

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

GOD'S WORD CONCERNING CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP – PART IV

Romans 13:6-7 “This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.”

God’s word says you as a Christian are to pay taxes. . . respect and honor those who are in authority. This is no April fool comment. This is what today’s devotional thought is based upon Romans 13:6-7. This word of God is so different from the conversation of the general population of the United States. This is not what your old sinful nature wants to read or hear.

Note the reason given by the Holy Spirit through the pen of St. Paul that you should pay taxes, “. . . for the authorities are God’s servants.” This word of God gives a simple explanation that taxes are the way God provides the necessary financial resources for those in government to carry out their responsibilities to main order in this world.

To not pay taxes would cause you to do exactly the opposite of what St. Paul wrote in Romans 13:2, “. . . do not rebel against government officials” because they have been appointed by God to rule over you. Withholding your taxes would be a sin against the First Commandment because to rebel against the taxes would also mean you are rejecting what God has said through His word. So, St. Paul urges you to do what is God pleasing which includes paying taxes and giving honor to those God has placed over you as authorities. Luther explains the Fourth Commandment, “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor the, serve and obey them, love, and cherish them” (Small Catechism)

In his Large Catechism Luther says the reason that all authorities are included under the umbrella of the Fourth Commandment is those in government are the fathers of the region, state or nation that they serve. They are responsible to provide for the smooth functioning of the community and its individual members. Carol Geisler writes, “In His (God’s) commandments and throughout His Word, we find God’s guidance for wise and loving parenting, just governance (my emphasis), and faithful spiritual leadership.” Luke wrote that even Jesus, as true man, “. .

.went down to Nazareth with them (His parents) and was obedient to them." (Luke 2:51)

Prayer: Lord, give me and all citizens of this nation willing hearts to pay our taxes and honor our elected leaders and guide those who are elected to honor their offices by carrying out their duties honestly and faithfully. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Lift every voice and sing Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty,
Let our rejoicing rise High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun Of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chast'ning rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with steady beat, Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our parents sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our wear years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, May we forever stand;
True to our God, true to our native land.
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