



World Christian Fellowship

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Citizen of Heaven Matthew 17:22-27

Matthew 17-20 chapters we find the Lord's special instruction to the Twelve. He is giving them final preparation for the ministry that lays ahead of them.

Jesus has given them a revelation of His person as King. He has given them a revelation of His program for the kingdom.

Now Jesus gives them a revelation of the principles for living in that kingdom.

These lessons are rich, essential, and practical. These will be great lessons not only for them but for us.

Matthew 17:14-21, Jesus teaches them about faith.

Matthew 17:24-27, teaches them about citizenship. How to live in this world.

Matthew 18:1-5, teaches them about humility.

Matthew 18:6-9, teaches them about offending.

Matthew 18:15-20 teaches them about discipline.

Matthew 18:21-35 teaches them about forgiveness.

Matthew 19:1-10, teaches them about marriage and divorce.

Matthew 19:11-15 teaches them about children.

Matthew 19:16-22 teaches about wealth and rewards.

Matthew 20:20-28 teaches about position and serving.

Matthew 20:29-34 teaches about compassion.

Matthew 21 is Triumphal entry to Jerusalem.

These are profound principles for the kingdom.

In between those lessons periodically Jesus tells them about His death. So that Jesus constantly reminding them about going to the cross.

Matthew 17:22-27, *Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, ²³and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful. ²⁴When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?" ²⁵He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" ²⁶Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you*

will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you.”

Jesus gives the Twelve private teaching about all these important areas that they need to understand.

Jesus is giving them all the information so that when He goes back to heaven, they carry on the work of the kingdom.

They will know how to live.

They will know how to act.

They will know how to respond to what goes on.

V 22, *Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,*

We don't know where they were.

They were just in Galilee.

They were in Caesarea Philippi.

They came down from the mountain of the transfiguration.

Jesus healed the demon-possessed epileptic boy.

They are still going through Galilee on their way to Capernaum, where they are going to stay for a little while.

Jesus just told them the third time prediction of His death.

The first one.

Matthew 16:21, *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

The second.

Matthew 17:12, *But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”*

Now the third time.

Mark 9:30-31, *Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it. ³¹For He taught His disciples and said to them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”*

The first intimation of Judas being the betrayer.

V 23, *and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.*

He will be handed over, and they shall kill Him.

We know that Judas was the betrayer who handed Him over. We know the men to whom He was handed was the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leaders.

We know then, from **verse 23**, that they killed Him. Whenever the Bible puts responsibility for the death of Christ always is in the hands of the Jewish leaders.

It is not an anti-Semitic thing to say.
It is the truth to say that.

The Jewish people rejected their Messiah, and they were responsible for His execution.

Acts 2:22-23, *“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;*

You did it.

The Romans were the executioners.

But the Jewish leaders were the murderers.

It is not a statement against all Jewish people who ever lived. In fact, every man who ever comes onto the face of the earth that rejects Jesus Christ, letter to the Hebrews says guilty of

crucifying the Son of God again and putting Him to open shame.

They were the ones who received Him when He was betrayed.

They were the ones who killed Him.

The guilt was laid at their feet.

All others in the world, whoever rejects Him, stand with the crucifiers.

and the third day He will be raised up.”

Somebody betrayed Him.

Somebody else killed Him.

Somebody else raised Him from the dead.

God the Father who raised Jesus from the dead.

Clearly indicated to us in the Bible.

And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

Why?

Because they didn't understand the resurrection.

Mark 9:32, *But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.*

When Jesus said He was going to die, that's all they heard. It may well have been very much like Martha.

John 11:23-24, *Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."
24Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the
resurrection at the last day."*

It may well have been that that's where the disciples were.
They missed the third day, or they didn't understand what the
third day meant.

All they heard was that He was going to die.
We can imagine that 3 disciples who had come down off the
Mount of Transfiguration, seen the stunning glory of Jesus
Christ, they see Him use His power to heal this demoniac, and
they are on cloud nine.

Suddenly Jesus says to them, "I am going to die."
As soon as they hear they are in despair.

Later after the resurrection, they will look back then it makes
sense to them.

The Lord just tells them it's going to happen.
They don't understand.
When it happened then they understood.

Capernaum, a beautiful little city on the north most point of
the Sea of Galilee. The city where Jesus lived, preached,
taught, and healed thousands.

The city where Peter lived.

As they journey from Caesarea Philippi, down through Galilee, heading for Jerusalem where He will die.

They stopped of a few days in Capernaum.

Perhaps to stay as guests in Peter's house because His house is there.

Jesus was with the disciples in the house.

Peter was out on the street somewhere, maybe going to get some food.

1. Temple tax demanded.

V 24, When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?"

Jesus and His disciples have been absent for a long time. Months.

They had left Galilee a long time ago, gone through Tyre and Sidon, Gentile area known as Decapolis.

As soon as they come back to Capernaum, and they are immediately confronted by the tax collector who says, "Just because you are not in town doesn't mean you don't pay your taxes."

He asks the question.

“Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?”

- This is not a Roman tax.
- This is a Jewish tax relating to the temple.

The Romans taxed them, and they had agents to do the taxing called publicans. These were Jews who sold themselves to the Roman government to exact taxes from the people.

They gave some to the Roman government and then they pocketed the rest.

They were usually thieves and robbers.

They were hated by the people because they were collecting taxes from their own people to give to the oppressing Romans.

But these are not such as publicans.

These are people within the Jewish system.

The Jews were allowed a certain amount of autonomy by the Romans. They could operate their quasi-theocracy to a certain extent. They were collecting the temple tax for the services of the temple.

In every town and village, they set up little booths in a visible road. As people came by and passed along, they would collect the taxes from them. This way they make sure everybody paid.

They would be set up for long periods of time to make sure they didn't miss anybody.

In the wilderness when the tabernacle was established, and it was carried from there to the temple, God gave a law through Moses.

Exodus 30:11-16, *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹²“When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the Lord. ¹⁴Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord. ¹⁵The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves.”*

Half shekel.

Nehemiah 10: 32, *Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God:*

When the people came back from their Babylonian captivity Nehemiah reduced their temple tax because they were very poor.

But the half shekel had been reinstated.

This time in Jerusalem, there was a half shekel temple tax that had to be paid by every Jewish male annually.

If you didn't pay, then they took compensation out of your personal belongings.

Didrachma, a half a shekel was equal to two Greek Drachmae.

Two Greek drachmae.

The tax then became known as the double Drachmae, or the Didrachma.

Basically, it is two days' wages.

That is the tax they were after.

When the temple was destroyed the Romans levied the very same didrachma tax to be paid for the temple of **Jupiter**

Capitolinus and carried on that tradition. They forced the Jews to pay for a temple of a pagan idol.

Here the collectors come and ask the question to Peter.

“Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?”

There are Christians who don't pay taxes. They don't think they have any reason to pay taxes. They don't like what's done with their money and so they don't pay.

But Jesus, does he pay taxes.

V 25, *He said, “Yes.” And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?”*

Jesus always pays His temple tax.

We can imply from that that He always paid His taxes.

Jesus is not a tax evader.

Jesus is not a tax dodger.

2. Provision for the Tax:

V 25, He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying,

Jesus knows exactly what went on with Peter.

Omniscience!

Jesus knew it all.

V 25, "What do you think, Simon?"

What are you thinking about?

Peter must be thinking to himself why would Jesus pay taxes? He is God. It doesn't make sense.

Jesus calls him "Simon."

That was still his common name, not yet fully known as Peter, even though his name had been changed in chapter 16.

V 25, From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?"

Taxation in those days was not like it is today.

The countries were run by one individual emperor, or a king. There was no democracy as we know it.

The one who was at the top of the pyramid.

Basically, taxed the whole society under his control for two reasons:

- Support his kingdom, and
- Support his family.

He collected it all and used it for the support of his family and the support of his kingdom.

Peter asks a very simple question, when a king sets out to take his taxes, who does he take it from?

Does he take it from his sons or strangers?

He doesn't take it from his own family.

He is taking it for his family.

What point would there be to tax his own family?

He is collecting it for them.

Peter would know the answer.

V 26, *Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.*

They didn't have a democracy where everyone paid taxes.

We do on a structured basis, equally everyone responsible to pay.

In those days, if you ran the place, you did all the collecting and none of the paying. So, it was obvious that kings did not take their taxes from their own sons.

So, Jesus then draws a conclusion, *“Then are the sons free.”*

We are free.

Why?

Because God is the king of the earth.

God rules everything, and we are the sons of God.

So, we get all the benefits, and we don't have to pay our taxes. It is a good illustration because it was a temple tax being collected.

Who was the king of the temple?

God was.

Who was His Son?

Jesus Christ.

So, if there was any tax that Jesus Christ shouldn't have paid, it was the temple tax.

He was the Son of God who was the King of His dwelling place, the temple.

So, it would have been a perfect time for Jesus to say, “I Am not paying My tax. After all, God is the head of the temple. I Am His Son. God doesn’t tax His Son, Me. We are all the children of God. The world is God’s, and He is our King.”

They were giving their money to support us and God.

Theologically straight one.

God is our King.

We are His children, joint heirs with Christ, brothers of Christ, Sons of God, and children of the King.

God isn’t going to take from us.

God is going to give to us.

So, we don’t need to pay our taxes.

Jesus repeatedly said the temple as My Father’s house.

Luke 2:49, *And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”*

Matthew 12:6, *Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.*

John 2:16, *And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"*

Even the tax collectors would have agreed that if He could prove He was the Son of God, He wouldn't have had to pay a half shekel.

Kings didn't tax their own children.

if He could prove he was the Son of God then Jesus don't have to pay.

It would be like me traveling through another country and having someone come and say, "Have you paid your income tax?"

"I don't belong in this country. I don't live here. I am from the United Kingdom, and I don't have to pay you anything."

3. Principle:

V 27, *Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."*

Lest we should offend them.

Jesus didn't want to offend the tax collectors, the HMRC, the government?

Do we want to offend them?

We don't want to offend them.

There are some evangelical Christians who must offend the Income Tax persons.

Today some of the Income Tax collectors would talk about the Christians like this.

I don't know what kind of religion Christianity is, the kind they have got, but I sure wouldn't want anything to do with it.

When Christians attack against the government non moral sin issue then we lose our testimony.

We don't have to pay because we are free. But we don't want to offend them.

Why?

Because we don't want them to throw out our message.

Because they won't accept us.

So, the Lord paid His taxes.

How did Jesus pay?

V 27, *go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."*

The Sea of Galilee.

Throw a hook in the water and pull up the fish that first comes, take it and when you have opened the mouth, you will find a piece of money. Take it and give unto them for Me and you.

Incredible!

Don't you dare say I will also pay my taxes if I catch a fish like that!

The Lord did it this way for two reasons:

1. Because Jesus didn't have any possessions.
2. Because he wanted to show Peter who He really was again and the other disciples.

Go anywhere you want on the seashore, just throw in a bare hook. I got a fish which is waiting.

One fish was on a divine mission.

Goes down, puts that coin in its mouth. Don't even swallow it, just leave it in mouth.

Fish was waiting for Peter.
Looks at the hook, jumps into it.
Opens its mouth there the coin.

I am sure Peter threw the fish back into the water.
We can't waste a fish like that.
Marvelous fish.

- In the Old Testament, God used a big one.
- In the New Testament He used a little one.

The Lord was going to pay His taxes and even set all divine power in motion to make sure it got done.

“You give it to them for you and Me.”

The implication is the other disciples, too, would pay their taxes, and that they would pay other taxes also.

What does all this say?

However unpleasant it might be,
However difficult,
However seemingly equitable it might be,
Though we are not even a part of the world system, we are to fulfill our duties as citizens.

We are free from man's law. Bound by the law of God.

But the law of God says you do not offend.

If Jesus hadn't paid His tax, do you know what He would have said to those people?

- ✓ I don't care about your temple.
- ✓ I don't care about its service.
- ✓ I don't care about your nation.
- ✓ I don't care about you people at all.

Do you think they would have listened to His message?

When you are a good citizen, and you say that I care about this nation. I care about these people. I care about its leadership. I care about this country, and I want to do what's right. People are drawn to such a person.

Application:

Evangelical, fundamental, Orthodox Christianity has become very involved in worldly politics and economics.

There are many Christian lobby groups.

There are many protesting Christian groups who are against the government and leadership.

Questions being asked about **how involved should Christians be in politics?**

**How involved should we be in fighting against the system?
How critical should we be of our leaders, legislature, and
judicial branch?**

There are people telling us today that it's a time to be angry. People are saying that we need to come together in a great mass of Christian people and protest our government.

We need to take on the glide and the direction of our government.

We need to elect other people to office.

We need to get involved in politics and economics.

There are others who are saying to us, "No, we need to make sure that we maintain our very clear word of the Gospel and not get it clouded up with other issues."

Where does the Christian really find his balance, and what is a believer's relationship to the world and its authority, and government?

We have been called as Christians to be apart from the world.

No question about that at all.

The Bible calls us citizens of a heavenly kingdom.

We are not even called citizens of this earth.

Philippians 3:17-20, *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

The apostle Paul then sets a pattern or description of people who mind earthly things.

One hand, we have these earthly things.

But we are citizens of heaven. Our citizenship is clearly there.

Ephesians 2:19, *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

We are citizens who belong to a very special group, a heavenly group, with other saints who are of the household of God.

Hebrews 12:22-23, *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³to the general assembly and*

church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

We belong to an assembly of people who are heavenly.

Since we are citizens of heaven, we are called to be apart from the world system.

1 John 2:15, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

James 4:4, *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

Colossians 3:2, *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

We are called to be distinctly apart from such things.

Philippians 2:15-16, *that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or laboured in vain.*

If we are citizens of heaven,
if we belong to an assembly of people whose names are
written there,
who are the household of God,
the saints of God,
if we are only strangers and sojourners in the world,
if this isn't our home,
Then we might conclude from that we have no obligation here
at all.

We are not responsible to respond to the system in any way,
that we are called to a higher order.

Because we have been infused with eternal life and made
possessors of the Holy Spirit, we also have come to state of
superiority to the people around us, which belies any need to
respond to them no matter who they are.

What is a believer's relationship to worldly authority?

How are we to respond in the world?

Peter is writing to believers who unquestionably were going
through some tremendous persecution, trial for their faith.

They were under an oppressive government.

1 Peter 2:9, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal
priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may*

proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;

You are elected by God.

You are a collection of people brought together by God's sovereign, eternal choice.

Very special people chosen by God Himself.

You are a royal priesthood.

Not only are you priests to serve the Most High God, but you are royal priests.

- You have not only the role of the priests, but the role of the king. You are royalty.
- You are majesty.
- You are a people for special possession.
- You are unique.
- You are not like the world.
- You are priests to God.
- You are royal priests.
- You are a holy nation, different than any other.
- You are a people of divine possession in order that you would show forth the praises of Him who's called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

1 Peter 2:10, *who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

You had not obtained mercy, but now you have obtained mercy.

These two verses, he speaks of our infinitely high calling.

1 Peter 2:11, *Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,*

You are sojourners and pilgrims.

You are like a person in this world, traveling in another country.

If you travel in another country, you are just a stranger there.

- Strangers, not citizens.
- Sojourners, not residents.

Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

You walk through the world, is to stay away from its contamination. Stay away from that which will pollute you.

1 Peter 2:12, *having your conduct honourable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

You want to take away their criticism. You want to live so upright so that they may try to speak against you as if you were evildoers. But when it comes down to the end, and they really examine our life, they are going to see that it wasn't the case.

You are not a citizen of the world. The world really has no claim on you. You belong to another economy.

But as long as you are in the world, there is a **negative command** is stay away from the pollution. **Positive command** is to live such an honest life among people that they find nothing to criticize.

How are you going to do that?

1 Peter 2:13, *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,*

Obey every law.

Obey every law for the Lord's sake.

God judges.

It isn't that every law is equitable, as God judges' equity.

It isn't that every law is even sensible, as God would judge what is sensible.

But we are to submit to every law of man for the Lord's sake.

Why?

Because if you are going to be perceived by your society as a good, upright, honest person with integrity, character, moral quality, and proper values then they are going to evaluate you based on what they understand to be the code of right and wrong.

Society sets up laws and rules.

Then it says that the people who keep these are the law-abiding people.

The people who fight these rebels, protest, disobey, they are the anti-law. They are the rebellious people.

Even though we may not see all the laws as being morally reflective of God's mind, we are called to submit to all of them.

Not only in our physical act, but in our mental attitude so that our submission is a willing one to the law of man.

The world evaluates people in it by how they conform to its applied standard of morals. When the world sets up laws, we are to respond to those laws so that we demonstrate that we are not rebellious people.

- We are peace making people.
- We are disciplined people.

- We are righteous and good people.

The demonstration of that lays a foundation for credibility for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

if Christianity was reduced to an insurrectionist movement, no one would be interested in it.

We are not to submit for the sake of man, but for the sake of the Lord because it is for the advance of His kingdom.

1 Peter 2:14, *or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.*

Whether you are talking about kings, or governors, or police. The people to whom Peter was writing were under an oppressive situation. But he doesn't tell them to have a revolution. He doesn't tell them to throw over the yoke. He tells them to submit.

What if they tell us to do something against the Bible?"

You don't submit.

We submit at all points except when the law of man counteracts the law of God.

Acts 5:29, *But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.*

They told Peter, “Stop preaching.”

Peter said, “I can’t. I have a higher law.”

If the government came along and tried to force a person to abort a baby, I think at that point you have a higher law in the Word of God. You say, “I will do what the law of God says.”

You willingly, and with the right kind of spirit, accept the consequence.

1 Peter 2:15, *For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—*

God wants you to be such good citizens that you shut the mouths of the critics, that they look at you, and they admire you from their value viewpoint.

They must evaluate you from their own.

If you are one who conforms to the best standards that society sets down then they see you as a person with values.

1 Peter 2:16, *as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.*

You are not to say that I am free. I can do what I want.

You are to be slaves of God, submissive.

1 Peter 2:17, *Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

It really bothers me the way people attack the prime minister/president.

The problem in any country is not the problem created by any ruler we ever had. It is the problem created by a mass of godless, Christless, selfish, greedy people. Built in democracy is the seeds of its own dissolution. Ultimately when men find that they can vote to themselves to the public treasury. Finally, they will destroy themselves economically and in every other way.

We are called, then, to pray for them.

1 Timothy 2:1-2, *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

Romans 13:1-2, *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

The government is of God.

God put it there.

Government is a divine institution as much as the Church is, as much as the marriage is, as much as family is for the preservation of man.

Every soul is to be submissive, even if you are under a Roman emperor who believes he is God.

Even though the laws may not be equitable, sensible, not fair, you are to be submissive.

Romans 13:3, *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*

They are there because God put them there.

It doesn't mean we don't take our processes to change things if we want to. God works through that process.

But they are there because God put them there.

It is a divine reality.

Have you ever wondered why Christianity didn't start a slave insurrection in Rome?

Because the Roman government was ordained by God.

We can see that now.

It was the Roman government that provided a one-world language, which facilitated the preaching of the Gospel, the Greek language.

It was the Roman government that provided the Pax Romana which brought peace to that whole part of the world, which allowed intercourse between countries and nations all over the place so the Gospel could spread so freely.

It was the Romans who established the Roman roads, highways, trade routes, and ship routes so that the Gospel could be carried all over the place.

God put the Roman government there to facilitate the Gospel, even though they didn't believe it.

Paul makes it clear that we are to be good citizens. Based on Jesus' teaching.

1 Peter 2:18, *Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.*

Are you supposed to submit to the harsh master?

Right!

1 Peter 2:19, *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

Do you want to win your boss at work?

Endure what he gives with a Christlike spirit.

You will lay a platform to make your message believable.

1 Peter 2:20, *For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*

The laws are not always going to be equitable.

Evangelism begins by your life of submission to those in authority over you.

Just like a wife will begin to win an unsaved husband by submitting to him as the one in authority, in a loving and gentle way.

A Christian becomes capable of reaching the society he is in for Christ when he learns to submit to that society with a gentle and meek spirit.

1 Peter 2:21, *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

Christ took suffering He didn't deserve, from authority that had no right to do it to Him.

Christ did it so that He could win us.

Can we do the same to win others?

Jesus sets the utter pattern.

He submitted to authorities He had no reason to submit to in a divine sense.

He had submitted to authorities that had no right to do to Him what they did, but He did it for our sake.

Can we do the same for the sake of our society?