in the elections and politics of our nation?**
 - (i) Let me suggest that we have three responsibilities.
 - (ii) So, let's take a brief look into our responsibilities.

TS: **Our first responsibility is to . . .**

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **Be Informed**

- 1) **We need to be informed about the Candidates**
 - (a) Who are they and what do they support?
 - (b) Where do they stand on the issues?
 - (c) What is their voting record?
 - (d) Review Voter guides which can help compare candidates.
 - (e) Ask the candidate themselves
- 2) **Get a copy of the ballot and review the questions.**
 - (a) If you don't understand what it is saying do some research.
 - (b) DON'T RELY ON THE ADS ON TV AND RADIO!
 - (c) Many distort the truth.
 - (d) Read from the internet; but don't take any one opinion as gospel.
 - (e) Weigh opposing viewpoints and figure the truth is probably somewhere in the middle.
 - (f) Talk to people you trust and respect and ask their opinion of what the issues are.
 - (g) Read articles on pros and cons; but realize that most have an agenda that is reflected in their writing.
- 3) **It takes work to be prepared to vote;**
 - (a) But remember we have been given the freedom to vote.

- (b) And with any Freedom comes responsibility.
- (c) God's Word and pray should be tools we use to guide our decisions.
- 4) **There are some good resources through the Billy Graham Association**
 - (a) The Christian Civic League of Maine
 - (b) and Christian magazines that can help.
- 5) **The legalization of Marijuana has grave implications: on 60 Minutes last week they interviewed a doctor in Colorado where it is legal who spoke of the effects he is seeing in the hospital.**
 - (a) Mostly on babies who are getting dosed from their mother's milk for those who breastfeed.
 - (b) What these mothers don't realize is that it is 6 times more potent in infants than for themselves.
 - (c) But it is causing a whole lot of issues and at least this county in Colorado is trying to repeal the law there.
 - (d) Check it out on-line for yourselves.

TS: **Next . . .**

B) Key Point #2: **Be Involved**

- 1) **Bill Bright wrote a little booklet titled "Your 5 Duties as a Christian Citizen"**
 - (a) Bill says that these five duties begin with PRAY!
 - (b) The Holy Spirit can give us Spiritual insight if we ask God to guide us.
 - (c) This may be the most important one of all.
 - (d) **The others are:**
 - (i) Register to Vote
 - (ii) Become informed
 - (iii) Help Elect Godly People
 - (iv) and VOTE!
- 2) **Do what you can to help good Christian candidates.**
 - (a) Talk to them.
 - (b) Ask how you can help.
 - (c) You would be surprised the ways you can help if you are willing.
- 3) **We have already talked about getting informed; now you need to make sure you vote and make yourself available to help others understand the issues.**
 - (a) Don't be afraid to speak up about moral issues.
 - (b) Voting for president is not the only thing at stake in this election
 - (c) There are the referendum questions
 - (d) Senate and House seats;
 - (e) School boards, and State senate and house seats.
 - (f) Judicial elections and who pick our next supreme court justices at stake.

TS: **Finally . . .**

C) Key Point #3: **Be Realistic**

- 1) **Realize that it is God who raises up governments and takes them down.**
 - (a) God puts the people in charge we need to lead or perhaps teach us.
 - (b) Regardless of the election outcome; God is still God.
 - (c) And He is still on the throne.
- 2) **My biggest fear this year is**
 - (a) That the worst case scenario could be that no matter who wins the presidential election with all the emotion and violence we have seen building up to it . . .
 - (b) That there could be rioting in the streets come Wednesday morning.
 - (c) I hope I am wrong.

- 3) **But we as Christians no matter what happens need to remain prayerful and calm.**
 - (a) We need to set an example and pray that people will expect what happens.
 - (b) We can do this because we know that God is God and God is still in charge.
- 4) **Be realistic that we cannot find perfect candidates.**
 - (a) No one is perfect in every way for what we want in a leader.
 - (b) But if you look at the party platforms and the issues and compare them with a Biblical World view I think God will help you know who and what to support.

TS: **So, in summary . . .**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

- A) **Be Informed**
- B) **Be Involved**
- C) **Be Realistic**

IV) Invitation: **Let us Pray!**