

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:
Authority & Resistance

Speaker:
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Scriptures:
Titus 2:15-3:8

Theme: Embrace submission and you will know when to resist.

Introduction: Numbers 22 recounts the story of Balaam and his willingness to curse Israel for personal profit. As he went to do so, his donkey resisted him, earning his anger. When the Lord opened the donkey's mouth, he protested that he had been faithful for many years, and that his resistance was for good reasons. In that way, the donkey serves as a model for how Christians are to engage authorities: we seek to submit and obey so that our reputation is for faithfulness, and we only resist when necessary.

Here are 3 points for understanding the authority and resistance:

1. Good citizenship

Titus 3:1-8 teaches us that we are to be submissive to rulers and authorities. That means a humble attitude that obeys and acknowledges rightful authority.

Exercising authority and submission are everyday, everyone experiences.

The first fruit of submission is obedience. If someone is not generally obedient to authority, they are not submissive.

Submission should also produce good works, as we work for the good of our communities.

2. Higher citizenship

Christians live in the tension of dual citizenship: our earthly allegiances and our heavenly citizenship. These two kingdoms are not equal: God's kingdom is always first and best.

When these 2 levels clash, our allegiance must always be to the kingdom of God, which means that we will have to resist our earthly kingdoms on some level. Jesus showed us this in relation to money (Luke 16:13).

Psalm 87 is a meditation on how glorious our heavenly citizenship is

3. The purposes of God

Titus 2:15 shows the necessary connection between exercising authority faithfully and making sure that no one disregards you. To allow your authority to be disregarded is to have it undermined.

Ultimately, being a good citizen is founded on our making God's kingdom first.

The Bible contains many examples of rightful resistance to authority (cf. Acts 5:29; 19:21-34), as does church history (Luther and the 'lesser magistrate').

There is a proper way to resist unjust authorities that honors the Lord and seeks the genuine good of our neighbors.

Questions:

1. Does your life demonstrate glad submission and obedience to God-ordained authorities?
2. How does your 'heavenly citizenship' affect your daily life?
3. How are you resisting wickedness because of your higher loyalty to God?