

The Footsteps of Faith Series
Lesson # 21 “We are to put on the armor of light”
Romans 13:1-14

Scripture: Romans 13:12 “The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”

Introduction:

When I was little I used to sit and listen to my grandfather tell stories about his service in World War II. He had a collection of war rifles that he would break out and let me hold while he told the stories over and over. He had real German swastikas and even a German Lugar taken from a fallen German.

Once, he told me about a face to face encounter with General Eisenhower. It seems that Grandpa was sitting on a tank with some other guys when Eisenhower’s group came by. This would be a great story for any veteran of war but I wanted to know more about the tank, so grandpa took me to the Jim Davis gun museum in Claremore Oklahoma and let me sit on a real tank. For a little boy...Woe !

I was watching a show on the History Channel about tanks and the history of warfare using them. On this show they showed the Sherman tanks and talked about enemy tanks also.

They explained the weaknesses and problems of all these tanks. It seems that modifications were always being made to make the tanks more lethal.

Then they introduced the tank of all tanks....the Abram Tank. What really makes this a great weapon of war is its armor. I thought iron and steel was the key to a good tank but they actually have armor plates that when hit explode outward protecting the passengers.

These tanks with all that armor are meant to intimidate the enemy and send a message that you are going to die. They are made to protect the passengers at all costs and kill the enemy.

Transitional Statement:

Church, Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 that we are to put on the armor of God. But our armor is not a worldly armor, meant to provoke fear and intimidation in our enemies. Our armor should reflect the love of God in this world.

A worldly armor trust only in itself and seeks not the good of others. But the armor of God is meant to reflect His wonderful light of life.

Lesson:

I. God commands us to be in subjection to governing authorities.

Romans 13:1a

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities.

A. “Every person”

1. No-one is exempt from this instruction from God.
2. There are not exclusions at all.

B. “Is to be in subjection to governing authorities”

1. The first thing in view is that the verb here is an imperative and takes the form of a command.
 - a. In-other-words, this is essential for the Christian
2. Then subjection is the word “hupotasso” in the Greek and it means to subordinate or obey.
 - a. i.e. we are to recognize the governments authority
 - b. And we are to place ourselves under it
 - c. And yield to it.
 - d. Not straining against it !
3. When we talk about submission in the bible, a godly submission is characterized by an attitude of willing desire.
 - a. Not one toleration
 - b. Not a submission that only happens when others are watching
 - c. But a submission that is turned on by the desire of the heart to please the living God.

C. In (1 Timothy 2:1-3) Paul adds to pray for them.

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,”

1. Not just subject to our government, but prayerful for it.

D. In short the Christian although he serves a higher power is not above the law of the land.

E. Now here is where we usually ask...what if the government asks us to sin?

1. When the government asks us to do something sinful, what do we do?

2. Plain and simple we don't do it

- a. Daniel chapter 6, Daniel with God's blessings refuses to obey
- b. Acts 5:29, Apostles refuse to obey the Sanhedrin not to speak in the name of Jesus.

F. But to chase this line of thinking here, misses the point.

G. The point is that godliness should co-exist with the world in a peaceful way, in the promotion of good. And that godliness should not be represented by a bunch of Christians who think themselves above the law.

- a. Mark 12:14-17 Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes try to trap Jesus

14 They came and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.

Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? 15 "Shall we pay or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at." 16 They brought one. And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." 17 And Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were amazed at Him.

H. Here in the beginning of Romans 13 God simply tells us to submit to our governments.

- a. You see submission to government is a part of God's overall plan for kingdom business.
- b. Titus 3:1, Paul says to Titus

"Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,"

II. Next, God explains why we are to submit to governments

Romans 13:1b

For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

A. Authority only comes from one place.....God !

- 1. You can't apply for it
- 2. The people can't give it to you.
- 3. Here the text says thatGod establishes it !

B. Let's do a little exercise of thought here.

1. Place yourself in the house of Jacob in Egyptian bondage during the time of Moses....your now a brick maker with no pay and barely enough to eat on.
 - a. Your rights have forcefully been removed by an ungodly bunch of Egyptians who worshiped many different gods.
 - b. Daily you are being mistreated and abused
 - c. Forced to hard labor
 - e. And treated like a dogs
 - g. And if that doesn't beat all, Pharaoh orders that any new born son of yours must be thrown into the Nile river.
2. What a horrendous injustice.....
 - a. One might ask how God could allow this to happen?
3. But all this was in God's plan:
 - a. You see, God used Egypt and its resources to feed His people through a severe famine.
 - b. God also used the harsh conditions of slavery there to prepare heart of His people to serve Him.
 - c. You see God didn't just tolerate or allow Pharaoh's actions, but God with forethought of mind and resolution of heart, raised him and gave him the authority.

Romans 9:17

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

C. Governments might not always do the right things, but God gave them their authority and will use them to His end.

1. Including the U.S.A.

D. Church one point that we should remember for sure is that God is sovereign !

1. Nothing escapes His notice
2. Nothing is beyond His control
3. And nothing is above Him....See Isa 40 for details

III. Then if we resist submission to government

Romans 13:2

2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

- A. Resisting government puts us in opposition to the ordinances of God.
 - 1. Resist here is the idea of pitting oneself against.
 - 2. If we pit ourselves against earthly governments...in actuality we pit ourselves against God.
- B. And those who oppose God will receive condemnation (damnation)

IV. Ultimately governmental authorities are a minister of God.

Romans 13:3-4

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

- A. If you are good you need not fear governments
 - 1. Because you will be praised by them.
- B. But if you do evil then watch out !
 - 1. Earthly governments wield a sword for the wicked
 - 2. And they do that as ministers of God's wrath.
 - a. Capital punishment?
 - 3. 1 Peter 2:13-14 ... Peter says the same thing.

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

- C. You see the only fear that we are called to have is:
 - 1. Is a healthy fear of God.

Matthew 10:28 Jesus says to His disciples:

28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

V. Our submission should be from a conscience desire to please God.

Romans 13:5-7

5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

- A. Submission is necessary because the will of God is carried out through it
- B. But, obedience to government should not only be from fear of wrath.
 - 1. But for conscience sake.
 - a. That is from an awareness that God is over all
 - b. And a deep trust in Him for our well being.
- C. For these reason we pay taxes.
 - 1. Let me ask you if you find it coincidental that this lesson would come on the heels of tax season?
 - 2. Here the text says that rulers are servants of God
 - 3. And we are to give them their due
 - a. The money that is owed for their support
 - b. Including honor.
 - c. Confession time....Over the past few years, somewhat discouraged by President Bushes policies I have failed at giving proper honor to him, but am now reminded of my godly duties through this passage.
- D. Our attitudes toward government either honor God....or dishonor Him.

VI. Christians are to recognize and fulfill our obligations or duties.

Romans 13:8-10

8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law

- A. First of all we must remember the context of discussion here. The context is paying that which is owed.

- B. And I believe it is to this end that God says we are to owe nothing.
 - 1. That is we are to meet our obligations
 - 2. If we owe taxes then we are to pay them, just like Jesus said in Mark 12
 - 3. If we borrow money we are to faithfully repay it.
- C. And everything should be done from love in a fulfillment of God's word.
- D. You see, love doesn't take advantage of his neighbor or the government by not paying what is owed.

NOTE:

Here is a good place in context to stop and ask how much more should we consider what we owe God and ask ourselves if we are meeting those expectation.

VII. To all of this we are reminded that time is short

Romans 13:11-13

11 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. 12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

- A. God calls us to waken our minds from a sleepy stupor
- B. "Salvation is nearer to us than when we believed"
 - 1. i.e. time is short
 - a. "The night is almost gone, and the day is near"
 - b. I think of James 4:14

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."

- C. Therefore:
 - 1. Lay aside the deeds of darkness
 - 2. Not:
 - a. Hiding by the darkness of night
 - b. Carousing

- c. Drunkenness
- d. Sexual promiscuity
- e. Sensuality
- f. Strife
- g. Jealousy

3. Put on the armor of light

- a. You see we are to be on guard against Satan in this world, but our defenses should not hurt others but show them the light of God.
- b. Jesus says that we are the light of the world Matthew 5:14-15
 - a. And to this end God tells us to behave properly

VIII. And finally we are to put on Jesus

Romans 13:14

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”

A. “*Put on*” here is the meaning of sinking into a garment

- 1. To be totally engulfed and surrounded by Christ.
- 2. Galatians 3:27

27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

B. And we are to “*Make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*”

- 1. Our thinking should not be external, seeking to protect ourselves or fill our own desires.
- 2. But our thoughts should be on God’s desires.

Conclusion:

Today we should consider the shape of our armor.

Is your armor one of light to this world.

Or is it rusted from the lack of trust in God.

Maybe it is it tarnished by a lack of submission to rulers and authorities in our Lives.

God can restore the light to your armor through a humble surrender to Him.