

Week 17: "Living Under Authority"

Memory Verse

"Looking at his disciples, he said:

'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

"Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets" Luke 6: 20-23

Day One

Sunday, February 9, 2003

"Living Under Authority"

Read: Romans 13:1-7 (p. 1295) and Commentary (p. 1297)

Reflect: What clues do you have from our culture or your own life that submitting to authority is not very popular? (for example, the bumper sticker "Question Authority")

Dig: What situation was Paul in with regard to the authorities when he wrote many of his letters?

Study Matthew 22:15-22 (p. 1109) and see if you can state how what Jesus said gives us more help in knowing the limits of the authority of the state in our lives.

How does Romans 12:1-2 relate to these verses in chapter 13?

Apply: Since we are urged to pray for those in authority over us (1 Timothy 2:1-2 (p. 1397), why don't you conclude today's study with a prayer of intercession for those in authority over you.

Day Two
Monday, February 10, 2003
"The Sin of Rebellion"

Read: 1 Samuel 15 (p. 311) and Commentary (p. 312)

Reflect: How has rebellion been a problem for you (either you rebelled or people rebelled against you)?

Dig: How is Saul's sin like the sin of Adam and Eve? (see Genesis 3:1-13 p. 7-8)

Look up the three New Testament passages that quote or allude to this passage:

- Mt. 12:7 (p. 1092)
- Mk. 12:33 (p. 1145)
- Heb. 10:5-10 (p. 1431)

How does Jesus' teaching and sacrifice explain and fulfill what was missing in Saul (and all of us)?

Apply: Since submission is so difficult for us and rebellion so attractive; ask God for a new heart. What is it that the Holy Spirit is calling you to submit to?

Day Three
Tuesday, February 11, 2003
"Understanding Submission"

Read: 1 Peter 2:9-17 (p. 1452) and Commentary (p. 1452)

Reflect: What do you think of this wisdom: "you must submit to authority before you wield authority"?

Dig: What are the God-given restraints on authority?

- See Acts 4:18-20 (p. 1239)
- Daniel 1:8-16 (p. 962)
- Philemon (p. 1416)
- Ephesians 6:1-4 (p. 1361)

What is the main reason that we are to submit to legitimate authority?

See verses 12 and 15.

Can you give examples of this happening both from scripture and from the recent history of the church?

Apply: Ask God to specifically give you the power to voluntarily submit to those he has placed in authority over you. You might try using the prayer on page 1516 (in bold print) to help you pray.

Day Four
Wednesday, February 12, 2003
"The Great Commandment"

Read: Matthew 22:34-40 (p. 1110) and Commentary (p. 1110)

Reflect: How much can you tell about people's love for God in their love (or lack of it) towards others?

Is it possible to be one of God's children and hate or hold prejudice?

Dig: Look up Deut. 6:5 (p. 199). Jesus must have had this memorized, as did all Hebrew children. What does the context of Deut. 6 tell you about how this command was to be followed?

Look up Lev. 19:18 (p. 130) and notice how the previous verses (11-15) give content to the command to "love your neighbor as yourself."

What does this passage have to do with living under authority?

Apply: The closing of the commentary says "we are to relate to others as Christ relates to us...we are to be gracious, giving people what they don't deserve-love." Who is God calling you to be more gracious with today?

Day Five
Thursday, February 13, 2003

"The Lordship of Christ"

Read: Mark 8:34-38 (p. 1136) and Commentary (p. 1137)

Reflect: What things do you possess or would you like to possess which money cannot buy?

What character trait would you love to develop in your life?

Dig: Notice the verse that just precedes this text: verse 33. What does this encounter tell you about Peter's intention and what was really going on and how seriously Jesus took the matter?

Summarize the three things in the commentary that are listed that we sacrifice when we choose the path of following Jesus. Are they indeed implied in this text?

How does Matthew 11:28-30 (p. 1091) illuminate the meaning of today's text?

Apply: Name a few blessing that God has given to you that would only come to you as you submitted to Jesus' yoke.