

Pastor David Fritzsche Th.D.

The Road to
Peace & Freedom

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Out of the conflict of this past year, I feel the need to say a few things.

They are important, or so it seems to me, but they are also controversial.

Please read this at your own risk. It may confirm some feeling you also have or it just might rock your boat.

In any event – It is yours to do with as you please.

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So, read on... and –

May you find PEACE and the Freedom to enjoy it!

Pastor Dave

Chapter 1

Submission to Authority

As our nation moves through a time of conflict, increasing polarity and uncertainty, religious leaders are increasingly speaking out. Billy Graham seldom had anything political to say and served several presidents as their counselor and confidant through his years of honored ministry. Yet, now his son Franklin Graham is speaking out clearly and pointedly. Others are speaking out against our current administration and are hardly passive in their profile.

The past finds many religious leaders confronting their king or ruler. Israel went to war on many occasions and withstood oppression and injustice. They were submissive to the Pharaohs in Egypt until God told Moses to withstand the authority of Pharaoh. Jesus withstood the religious leaders in the Temple.



Not very submissive, was he? But what about the passage below and its challenge to be subject to authority?

If from time to time there are exceptions to this rule of submission, then how are we to interpret the following verses from Romans 13 – 1-7

13:1 - Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that

exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

It might be easy to make a case for being passive to all authority, or to simplify the text to mean, "Don't be a criminal." It might also be easy to make a case for all authority being an extension of God Himself, whether that authority is good or bad. But in that case, we would have no power to make the determination of whether they were good or bad, for that would be immaterial to the point of their being from God. Possibly one of the keys to interpretation is found in verse 4 - "They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." So, doing wrong is the action that triggers the punishment. But what if there are reprisals for actions that are not wrong before God or rational others? What if the authority is not kind, protective, and benevolent but is the thief itself? Frederic Bastiat, in his treatise - The Law, makes a great case for a natural movement of government from being our protector to being the plunderer. There are many cases in history that make that case. Of course, Hitler is a prime example of abusive leadership, yet he killed far fewer than Stalin, Mao, or others in history in their quest for power. Should we submit to them without question

because they presume to have the authority to abuse people?

A theology, to be accurate and complete has to take the entire scripture as a whole and put it all together to have a complete and precise policy and doctrine. In terms of submission to authority, it is obviously not an easy matter. Was Moses rebellious in confronting Pharaoh? Were the prophets and priests of old rebellious when they confronted Israel's kings who went astray? Was Detrick Bonhoeffer rebellious when he and several other pastors in Germany took a stand against Hitler? Was Martin Luther rebellious when he nailed his thesis to the door of Wattenberg Cathedral? Were the Jews rebellious when they demanded a homeland and gathered from all over the earth to Israel in 1948? Was Martin Luther King rebellious when he fought for equality of his people in the 1960s?



Yes, we could go through history and the history of the scripture and find many instances of those who championed a cause and surfaced as a godly leader by confronting the government. How is it that we seem to see these as exceptions to the rule, yet contend for fidelity to scripture that teaches submission? We either have to condemn those who were confrontational, including Jesus, or we have to find a different way of interpreting what we see historically.

Chapter 2

My Journey into Authority

Of course, as in all things theological, not everyone will agree with my conclusions and I do not expect such agreement. In fact, I have changed my mind on many things over the years so I am not closing my mind to anything. But let me tell you a little about my journey through submission.

I was taught as a child that good Christians were not angry, did not fight, and always turned the other cheek. This is a part of Christian thought and training. This is one of the reasons that Christians were easily persecuted. Christians do not have a doctrine of Jihad - Holy War. They tended to end up victims.

This was also part of my personal history. I was a big kid, reaching my mature height and weight earlier than many of my peers. But I was also known as the nice guy, the easy to get along with kids on the campus. This of course invited the bullies to target me. If you can intimidate the big kid, then you rule. Power works like that. Power without responsibility is always tyranny, whether it is a personal thing on the playground or the exercise of political power in government. It is all the same.

So, I was easy, nice, and submissive. No one ever accused me of being a rebel either to the law or church authorities or to my parents. Well, that was until David Snider. Snider was the epitome of the stereotypical bully. He ruled! He accumulated an entourage of 'wanna-be' bullies around him and he ran rough-shod over the campus. Everyone in school knew it and all the teachers did too. No one did anything

about it. Not one, until about the 10th time he took my orange creamcicle away from me. That day, his rule died and I became a man. From that point on the campus was free from his tyranny and I was free from my fear. But that's a long story in itself.

No, I did not change personalities, nor belief systems. I still believed in submission to authority and remained compliant with my parents, the pastor, and the law. I did have to come to some understanding of my behavior however and wrestled with it for weeks trying to reconcile my behavior to my belief. I did so, but possibly it was not a reconciliation as much as a justification. You, the reader, will have to be the judge of that.

Later in life, I became a police officer for the City of Colton, California. I soon came to a conflict of beliefs again. I was committed to peace and reason, but I was constantly thrust into situations where reason was not on the table and where peace was something I had to bring at the expense of a violator of the peace. I had to fight! Submission to the law required that I confront rebellion against the law and bring compliance.



That internal conflict came to a head one night when I was called to the office for my 6-month evaluation. My Sergeant, Jim Zurcher was a guy that I greatly admired and still do. He would become the Chief of Police at several agencies, ending up at Palo Alto, California where he

became famous for several innovative ideas and for establishing Zurcher's Law, a Supreme Court Ruling in a case he initiated.

His evaluation of me that night was both rewarding and devastating. He summarized the evaluation as the first 'Above Standard' evaluation he had given to anyone during the first evaluation period. Then he said something I shall never forget. He said I was superior in everything I did except he was thinking of terminating me. The issue was that I could reason my way through situations like no one else, but I was going to get killed on his watch because I was slow to move to physical force and at some point, I was going to get killed because of it. His challenge was that I change my demeanor or resign.

I left his office devastated. I liked the job and the people I worked with. I knew what he was talking about for it was a conflict in me and my spirit. I did not like to fight. I wanted to believe that reason could overcome violence and the need for violence, yet, I recognized that I was constantly confronted by people who were unreasonable, incapable of reason in their condition, and who had to be restrained.

As I drove away from the police department, back onto my beat, I saw a truck weaving down the street. I observed for a moment, then put on the overhead police lights. The truck lurched forward and started to try to get away. A semi-truck and trailer are not reasonably going to outrun a police car, so I knew there was a lack of reason already in the situation. The truck finally struck a power pole and came to a stop. I rushed to the driver's door and told him to get out, but he refused. I reached up and grabbed him, and he came tumbling out, on top of me, and to my rear. Instantly he had

me in a chokehold and was trying to get my gun out of the holster.

At that moment I heard all of the words of Sgt. Zurcher pounding in my ear. He was right, I was going to get killed and it was going to be now. But my training in physical defense kicked in and I knew how to get out of this and instinctively reversed the positions and in a second had him on the ground and in cuffs. I finished the incident, took the driver off to jail, and then drove directly to the station and called for Sgt. Zurcher. He was right. I had to make a decision - reorient or resign. I told him all that had happened and then said simply, "Never again. This will not happen ever again." It didn't. I was in fights regularly as would be expected in that occupation, but I never hesitated, never gave place to rebellion, and never lost another fight!

Chapter 3

Submission and Authority

In his recent speech to Congress, Prime Minister Netanyahu repeated those words, which are the mantra of the new Jewish state - "NEVER AGAIN." His commitment is to never again place the tolerance or peace of his people in a place where the holocaust can happen. Never again will they submit to illegitimate authority.

And here is the first principle of submission - It must be to true authority that God has established.

The second necessarily follows. Doing what is right is submission. Submission to illegitimate human regulations is not submission. During the Nuremberg War Trials, the defense of those charged with war crimes was all the same: 'I was just following orders!' In other words, I was honoring the government and submissively doing what I was told. But the sense of natural law, which has always been there for the human race, over-ruled that defense. If you do what is evil in submission to illegitimate law, then you are equally guilty of the crime. Submission is no excuse for murder. And, may I suggest, it is no excuse for following anything that is outside of God's established order of things.

The passage in Romans 13 is clear on this. The issue is doing right as opposed to those who do wrong. Also at issue is the legitimacy of the authority. All authority is limited with the exception of God Himself. No authority has the right to require that we do what is wrong. There is a higher law than the civil law of the human government and it is there that the rule of God applies. It is there that such famous statements also come into being, such as - "Evil prevails when good men do nothing" and "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" and "appeasement of evil is itself evil."

For us to understand what is right and wrong in terms of those who govern, we have to understand the definition and structure of authority. **The true righteous authority has two component parts** and without either, it is not good authority. First of all, there has to be a defined responsibility. No responsibility should be arbitrary, without definition, and without limits. It is the scope of that responsibility that releases the responsible person to have oversight.

The second component part of true authority is power. Everyone with a responsibility must be empowered to take care of their responsibility. Power, in and of itself is not evil. It is essential to function within the scope of responsibility. **The responsibility defines the function and the power is the ability to do it.** But, when there is inadequate power to accomplish the responsibility, there is weakness and it is ineffective. And, when power exceeds responsibility it is abuse. Evil takes power, not to be responsible, but to have power in and of itself.

Therein is the matrix through which we can determine what we submit to. We are submitting to the law and the rule of law, not to the whims of those who administer it. If they administer it as it is given from the law as a legitimate responsibility, then we yield to the rule of law as administered. But if the person presuming to administer the law, is outside of their responsibility and is driven by the accumulation of power, then they have stepped beyond the rule of law and are a law unto themselves.



Our Founding Fathers understood this principle and wove it into the fabric of our nation. In fact, they went beyond most social structures before them and inverted the

administration of power in our new nation. Before that time, most nations were ruled by a king or some other form of absolute authority that gave material goods and services to those under them at their whim. The government did not represent God but was, in essence, god all by itself.

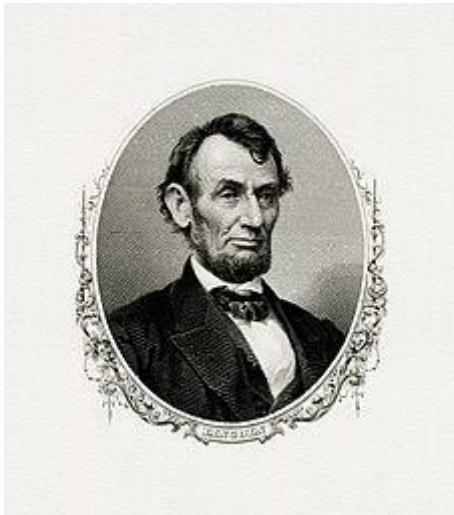
Our form of government reversed that sense of power and its source. It started with the premise that all men were endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. That is the first line of power and of relationship to God and from God. The premise is that God empowered all of us for self-government as God directs. The existence of civil government is not the presumption of power over the people, but in having delegated power given by the people to the leaders. In this sense, the greatest concern is not that the people would overstep their responsibilities but that the government might overstep its limited power and responsibility.



This is the wise and knowing supposition that people love power and some will sell their soul for it. Some will go far afield to implement their agenda over the people and change the fundamental foundations and limits that are provided for in our constitution.

So, the danger in our form of government is that the leaders will not submit to the people and remain within the limited confines of the responsibilities defined in the constitution. Proper submission to authority may mean our (the people) calling our representatives into question for this abuse of power.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "We the people are the rightful master of both Congress and the Courts, not to overthrow the Constitution but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution." There is a sense that a wayward government is obligated to submit to the people, who are the source of its power.



What is and is not proper submission requires a definition of what is and what is not the proper authority to which we submit. To submit to abuse and tyranny is not valid given the context of history or the administration of God's authority.

So, am I saying that we should not submit to authority? No, not at all. Remember, I was once an officer of the law and am proud of the service I rendered. I believe in the law and believe that the government should be honored in its administration of public safety, the general good, and the responsibilities that are given to us in the constitution.

What I am concerned about is that our passivity not be mistaken for righteousness by allowing tyranny and abuse. Submit, yes, but don't be ignorant, uninformed, or stupid in giving away the freedom and rights God gave to each one of us.

Increasingly there are strong voices in our land speaking prophetically and warning of the loss of freedom and the abuse of power. Increasingly they are confronted by those political forces seeking to remove the power of the individual and to have centralized ownership of material, money, and resources. Our foundational concepts of God giving directly to each individual is being increasingly supplanted by the philosophies of government ownership of all things. We are changing and being changed by forces that, in the last analysis, are evil. They must be confronted and exposed. This is submission to God's authority and to the law that is still ours to obey, even though it is being ignored by some authority figures.

So, I submit to those who have questioned my speaking out and feel that we need to honor those in authority, I ask, is our authority that which protects us or plunders us? Are we living in a time when God would raise up prophets to confront excessive use of power and stop the erosion of personal liberty? Is submission to authority an arbitrary stance without reservation or definition? If so then Moses owes Egypt an apology and Jesus owes the temple priests one also.

We can all err in trying to do right. Let us be careful that we seek truth and the authority of God in the process. Thanks for listening. I am open to your comments and disagreement.

Chapter 4

Social Justice and Individual Rights

We face a powerful movement today, in the name of Social Justice. The problem is, it has been elevated above individual justice, which traditionally has been our basis of all justice. The problem is, in defining what Social Justice means and how to administer it.

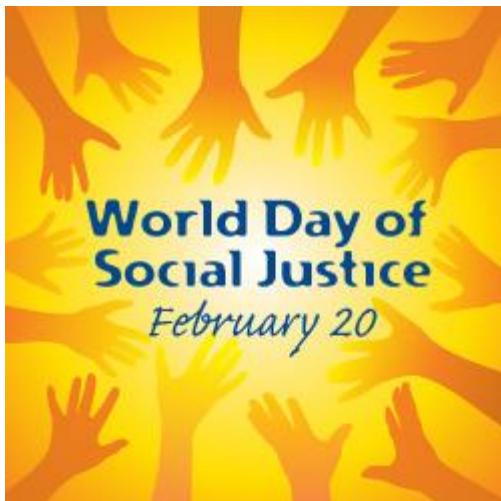
I read a series of posts on a social media site, between my sister and an editor of an Oregon Newspaper. He insisted that he was the victim of White Privilege and thus of Social Injustice. My sister came back at him with our family history, complete with an emigrant grandfather of German extraction and the history of his being registered during WWII, and his lack of opportunities for advancement during that time. She recounted our father working two jobs and building our house at the same time and of our needs being met, but without any 'privilege.'

Now I rather like a lively debate and I have enjoined a few in my lifetime but one thing I have learned: You never want to debate with my sister. She is smart, well-read, and her command of logic is lethal. She will destroy you in a debate. And so, she did with this editor who dared enter into her focus. But, although he finally gave up and became silent, was not convinced and crawled away somewhere to lick his wounds without a change of mind.

He voiced something that is now the mindset of the oppressed: Whether you know it or not, if you are white you are guilty of white privilege and you owe those who

are your victims, Social Justice. In this mindset, the guilty do not have to do anything or believe anything or have any known motivation for their guilt. And they are guilty, not by the preponderance of the evidence but by simply being different from the victim. Being a victim needs no evidence other than that the group or culture has a different standard of living than those who have more. Inequality is the measure of guilt or innocence. And, even if you have less than the victim, you can still be the problem for not being part of the culture or group that is identified as oppressed.

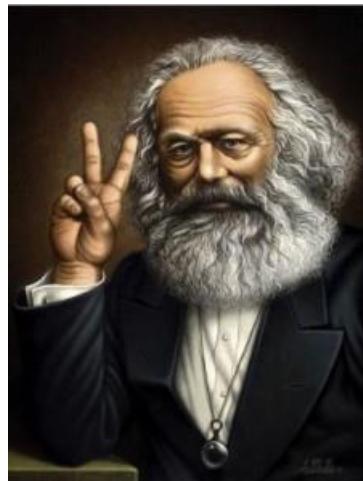
The measure of Social Justice is not by any means of jurisprudence, but by the historic outcome of one race, culture, group, or social division having less asset value than another. Equality is defined by the economic outcome and by nothing more.



This is in stark contrast to the Judeo-Christian world view that underpins our American history and culture. God relates to the individual and human rights are given by our Creator to individuals. Our economic system rewards individuals for their labor, investment, creativity, and thrift, without regard to any social attachment or membership. Asset value is tied to ownership acquired by growing it, mining it, or creating it.

So also, is our criminal justice system individualized. The individual is responsible for their behavior and the individual pays the price for the crime committed. We, as a culture, do not have a system of representative guilt, where someone or a relative can stand in the place of the criminal and do their time for them. Guilt or innocence is an individual matter.

So, embracing and understanding the basis of Social Justice is difficult for most of us, except for those who are steeped in the philosophies of Marxism. Karl Marx and Frederic Engels wrote their Manifesto articulating the struggle between the classes. Their reality was one of class warfare, not individual responsibility. They removed the connection between individual effort, investment, and creativity and boiled responsibility down to the struggle of classes.



The problem with their social order and its political adherents was and is, that the motivation for productivity is in the rewards it brings and if one is not rewarded for their effort, there is a lack of motivation. And that is the simple and basic fact of human behavior and motivation. We do what we do for personal gain. Yes, self-interest is in us all and it is the basic element of seeking a reward.

So, we have two factors at war – The Judeo-Christian world view and the Secular Socialist World View. One has

at its core the individual and the other the culture or group. One believes in equality of worth and access to the law and equality of value to the Creator. The other disregards the individual in favor of a presumed rightness of equality of outcome. Everyone should have the same reward regardless of the individual contribution.

The war is best seen through the matrix of Capitalism vs. Socialism. They are incompatible and there is no middle ground. You can have life within one context or the other but not in both. You believe in the responsibility of the individual or you see the efforts of the individual as the means of rewards to be divided for the whole. Your focus is either in how equal are the pieces of the pie being cut, or you envision an unlimited quantity of pies to be baked by willing individuals.



Possibly by now, I have betrayed my bias. I do not believe in Social Justice.

Chapter 5

Christianity and Personal Responsibility

I love history. Always have. History is the record of humanity and God's dealing with us. The human race does not have a perfect record of self-management, and it seems to me that our failures are directly attributable to our need to be as God, knowing good from evil. It is that original sin

issue – that tree in the garden that exposed our propensity to want to be as God.

Yet, the more we pursue our will to power and our absence of a need for God, the more we reveal the fatal flaw of a godless life and a godless world. The more we pursue godless philosophies, the worse becomes our outcomes. The more we rely on power monger rulers, politicians, and systems, the worse it is.

God is a gentleman. He does not force us to comply but offers ample evidence of His love for us and his plans for us. He placed us on the earth and gave us dominion as ambassadors of Himself. The mystery is, why do we continue to want to go it alone and disregard the presence of the Creator in our affairs?

The circle of history gives ample evidence of the results of cultures that felt the need to accumulate all power and to have all the answers and to follow leaders who propose to solve all of our problems. We vote for the one who offers the most without realizing that they cannot do so without destroying the balance of nature and the simple reality of the individual. We must solve our own problems, discipline our own behaviors, set our own goals, and offer no excuses for our outcomes. We stand before God alone – as individuals. We have only ourselves to blame.

In His likeness, He created man, to be a reflection of His creative nature and to be an extension of His presence and power. He placed us in the garden and provided the genetics by which all humans would be unique and valuable in the scope of creation. He divided unto each a different share of talents, abilities, perspectives, sizes,

shapes, and colors. Each one is a reflection of the Creator who designed our difference but maintained our equal value and place in creation.

Sameness is not equality and equality is not sameness. Difference is not division nor is it inequality. We have it all wrong when it comes to equality. We devalue ourselves and others in our quest for Utopia and make sameness a substitute for our becoming what we are intended to be.

Life is not about becoming like others or demanding sameness in any of our differentiation, but in cherishing our difference, developing our uniqueness, and becoming all that our Creator intended. Nothing less will satisfy and nothing more is worth the struggle.

Relax! You cannot become what you already are.

Pastor Dave