

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Church & State in
Conflict

Speaker:

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Date:

October 30, 2022

Scriptures:

Various

Theme: Surrender to the Lord so you know how to resist.

Introduction: We all know what it is to resist authorities who make a decision we disagree with, feeling like their choice will keep us from happiness. But when we know that the authority fears the Lord and wants to please him, then the grounds for our resistance quickly disappear. Their rightful submission to Authority himself helps us to submit as well. But not all earthly authorities fear and honor the Lord, which means that we will need to resist them at points.

Here are 3 points to know how to resist:

1. Take a high view of government

Some think that the government can solve society's every problem; but that approach leads only to disaster. Others think that government is a necessary evil; but that attitude disrespects God's design.

David's encounter with Saul in the cave (1 Sam 24) demonstrates the right attitude: reverence and respect for duly-constituted authority, even when it's wrong. Christians see government as fundamentally good and appointed by God. That should show in all we do.

2. Examine ourselves closely

Our duty to God is higher than to any other authority; but that duty is not composed of our feelings or preferences.

Rebelling against authority can be very energizing; and it can fuel sinful attitudes. If we are going to challenge God's appointed authority, it must be on grounds that God approves of. Therefore, we need to examine our motives for resistance.

There are two ways to examine: Scripture and prayer, and fellowship with others. We need to allow God's word to correct and guide us in all we do.

3. Act consistently

Our actions must be consistent with our Christian faith; which means that when we resist unjust authorities, it probably looks different from how others do so.

To be consistent we should: a) prioritize legal justifications; b) look to the lesser magistrate; c) use the power we have within the system to work for change; d) be prudent; e) look to resist more than to rebel; and f) keep the gospel in view at all times.

Questions:

1. Do you have a positive view of government?
2. How conscious are you of living for Christ first in your daily life?
3. In light of this series, what areas or topics do you need to bring into fellowship with others?