

Sermon Questions for Life Groups

The Christian Responsibility to the State

Romans 13:1-7

Pastor John Mahaffey

Sunday, March 18, 2018

*These questions are generated by several authors for Life Group discussions
or family or personal devotions*

1. For the Canada Summer Job Application, required of our church, this is the Employer Declaration attestation that requires our checkmark to be considered for a grant to benefit student interns:
"Both the job and the organization's core mandate respect individual human rights in Canada, including the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as other rights. These include reproductive rights and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression".

How do you react to the government's requirement of us? Read Genesis 1:27, and Romans 13: 1-2 and discuss at least two of the convictions that should undergird us in our ongoing opposition to the wording in this attestation?

2. What are the reasons, from Scripture, for valuing the sanctity of human life, from conception to natural death? How far would you go personally to support the sanctity of human life? Review Romans 13:1-7. How would you balance this with scriptural requirements that you be subject to governing authorities? In what ways should we be involved in helping others value the life of their unborn child?
3. Consider and discuss the personal implications of the following poem:
*First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a socialist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me - and there was no one left to speak out for me.*

by Martin Niemoller

4. We believe that civil obedience is limited by the Word of God. How should we be responding when our governments appear to be going strongly against the Word as we understand it? Read Rev. 13: 4-8.

5. Consider Jeremiah, who was called by God as a young man and told that he was to say all the Lord had commanded him to say, to whomever God wanted for as long as God wanted it said. He had a 40 year ministry which largely consisted of telling the Hebrew people about God's coming judgment. This fell on deaf ears at best and hateful, revenge-seeking ears at worst. He was despised in his own time for doing what was right and yet, now, this is what is said of Jeremiah: "Among all of the prophets of the Hebrew people, none was more heroic than Jeremiah." — G. Campbell Morgan

Read the following 3 passages in Jeremiah 1:4-9; Jeremiah 20:8-9 and Jeremiah 38:1-6 and discuss the following questions.

- I. What does God tell Jeremiah about his calling in Jeremiah 1:4-9?
 - a. How does God respond to Jeremiah's objections to his calling?
 - b. How does God address Jeremiah's potential fears about doing God's will?

 - II. What does Jeremiah 20:8-9 tell us about Jeremiah's struggle to do God's will in a world that was hostile to his message? How was Jeremiah repeatedly treated for delivering this message in this passage?

 - III. What happens to Jeremiah in chapter 38 and how does God keep his promise to Jeremiah from chapter 1?
 - a. How do the events in this set of passages relate to the responsibilities John spoke of in his message on "The Christian responsibility to the state"?
 - b. What do you find to be comforting about these passages? What do you find to be troubling about these passages?
6. WH leadership has decided to value the benefit of training our young leaders regardless of our government's financial support. Discuss these benefits and the cost that it will be to us, as individuals.
7. **I Timothy 2:1-2** - *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. Anglican communions pray weekly for our queen and government. Do evangelicals generally fail in this?*
8. "Prayer is a potent weapon in the hands of Godly people" -- have you armed yourself today?

This Week's Prayer Requests:

1. Pray for God's favour and mercy on our country and the Spirit's intervention in the hearts of our government officials.
2. Pray for each other to be wise, discerning and active as citizens of this great country.
3. Pray for West Highland's leadership as they lead us and focus us on God's purposes, above men's.