

Submission to Government Authority

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Turn to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 13, and I'll be reading from verse 1 through to verse 7.

Our pastor has asked that you keep a bookmark in this passage as he'll be referring to this through his sermon. So Romans chapter 13, beginning at verse 1.

Let's hear the word of God. Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.

The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.

And those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority?

[1 : 08] Then do what is right, and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing.

He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment, but also because of conscience.

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him. If you owe taxes, pay taxes.

If revenue, then revenue. If respect, then respect. If honor, then honor. Before the preaching of God's word, please take your Bibles again and turn to the book of 1 Peter.

1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2.

[2 : 19] 1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2. Let's hear the word of God. 1 Peter chapter 2.

1 Peter chapter 2.

if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it?

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats.

[3 : 44] Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Amen.

Let's hear the preaching of God's word. I invite you to keep your Bibles open to 1 Peter 2. We'll be working from that to begin with and then also from Romans 13.

We're coming this morning to the last of our studies on the topic of submission as found in the scriptures and learning this morning what it is that we owe to the authorities of civil government.

Now this has been a heated debate in the last few years, especially in the church and has been the cause of church splits and folks parting ways.

[4 : 55] I'm not anticipating that. But this is why we turn to the word of God, a sure lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

So here we are in 1 Peter 2, verses 13 and 14. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king as the supreme authority or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

Now the word that meets us here right off the bat is the same word we've been looking at throughout our study, *hupotasso*, that means we are to put ourselves under every authority instituted among men.

From the highest authority of the emperor, the king, the president, right down the chain of command of governors and policemen and even tax collectors.

This is not talking about theoretical governments. This is not sitting around in seminary and theorizing about what kind of governments there are and which ones we are to submit to.

[6:13] No, not at all. These are real governments in existence. And Paul makes that explicit in his word in Romans 13, 1 and 2, if you just want to flip back and we'll be right back in Peter, but Romans 13, 1 and 2.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment upon themselves.

So we're talking about the authorities that exist. How they came into existence, whether it was in a good way, a bad way, that doesn't matter.

Do they exist today? You are to submit to them. So it's important that we note that when Paul and Peter wrote these words inspired by the Holy Spirit, the existing government for them was the Roman Empire headed by Nero, the emperor, an ungodly pagan not known to be a friend of Christians.

[7:37] And indeed, one year after Peter writes these very words that we're studying this morning, when Rome was burned to the ground on Nero's watch, he needed a scapegoat and he blamed it on the Christians as if they had burned the city of Rome.

And he began to hotly persecute them. They were torn apart by dogs. They were crucified. They were burned to death. Church tradition says that it was Nero who also ordered Peter's own execution.

As he died, a martyr, as Jesus had predicted in John chapter 21. So that's the government that existed.

That's the government Peter's talking about. It was also a government that required emperor worship. That they worship the emperor. Sometimes that was enforced, other times not.

But many thousands of Christians were killed because they would not say Caesar is Lord. Which was to acknowledge his deity.

[8:44] Whereas we know that only Jesus is Lord. So our text is not talking about submission to ideal governments. It's not talking about submission to governments operating in harmony with the Judeo-Christian ethic.

No, no. It's rather calling us to submit to the existing government authorities which down through history I would remind you have often been pagan and anti-Christian.

So we have no back door out of this duty of submitting to our governing authorities. So let's consider what do we owe to our governing authorities in our submission to them.

And I've got four things this morning. Number one, obedience. Titus 3.1 says remind the people to be subject in submission to rulers and authorities to be obedient.

And not just to laws that you agree with. Now, should they command what God forbids or forbid us to do what God commands?

[9:55] Then of course we must obey God rather than men. But that is not the same as rebelling against the government. That is not the same as throwing off their authority altogether in a revolution.

No, we keep ourselves under the governing authorities and we continue to submit to them and obey them in every way that we can as law-abiding citizens.

Think of Daniel in Babylon and Persia. These were pagan governments to be sure. And he was employed and a high official in these governments.

And he submitted to his king. And he exercised civil disobedience only when commanded to sin.

And so, when the decree came down from the king that anyone who prayed to any god or man except the king during the next 30 days would be thrown into the lion's den, Daniel respectfully disobeyed that decree and kept praying to his god three times a day as he had always done and kept working for the king and submitting himself to his authority.

[11 : 14] He did not try to overthrow the government because it had commanded him to do something that God or forbid something that God had commanded.

He remained in submission to that authority even willing to submit to that government's punishment. And when he was found praying he was arrested and thrown into the lion's den and he went. Willingly. And when he survived the night in the lion's den he didn't curse the king the next morning but he blessed him.

He blessed the king. That's remaining in submission to government authorities even when you must disobey a specific law. So that's the command.

We're to submit and that means our obedience unless it is commanding us to disobey God. Now if you don't like the decrees of your state you've got 49 others to choose from don't you?

[12 : 26] And if you don't like the decrees of your federal government you have 194 other nations to choose from as well. But we are called to submit to the governing the existing authorities under which God has placed us.

that's something that we owe our leaders. Second thing we owe them is prayer. Believers are to seek the good of the nation in which they live.

And we can do that in many ways. Yes you can do it in political involvement. You can do it in setting an example of righteousness for righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. but you should do it as well in prayer for your nation for your leaders. And this is important to Paul. He says it's something of first importance 1 Timothy 2 1 to 3 I urge then first of all that requests prayers intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone for kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness this is good and pleases God our Savior.

This was pagan Rome. This was pagan kings. And they were not to pray to them but to pray for them that they would use their authority in ways that promote peace and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

[14 : 01] Are you praying for your president to that end? Are you praying for your congress for your judges your courts your governor the policeman the military?

We owe them our prayers. That's part of the submission that we owe to them as our leaders. And this is good and pleases God our Savior.

Not only obedience and prayer but we owe them thirdly our taxes. Paul tells us in Romans 13 that part of our submission to governmental authorities includes the paying of our taxes.

You see it there in Romans 13 verses 6 and 7. Having stated that these government officials are serving God in their posts doing what God wants done in the world he says in verse 6 this is why you pay taxes for the authorities are God's servants who give their full time to governing.

Give everyone what you owe him if you owe taxes pay taxes if revenue then revenue if respect then respect if honor then honor. You know the Lord said the same thing didn't he?

[15 : 22] When he said give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's now it might cost you extra to do that to pay all the tax that you owe but God will reward you for it because he takes it as done unto him these are his servants even if the government doesn't reward you for just paying all your taxes when other people are cheating on theirs remember God is the one who is taking this as done unto him we're called to pay our taxes and thereby to honor him so what do we owe our government?

We owe them obedience we owe them prayer and we owe them taxes and lastly we owe them honor you see it right there give everyone what you owe taxes then taxes then he goes on and says if respect then respect and if honor then honor back to first Peter chapter 2 notice verse 17 where he's still dealing with this matter of submission to rulers he says in verse 17 show proper respect to everyone love the brotherhood that's the believers fear God and honor the king now honor has been a repeated aspect of submission that is owed to authorities it isn't just true of government officials it's true of wives wives be sure you respect your husband Ephesians 5 32 and same thing with children children honor your father and mother and slaves the same thing submit yourselves to your masters with all respect church members first thus 5 12 respect those who are over you in the Lord and admonish you and so we find it here in first Peter 2 7 with regard to the governing authorities fear God honor the king notice these are not viewed as conflicting duties fearing God giving him what we owe and honoring the king and that was when Nero was the supreme authority so you can give honor to the king such as Nero while giving worship to God alone so we should not

take an adversarial attitude toward government and pour out our scorn upon them no the command is give to each what you owe worshipful fear of God and honor to the king our president is not a popular president with many

Christians and there's nothing wrong with that being the case in the sense that you're guilty of something for having that view of him but he still is our president and we owe him honor the honor of his office in the way we refer to him not as Brandon not as sleepy Joe not as geriatric Joe but as president Biden we're to honor him for his position of authority over us even when we must decry his immoral declarations and policies and that's a distinction that few are maintaining even among Christians today we've fallen in with the custom of the world which gives full license to trash the president or anyone else in government that we differ with right down to the police on the street well it's our freedom of speech in America you know to do so well that may be but it's not the freedom that is given to citizens of Christ's kingdom notice first

Peter 2 16 still speaking about submission to those in authority live as free man yes yes you're free but don't use your freedom as a cover up for evil live as servants of God and you serve God by submitting to your government and by honoring the king so submit to every government authority and give what you owe obedience prayer taxes and honor you know the Lord Jesus didn't keep the law of God on some paradisaical island somewhere it was in this world the same world we live in with ungodly rulers remember when Jesus was on trial before the Roman governor Pilate Jesus had already explained to him when he found out oh you're a king and Jesus said but my kingdom is not of this world

[20 : 40] Pilate's not understanding and he's growing frustrated that Jesus isn't answering all these questions and so he says do you refuse to speak to me don't you realize I have authority either to free you or to crucify you and Jesus calmly answered you would have no authority over me if it were not given to you from above reminding Pilate that his being governor was not due to some inherent superiority or authority from within himself but was rather authority that God had given to him it's God who raises up one and puts down another and he had put up governor Pilate with authority to free Jesus or to crucify him well that sobered Pilate and from then on he tried to set Jesus free so so Jesus wasn't lambasting him with this truth no he comes out of that interview with

Jesus trying to set him free but the Jews wouldn't have it and they prevailed in pressuring him for Jesus crucifixion and Pilate caved in at last to the crowd but Jesus words were not spoken in an obnoxious in your face attitude toward government like we see so many Christians today doing that is unworthy of our savior who when they hurled insults at him we read it he did not retaliate and when he suffered he made no threats but entrusted himself to him who judges justly verse 23 of 1 Peter 2 and in so doing he's left us an example that we should follow in his steps yes in this very area of submission to ungodly authorities so even when we cannot obey specific laws if they command us to sin let us still be submissive and respond like with a Christ like honor due to their position according to

Jesus it was God who gave Pilate the authority that he then used to crucify Jesus let's put our neck in the yoke with Jesus and learn from him to give what we owe the governing authorities now that's some hard medicine it surely would have been to Christians who were living under Nero and were just years away from horrendous persecution that he would break out upon the people and it's it's a hard pill to swallow for us today and so we're given three motives in our text for our encouragement to such submission help to do so it's almost as if Peter knew we'd have some problems with submitting to government and I say that tongue in cheek because of course he did know he lived under an oppressive government and had troubles himself and of course what he wrote he wrote by the Holy Spirit who knew that we would have troubles and so built into this message from Peter are encouragements things that ought to move us to do our duty and I have three of them you know the fact that we've not had so much trouble in this area for so many years is due to the fact of God having shed his grace upon us as a nation for so many years but now the gloves are coming off and the rage of the kingdom of darkness is more evident against the kingdom of

Christ and his church we need help then we need help to stick to our duty to show this submission and honor to our governing authorities so what are those helps number one it's the Lord you are submitting to when you do so you see that in verse 13 first Peter to submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men the Lord submit to him whose authority it is now this is nothing new it's the rule that reigns in all the submission that God requires to authority whether it's wives submitting to their husbands out of reverence for Christ or children obeying your parents out

of honor for the one who has put them over you and so with slaves so with church members and so on it's always this as unto the

Lord for the Lord's sake and it's no different here with governing authorities so that's the first encouraging motive you're pleasing the Lord when you do this you are you are doing what he wants you to do you're submitting to him who has established this authority over you he's delegated that authority to this one and that one and so you you are putting your thoughts under his thoughts and you're submitting your ways to his higher ways and none are ever the losers for submitting to God it's well pleasing in his sight he'll reward it whether government will or not so let that be an encouragement to you it's meant to be an encouragement to wives and children and slaves and employees and church members and it's meant to be an encouragement to every one of us in our treatment of our governmental leaders the second encouragement we have is that

[26 : 51] God has instituted the existing governments for the good of society God is the one who is good and all he does is good 1 Peter 2 14 tells us that God instituted these authorities to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right Romans 13 5 says the one in authority is God's servant to do you good to do you good but if you do wrong well be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing he's God's servant an agent of wrath that is God's wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer so he's serving God he's doing what God wants done he wants wrongdoers punished and he's given the authority of the sword to the civil government to protect us to maintain law and order in our streets in our businesses in our communities the alternative to no civil government it's anarchy it's every man doing what is right in his own eyes do you want that then appreciate the goodness of God in instituting civil government government now if being without civil government sounds desirable well then go to some of these foreign countries and drive around where traffic laws and signs are viewed as optional and you'll be thankful that you live in a country where laws are upheld even in the traffic if you like the idea of not having civil government visit

Port-au-Prince Haiti see how it's working out for them go south of the border into the many nations where might equals right where gangs with the most power reign and they do whatever seems right in their own eyes and you'll notice the total breakdown of law and order of justice and mercy where judges are paid off with bribes to turn the other way to crime and those who don't are assassinated or where prosecutors just choose to not enforce the laws it all adds up to the decay of the very fabric of society it cannot exist you see when this is the case and the rot will soon cause the society to just collapse in upon itself how kind of God to have established civil authority for the good of society and the flourishing of nations let's go back a couple of summers and see what happens when police are called to stand down when rioters and looters are set loose upon the street to trash everything in their paths or read the book of judges especially the last few chapters it's not pleasant reading

I'll warn you and the horrendous things that are said there are explained by the very last verse in the book in those days there was no king in Israel there was no civil authority and every man did what was right in his own eyes no government is a gift from God it's his idea for the flourishing of the nations now some people come to the passages like this where they see that government is meant to be punishing the wrong and rewarding the right and they would say oh so those are conditions that if if the government meets those conditions then were to submit to them no no that is that has not been the instruction that God has given in this matter of submission that if that if the one in authority is operating perfectly according to how authorities to be used then you were to submit no not at all we just read it that slaves were called to submit even to those who were harsh and would cause them suffering so this is not said as a condition that the government must meet before we have to submit no this is saying can you see God's goodness in civil government that's what they're called to do to punish the wrongdoers and to reward the right and it's also what what we're to be calling our government to do we are to tell them this is the authority

God's given you and how it's to be used but we don't wait to see whether they do it whether we submit to it or not no they had to submit to Nero he wasn't always rewarding and commending the right he was sometimes crucifying them and once in a while we'll hear in our country too of somebody spending 30 years in prison and then being set free they got it wrong and every authority has been polluted by sin and error and that is true but that doesn't mean you trash the whole system and so it is that yes even in rotten governments very often you find the bad guys are getting punished and the good guys they're getting on with things but even if that should be reversed we're not given a way out this is just helping us to see the mind of God and wanting the best for people in

establishing civil government well the last encouragement we've seen that it's Christ that we're doing this for and then that

God is so good in giving us authority to maintain a semblance of law and order but thirdly the third encouragement is that political revolution is a blot on the name of Jesus Christ political revolution is a blot on the name of Jesus Christ notice in 1 Peter 2 how the two verses on submission here in verses 13 and 14 are surrounded with verses having to do with silencing false accusations by doing good so let's back up to verse 12 1 Peter 2 12 live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits you or visits us so they were being accused of some kind of wrong this doesn't state it but they were accused of doing some kind of wrong that they were to live in a completely different way that their good deeds would be seen rather than those wrong things whatever they are and immediately following is the word verse 13 submit yourselves for the

[34 : 28] Lord's sake to every authority of man as if to say that is where the accusation is coming that you Christians are not submitting to the authorities of the government and then what follows after 13 and 14 verse 15 for it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men again you see how it's both sides like a hamburger and the bun is talking about doing good to silence these false accusations and the bottom part of the bun is the same thing and the meat in between is what is the good that we're to do to silence the accusation is to submit to your governing authorities the slander against Christians was that they were political revolutionaries out to rebel against the Roman government and therefore their careful submission to government and honor for authorities was to dispel that slander because political revolution is a blot on the name of

Jesus Christ now the political climate of the Jews during and after the time of our Lord's years on earth was anti-Roman government Jewish nationalists were seething with revolution to overthrow the Roman government many self-proclaimed messiahs had led revolts against Rome don't forget Barabbas why was he under the death sentence for murder in the cause of an insurrection oh there's an example of what I'm talking about the Jews were a rebellious people wanting to throw off Rome and even Barabbas who's mentioned in the crucifixion of Christ is guilty of insurrection so history reveals that Rome had squelched many of these Jewish revolts and yet they kept continuing Peter and Paul do not want the

Jewish Christians or any Christians for that matter to be involved in rebellion against the government or to give any kind of credence to the slander that that's what they were now this was the exact kind of Messiah that the Jewish people wanted one to deliver them from the Romans a political revolution Jesus would have none of it they tried to make him a king by force no I'm not that kind of Messiah I've not come to deliver you from political bondage to Rome I'm here to deliver you from bondage to sin and Satan and death and hell and so he refused to become a king that they wanted what was the charge that the Jewish religious court brought against Jesus well they said that he claims to be equal with God that is blasphemy that deserves the death penalty well then why didn't they take him out and stone him because they were under the authority of the Romans and Rome didn't give them the authority to execute their criminals so they have to bring him before governor Pilate in the Roman court now they're sly they know that Pilate doesn't give a rip about their religion that won't stick in a Roman court so they change their accusation when they bring Jesus before the Roman court and they paint Jesus as a political revolutionary something not rare in those days indeed something very troublesome to Rome that they were constantly having to stomp out so they bring Jesus to Pilate we found this man subverting our nation that's revolution he opposes payment to taxes to Caesar that was a mark of revolt and he claims to be Christ a king setting him up as if he were a rival authority to Caesar fomenting rebellion against Rome earlier the Jewish leaders had tried to trick Jesus on this very question of payment to taxes to Caesar and so they come to Jesus there he is with all the people around he's teaching and question here is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not we got him now because if he says yes he'll be hated by the common people who wanted to throw off the Roman government and rebel but if he says no it's not right to pay taxes to Caesar then he would be playing right into their hands and be open to the charge of being a political leader of the zealot party preaching rebellion against Rome well Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and he answers with the wisdom that sent them scurrying who's bring me a coin used for paying the tax and they brought him a denarius and he asked whose portrait is it and inscription

[40 : 00] Caesar's they replied well then give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's he avoided either one of their catch 22 responses you see it's Peter's fear God and honor the king not one or the other both give the tax to Caesar to whom you owe it and give your heart and reverent worship to God to whom you owe it so it was a lie that they brought to governor Pilate saying Jesus opposes paying taxes to Caesar but truth was no concern to these men even though they were the religious leaders of the Jews and they simply shouted to Pilate if you let this man go you are no friend of Caesar anyone who claims to be a king opposes

Caesar and they prevailed against Pilate do you see the whole milieu and context of these words that we're looking at this morning it was a time when Jewish nationalism was fomenting rebellion and here they are now in first Peter chapter two thirty years after the crucifixion and the rebellion of the Jews was only boiling hotter that's the concern of Peter in this letter 63 AD three years after Peter writes this letter the Jewish Roman wars began a series of Jewish revolts against Rome trying to throw off their rule and gain their independence they were squelched and in 70 AD Rome came broke through the walls of Jerusalem and slaughtered as many as a million Jews burned the city to the ground these are troublemakers these Jews well you see what what Rome did was they lumped the followers of Jesus in with all the other Jews they just saw it as another sect a party within Judaism and you can see that in the New Testament so that when the Jews were commanded to flee Rome they chased them out of Rome the Christians had to go too Priscilla and Aquila leave they were just viewed as part of the Jewish religion and so they came under the same charges as the Jews of being out to overthrow the Roman government that's the concern of Peter that's the context in which our passage is found and it is by being law abiding citizens submissive to government authorities and laws that they are to adorn the gospel of

Christ and silence the slander against them by showing themselves not to be in any way political revolutionaries out to overthrow the government yes they may have had to practice civil disobedience when commanded to sin against God and say Caesar is Lord but that's not the same as engaging in revolution to overthrow the government rebellion against the government is not an option for the Christian Paul says in Romans 13 2 he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves so that's why this address about civil government makes its way into Peter's letter to these Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor it's why Romans 13 1 to 7 finds its way into that beautiful doctrinal book of

Romans written to the church in Rome the capital city of the Roman Empire both Peter and Paul were concerned that Christians live in a manner worthy of the gospel distinctively different from the revolutionary spirit of the day not dragging the name of Jesus down into revolt against the government so Peter can say if you suffered let it not be as a criminal or a troublemaker but let it be as a Christian fear God and honor the king and with such submission to authority this slander will not stick well on you at all this is God's will for you well that should that should settle the matter this is God's will this is what he wants I trust the application to us is self evident it's different day it's a different government I wouldn't want to trade places on the different governments but it's the same challenges it's the same rub and it's the same

[45 : 22] God and the same commandments respect for government authority is at an all time low let's be very careful not to let the world squeeze us into its mold and drag us down with it we're called to a higher standard in the kingdom of Christ to submit to authorities obeying everything we can without sinning against God praying for them paying our taxes honoring them remember those words in Jesus word to his citizens in his kingdom in Matthew 5 when he said in verse 41 someone forces you to go one mile go with him too what was remember the Romans were the occupying power over the Jews and the soldiers had a right that they were carrying bundles and burdens that they could command anybody to carry it for a whole mile pick it up man remember they did that with that man with

Jesus cross they compelled him to carry Jesus he had to it wasn't a choice soldier said to he had to carry it and Jesus says citizens in my kingdom if a soldier compels you to carry his burden one mile carry it too carry it too do you get a sense of the flavor of Jesus Christ and the honor given to government and those down the chain of command it's not one of in your face no no this isn't our our kingdom this isn't this isn't what we're living for we're living for another kingdom we're living for a day when Jesus Christ will return and the government will be upon his shoulders and he will bring the perfect government in which all wrong will be punished and every good deed will be rewarded to

the righteous perfect righteousness and justice for all the nations in a world of perfect love well that day's coming that's what we're living for so may

God help us Jesus came to save people from sin as he saved you from your sin he will if you ask him he's just that generous he turns none away come and repudiate your sin and fall on your knees and say Lord Jesus forgive me and I trust in your work on the cross to save me and to pay the penalty I owe and he will save you and then go go into your world living for him who is coming again in power and glory to bring in his eternal reign don't miss that you don't like the way things are in the government and the world today perfect government a perfect world is coming with Jesus Christ don't miss it don't be so caught up in this world that you miss the best thing ever

Jesus and his eternal kingdom let's pray our father in heaven thank you for our country thank you for giving us to live in this land thank you for officials over us that yes there is still a real element of law and order operative in this land far higher than what is found in so many nations of the earth we thank you for that would you help our president and congress and judges and governors and policemen and military to to so work as to bring about the flourishing environment for truth and righteousness and neighborliness would you cause them to labor in such a way that the church of Jesus Christ will not be hindered we thank you that in every government authority you have been the strength of your church and you have shown us that that church can grow even under great persecution so we thank you for that would you help us to be better representatives of Christ and his kingdom in the way that we obey the laws in the way that we pray for our leaders in the way that we pay our taxes and in the way that we honor that your name might be honored we ask it in Jesus name amen