



Christ Lutheran Church

605 South Fifth Street • Norfolk, NE 68701

Share God's Word, share His love, and do it now!

Pastor Chip Winter, Director of Ministries

“When God Gives You A Speeding Ticket” – Romans 13:1-10

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PastorMike Moreno

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The text chosen for our sermon this day is taken from Paul's letter to the Romans, the thirteenth chapter:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Fulfilling the Law Through Love

8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Thus far the text..dear Christian Friends...

You are driving along 275 from Omaha...just leaving West Point, and you can see the outline of Beemer. You're thinking of getting home and the things you have to do...put the kids to bed, maybe run to the store and get a few groceries. You might still get a chance to catch the last part of the game...and then you see them. The lights behind you...flashing red and white. Your stomach, which was fine 3 seconds ago, has turned to ice. Now the kids realize the car behind you is a state trooper. “DAD, there is a police car behind us!! Do you think he wants us to stop?? DAD, there is a police car behind us!” “I know there is a police car behind us. Please sit down. You pull to the side of the road. The trooper pulls up behind you, and the lights are blinding you. You wonder if you have a current insurance card with you, and wonder if your registration is where it's supposed to be. You turn the car off, and the trooper knocks on your window. “Good evening. License and registration please? And you provide the requested items, and the trooper goes back to his cruiser. And...you...wait. Will I get a ticker? Will I get a warning? Kids are asking a thousand questions and your wife just looks...straight ahead. Finally, the trooper comes back, and ... does that sound familiar? Don't you just hate it when you get pulled over?? Well, Paul tells us that God, the same God who is omnipotent, who loves you, guides and leads us in more ways than you know. Today, we want to look at God's work through those in authority, even when they give you a ticket. Today we gonna talk about the two kingdoms that God uses to care for His people.

I. Kingdom of the Right

In 1944, the Soviet Union liberated the first concentration camp in Poland. Later they would liberate Jews in Soviet forces later liberate Auschwitz (January 1945), Gross-Rosen (February 1945), Sachsenhausen (April 1945), Ravensbrueck (April 1945), and Stutthof (May 1945). Americans liberated Bergen-Belsen. The British liberated Bergen Belsen. Soviet Forces, American Forces, and British Forces have brought liberation to those who were suffering unimaginably. Jews prayed, Christians prayed, and God sent help by means of armies. Even Soviet Soldiers, whose government denied the existence of God, were used by God to bring about His will for His people.

Friday, March 11th, 2011 an earthquake struck Japan. In response, the United States government responded with The United States Navy, The United States Marine Corps, and the United States Air Force 24,000 U.S. servicemembers, 189 aircraft, 24 naval ships; and cost \$90 million.

Last week Hurricane Harvey slammed the Texas coast, and thousands were evacuated from their homes. The National Guard, Coast Guard and many others flocked to the Gulf Coast to assist. This weekend we pray and remember those in the path of Hurricane Irma.

December 10th, 2009 a fire occurred on Omaha Street across from Michael's Cantina. A propane tank had just been filled, and the fires was directly in contact with that tank. Our fire department had been previously trained on BLEVE...which means if that thing went up, it would have threatened the lives of residents of Norfolk in a mile radius. The Norfolk Police and Fire Department sent a team in, and a firefighter named Scott Bonsall risked his life and closed the valve. The fire was extinguished.

In every one of the incidents I have shared, God was at work in the kingdom of the right. That means that God controls our world...He cares for us. Remember the Apostle's creed, first article?

I believe that God has made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears and all my members; my reason and all my senses and still takes care of them. He gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink house and home, wife, children, land, animals and all I have.

He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

God uses authorities to care for us. And the authority they have, the power they wield is not for their own benefit. It is for your benefit. The flashing lights are not for the police...they are to gain your attention. They are to warn people when an ambulance must rush to your home. Authority is given not for the individual to wield power, but to serve.

In the military, we know a bit about authority. A colonel or captain wears an eagle on his collar. He is responsible for everyone in his or her command. America trusts her sons and daughters to the wisdom and leadership of such leaders. Captains and Colonels have power...power to serve privates and junior sailors.

Families are an example of God's gift of the kingdom of the Right. Parents are to lead and guide their children. Husband and wife are to love and honor one another. God creates and sustains life through worldly means.

In the Holy Gospels, we hear of the disciples arguing about who is greatest. The greatest is the one who serves. The only problem is that people don't always follow what God has in mind. There are those who seek power and wield power for their own benefit. Perhaps you have had a supervisor or other authority who did not have a servant mindset. Perhaps they thought you were the servant, and they were to be served. Perhaps there are time when you did not treat the people entrusted to your care as you ought. When the structure that God sets in place doesn't quite work correctly in the kingdoms of the right, the kingdom of the Left comes to the rescue.

II. Kingdom of the Left

We know that God controls and rules our world, but He does it in two different realms. In the realm of government, the sword is used, force is used. If you don't comply, you get a ticket. You get arrested. And if you hurt people and are threatening lives, then police and other lawful authorities have the godly duty of stopping you, up to and including deadly force. But there is also the realm of the Church.

in the realm of the Church, God calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth. The work of the church is to call sinners to repentance by the work of the Holy Spirit. The realm of the Church does not work on the external, but on the heart of man.

In the Holy Christian Church Christ is proclaimed so that God's children may enter into His presence washed in the blood of the Lamb. By believing in His name, they belong to Him...are are fed by His body and blood...and have life eternal in His name. We will not have life eternal in this world...but we will have life eternal. The Church does not do the job of the state. And the state does not do the work of the church.

Luther said it this way...

God has ordained the two governments: the spiritual, which by the Holy Spirit under Christ makes Christians and pious people; and the secular, which restrains the unchristian and wicked so that they are obliged to keep the peace outwardly...

But thanks be to God that this worldly kingdom is such a blessing. We are allowed to worship as we will. We are allowed to believe according to God's Word.

We live in two kingdoms...so what?

When you are at work on a fire truck, a bank, a hospital, an office, whatever the case may be...you are serving your neighbor. You are living and working in the kingdom of the right. When you care for your own child, or the child of another, you are God's hands caring and guiding for His children.

As I visit with folks, sometimes we complain about the state of our world and our nation. While it is imperfect, very very imperfect...God rules through it! This is just a hunch, but when we see our jobs, our politicians, our police and so many other entities of the Kingdom of the Right, we believe it to be wildly out of control, and contrary to God's will.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, God does work through both kingdoms. Paul writes to tell us that the worldly authorities are ordained by God for our good. They are the means by which God keeps us safe. They are the means by which God would bless us with pious rules, good government and the like.

But people who serve you..people who are in charge...sometimes they blow it. I mean they blow it big. Each one of you right now at this moment can think of a politician, or some leader who made horrible decisions, sinned and it was right there on CNN for the world to see. And there is a chorus whose refrain is, "Throw the bums out!"

These are people who are sinners...just like you, and just like me. These are people for whom Christ died. Join me as we pray for those people that God has called to serve His people through the secular or right kingdom. God rules in both kingdoms. And the next time you get pulled over for speeding, know that God is at work!

Amen.