

INI Hymns:

5th Sunday after Trinity **Romans 13:1**

Sermon 26-31

7/5/26

The Word of God for our meditation this morning is from **Romans 13:1**

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities.

*For there is no authority except from God,
and the authorities that exist are appointed by God."*

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

That is an incredible statement! "The authorities that exist are appointed by God." Every ruler and authority in the world is appointed by God. Whether they are elected, or born into a royal line, or even if they rise to power by a military take over, they are all appointed by God. This is not just the rulers God appointed over His chosen people of Israel, it includes all the rulers in the world, including evil tyrants and rulers who are only interested in their own wealth and pleasure. Paul was writing this to the Christians in Rome when Nero was the Emperor. Jesus truly is the "King of kings and Lord of lords." Today we will delve a little deeper into this amazing truth.

Behold Your God — Ruler of the Nations!

-I- Evidence of God's Rule

There are many passages that affirm this truth. Jesus told Pontius Pilate, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above." John 19:11 God told king Nebuchadnezzar "that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men." Daniel 4:17 Still to this day God appoints rulers over every nation? That is what the prophet Daniel says, "He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings." Daniel 2:21

God also proved it in our Scripture reading from Daniel 4:28-37. At the height of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, at a moment when he was taking great pride in the great kingdom that he had built, God humbled him and brought him low. God caused him to lose his sanity. He literally had the mind of an animal and went from living in a fabulous palace to living out in the fields, eating grass with the cattle. God took the kingdom of Babylon away from him. Then, even more amazingly, God gave it back to him. When Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven, God restored his sanity AND his throne.

God also made it clear, through the prophet Isaiah, that He had chosen Cyrus and gave him all the kingdoms of the earth and appointed him to power so he would release the people of Israel from Babylon to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the city and the Temple. In Isaiah 45 God emphasizes that He called Cyrus by name and appointed him for this even though Cyrus didn't know Him. And He said that 200 years before it happened! Yes, God "rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will."

It's easy to see why God would appoint Cyrus so that he could do good for God's people. But what about all the evil rulers? What about the wicked Tyrants? What about those who spread heathenism? Why would God appoint them to power? Why would He appoint Nero to be king when he brutally killed hundreds of Christians?

God doesn't always tell us why He does what He does. He tells us that He works all things together for good to those who love Him and He wants us to simply trust Him. However, there are several accounts in the Bible where He does tell us why. We can learn some lessons from them to help us

-II- Understand God's Rule.

When King Solomon was getting old, God sent the prophet Ahijah to go speak to Jeroboam, a servant of king Solomon. He told Jeroboam that God was going to tear the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to him. However, for David's sake He would leave one tribe to David's descendants, but He told Jeroboam, "I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes." God also told him WHY He was doing that. It was because Solomon did not remain faithful to God the way David his father had. Solomon married wives from all the heathen nations and He made places of worship for all their heathen gods.

What's really incredible, God told Jeroboam this and said, "If you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you." But Jeroboam did not serve God! As soon as he became king, he forbid the people to travel to Jerusalem to worship, fearing that they would want to join together with their brothers again. So he made two golden calves for the people of Israel to worship and led the people in idolatry. So God took the kingdom away from Jeroboam and his descendants and gave it to another. May we not make the mistake of Jeroboam and many others. Serve God! Be faithful to Him! Only He can bless us. Only He can forgive us and save us. Apart from Him there is only death and destruction.

Doesn't that beg the question, why did God give the 10 tribes of Israel to Jeroboam in the first place. God knew that he would be evil and lead the people in idol worship? God doesn't tell us why in this specific case, but He does give us one answer in many other passages. For example, when the people of Israel took possession of the land of Canaan, God commanded them to drive out the people completely. But they didn't. God says "they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord." Judges 3:4 So also God appointed Jeroboam as King over the 10 tribes of Israel as a test for the people. Would they follow an evil king or follow God?

We are being tested in the same way. The government of Canada has passed many laws making things legal that God forbids - like abortion, medically assisted death, same sex marriages, transgenderism, unmarried couples living together, free open sexual relationships, pornography, you name it. These are all widely accepted and practiced in our society. Whom will we follow in our life? Will we follow God's commands or the commonly accepted laws of the land? God says, "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil." Exodus 23:2 Follow God and His commands.

Do you ever wonder and shake your head about some actions of government, Job explains

it well. “[God] makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them. He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason; he makes them wander in a trackless waste. They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.” Job 12:23-25 Again we ask, Why? It may as a judgement against people who reject Him. **God gives a nation the type of rulers that they desire.** When the majority of people in a nation desire every form of perversion then they elect a ruler that goes along with it and even punish those who oppose it. God says in Romans 1:21-25 “Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!” God gives them over to follow their corrupted human wisdom.

The Canadian Senate passed Bill C-9 which repealed the "*good faith religious opinion*" clause in the criminal code section on Hate Speech. The lawmakers assert that this does not criminalize preaching, reading scripture, or faith-based teachings. It only removes the religious defence of those who are clearly promoting hatred toward any group. We of course would agree that hatred toward any individual or group should not be tolerated. However, many already consider it hate speech to say that homosexuality or transgenderism is a sin. It's not hard to imagine this being used against those who speak out against these common sins of our culture.

What is really amazing though, is how He uses that for the good of His kingdom. Even as God gives up a nation and people to follow their own perverted desires, He uses it to build His church in a number of ways. First of all, it makes a clear distinction between the true believers who desire to follow God and His word and the false teachers and followers who go along with popular opinion. It can also have another positive effect, as society grows increasingly corrupt, God can use that to cause people to wake up and see the corruption and seek God and a source of absolute truth. We are beginning to see people question the so called “facts” of evolution and the moral standard of our society and desire something solid and true. That gives us greater opportunities for spreading the Gospel. So you see God allows evil and foolish rulers to do their evil and foolish things, but He uses that to test His people and to embolden them to stand out as different and even to draw people to Himself and His word of truth.

Finally we have to ask, why would God appoint a ruler who tortures and kills Christians. Nero was ruling when Paul wrote the words of our text. He went on to kill hundreds of Christians in many horrible ways. Why would God appoint such a man to rule? What Good can possibly come out of that? This is truly amazing! You have heard the saying, “The blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church.” Contrary to what you would think, the

Church grew during times of persecution.

First of all the Church grew in strength of faith. Believers draw closer together to strengthen and support each other with God's word. They became totally dedicated to God and cling to God all the more. Not only that, God's Church grew in numbers. You might wonder why would anyone be drawn to the Christian faith when that could mean being put to death? The Christian faith is about gaining eternal life. Jesus Christ has conquered death and will raise us to life to live with God in paradise. What better way to show that to the world than seeing people who were willing to die rather than deny their faith in Christ. People saw their confidence in dramatic ways and were drawn to know more about the God they followed. God was not unfaithful to those believers. They endured a brief moment of terror and pain for the Saviour who suffered all for them, and now they have received the crown of life with Him in heaven, and they gave the most powerful testimony of their faith to the world. Truly God does all things well.

All of this is for our comfort and encouragement that we may know

-III- The Peace of God's Rule.

The world is very evil, so we should not be surprised that there are evil rulers in the world. But, as children of God, we can have the peace of knowing that God rules over all. God may allow evil people to work their evil, and that may even cause us some sorrow and suffering. But He keeps His own in His tender care and works through the evil for our Good and for the building up of His Church. So trust God. Find peace in knowing He rules over all. And serve Him! As we commemorate the beginning of our nations, let us remember that God rules in the kingdom of men. And He commands us to "be subject to the governing authorities." God has placed them over us for our good. And in this country especially He has given us many blessings through them. So be subject to the government and thank God. And where our government and society is going contrary to God's Word and will, may we continue to follow God and show the world that His ways are always best. And pray for our country that God may bring it back to Him.

Amen.