

Romans #28 - Rebels With a Cause Obey The Government?

- Well, how do you? We got to a great, great, great text today. The best way to get a word from God is to open the word of God, amen. So open your Bibles to Romans chapter 13. We're looking at the Christian's relationship with government, and I'll just say, it's really curious Tommy, because what weekend is it? It's Memorial Day weekend, where we honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, giving their life to defend our freedoms because for them, our freedom came at the highest price, amen. And so we stopped to honor those. We start by thanking and honoring first responders, police officers, those who are soldiers, veterans, and those who are family members of veterans, particularly those who have fallen and given their life. And what's really interesting. We're spending about a year going through the book of Romans. And a lot of times people will say, "We can't take that long of a series and go through a whole book of the Bible. Instead, you just need to every week, figure out what is topical and relevant so you can stay current with events." Well, when I laid out the book of Romans, I just organized it into the thought units and lo and behold, I wasn't this smart, we're dealing with the primary text in the New Testament regarding government on Memorial Day weekend and how we're supposed to relate to the government. So guess what? God's timeless word is always timely, because it's eternal, it fits perfectly into the season that we find ourselves in. And so what we're dealing with now is how do you live as a citizen of God's kingdom, but a resident of the nation and when there is conflict between God and government, how is the Christian to respond? Now, that being said, he's gonna tell us that we could be rebels, rebels against the culture by obeying the government. So we'll jump into Romans chapter 13, verse one. And this is the first principle that God works through authority. That's how our God works. Let every person, all right, so which people? Every person now, there's always a couple of us that are like, yeah, that's not, I don't believe in government. I don't believe in authority. I don't believe in any of that. And this tends to be a high concentration of people because we're in Arizona. Some people have asked me, "Pastor Mark, so is Arizona conservative?" No, it's libertarian. So if Texas, which is conservative, had a baby with California, which is liberal, they would call it Arizona and it would be libertarian, which means sometimes it's conservative, sometimes it's liberal and some elections it's drunk. So that's libertarian. We may have just had that, thrown that out there as a possibility, okay. And so there are always libertarians who are like, "I don't think I need any government or authority." And this includes us. Let every person be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God. So he's talked largely up until this point about our relationship with God and our relationship with each other. Now he's gonna talk about our relationship with government. The first thing you need to know is that God is the source of all authority, that God has all authority. All other authority is derivative. God's authority is an eight. He holds, he is all authority. There's no one alongside of God. There's no one equal to God, that our God has ultimate supreme authority and ultimately, we believe in the scriptures that this is our highest authority. And this is how our God who is in authority over us, communicates to us and convicts us. Number two, God's authority is external and internal. Externally, we have parents, we have pastors and we have police officers. Internally, we have the person, the presence, the power of the Holy Spirit. And he's already told

us a little earlier what it is to live by the spirit versus live by the flesh. And the flesh is our full in predisposition towards sin, folly and rebellion but if you are led by the spirit internally, you don't need much authority externally. If you are led by the spirit, they don't need to have a police officer keep an eye on you. There's not going to need to be a court case likely regarding you. In addition, you're not going to need a lawyer to defend you because the Holy Spirit convicts you before you go do something, that's going to get you in certain kinds of trouble. And so for us as the children of God, we need to pay careful attention to the Spirit of God in us, be led by the Spirit, be filled by the Spirit, to demonstrate the character of Christ in our own life. And as we do that, we don't need as much external authority. We just don't. And in addition, authority is from parental to civil. And so the first authority that God's establishes in our life is in the Ten Commandments, to honor and obey your mother and father, that's where authority is supposed to begin. And the problem is if you don't parent well, you're not raising your children to rightly relate to authority. The result is a whole generation of foolishness and rebellion and that's exactly what we have. And the result is that there was some parenting curriculum in the 1970s, the most popular book written and the most popular scholar in quotes regarding parenting was a guy named Dr. Spock in the 1970s. Now you would think with that name, he'd be really smart, he wasn't, he wasn't, he wasn't at all. In fact, what he said was that we're not born as sinners by nature and choice, that we're morally good or neutral, and that therefore, a child doesn't really need authority, they just need freedom to express themselves. And you can hear the mothers starting to chuckle, that's a testimony right there. In addition then, the best thing you could do for your child is build a high self-esteem. So all of our curriculum is based on self-expression and self-esteem which leads to self-destruction. And I always say, what's the difference between a terrorist and a child? Size, that's the only difference. They would destroy you and burn your house down and live stream it on the internet if they could figure out how to get that all done. And so we believe in the Bible that children have a sin nature, they need a new nature, they need a relationship with the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And over them, there needs to be parental authority because they start with the flesh and they need to be saved from foolish decisions and self-destruction. And so if you don't raise your children to honor, respect and obey authority, you are setting them up to not be a Christian and not to be a good citizen and not to be a good spouse and not to be a good employer or employee and not to be a good mother or father. And that's the culture that we absolutely tragically have. So my two questions to you would be first and foremost, what authority are you under? And then the question after that would be, what authority do you exercise? So who's in authority over you? So for me, I've got a board that oversees our church, I've got external, what I would call apostolic wise council overseers in addition to pastors and counselors that Grace and I submit to you and we're in subjugation to them, we love them, we trust them, we submit to them. We're under that authority. In addition, my love, my dad and my mom, and they love the Lord and they speak into my life. And even though I'm not a little boy who needs to do everything my parents say, I ask my parents for wisdom and wise counsel among other professionals. And then as a leader, I pastor a church, so I have some authority to love and to lead you and I thank you for that honor. I've also got five kids and I wanna love and lead them. And as they become adults, our relationship transitions, and I'm no longer in that, obey your mother and father, but your mother and father are launching you and we're here to coach you and help you and love you and serve

you. Some of you are coaches, you're in authority. Some of you are players, you're under authority. Some of you are teachers, you're in authority. Some of you are students, you're under authority. Some of you are employers, you're in authority. Some of you are employees, you're under authority. We all have varying levels and degrees of authority. And some of you are minor children and you're under authority and some of you are their parents and you're in authority. And rightly relating to authority is incredibly important because the truth is most of us, we wanna be in authority, but we don't want to be under authority, meaning, "Hey, I'll tell you what to do, you can't tell me what to do." We call that America. It leads to nothing but independence and rebellion. In addition, sin and rebellion are the default nature of our fallen human flesh because we're sinners by nature and choice and one of the Bibles definitions of sin is to rebel against authority or law that ultimately, our first instinct is often wrong. Meaning our first instinct is often to push back, to bristle, to argue, to disagree, to disobey, to disregard authority, which means when you're emotional, you need to be more peripheral and careful because your response could be more fleshly. He's already told us to initiate this section in Romans 12, "Don't be conformed to the pattern of the world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind." And what happens when we're under authority, if you're conformed to the pattern of the world, you feed your fallen sinful flesh and your first instinct is just to bristle and disobey and rebel. And instead, you need to perfectly, carefully, biblically consider how can I be transformed by the renewing of my mind and rightly relate to authority in honor to my God who is over all authority. In addition, sinners cannot and will not make a perfect system of justice and even if one existed, sinners would ruin it. We hear a lot today about injustice and we were like, "Well, that system is unjust." Let me say, every system has some measure of imperfection in it, why? It's created by a fallen sinful person, imperfect people, I'll let you in on a little secret. Imperfect people do things imperfectly. I know that's shocking, crazy to even consider that. And what happens is, even if we did have a perfect system, if you handed it to an imperfect person, a fallen sinner, that system would be ruined. We have that system, it was called earth. So when God got done, it says he made the heavens in the earth. Everything was good and very good. And then God handed the leadership and authority to a husband and a wife, Adam and Eve, everything was perfect, the people running it were perfect. As soon as they chose sin and folly, the imperfect now people, made everything imperfect in the system and everything broke. We looked at this in Romans 8. This is now why the world is cursed and flawed and broken and frustrating. And we look at it, we say, "Well, it should be better." Well, it was, and we ruined it. And that means that we are not the solution, we are the problem. And the only time that things have ever been right is when God did his work. So we need our God to do his work again, and to write everything that we've made wrong, to fix everything that we have broken and to heal everything that we have hurt. And so, as we look at the world, we can't just say, you know what, I know what needs to happen. We need to look up and say, "God, we need you and you're our only hope." In addition, when it comes to rightly relating to authority, the state is God's servant. God's servant, he's gonna tell us in the next section of scriptures, and as a result, he says here in chapter 13, verse one, "That we as citizens of our state should be subject to governmental authorities." This means generally speaking, our disposition is to try to be good citizens, to try and honor the law and authority and to try to do that which is right in the side of the government. This does not however mean that every single thing that the government tells us to do should be done because there are times

that our government is against our God and our higher allegiance and loyalty is to God above government. And so there is a difference between generally respecting authority and disagreeing with particular policy. We'll get into that later in the sermon when we deal with civil disobedience, but I'll give you one, I'll give you two examples. One would be in China, horrible regime, godless, communist, awful place. And if you're a Christian there, it's a very difficult place to openly practice your faith, which is why much of the faithful church is underground. But China for 30, some years in more populous regions had something called the one-child policy. And that is to force population controls. You're only allowed to have one child, which means if you have a child and you get pregnant, now you need to kill one of those children. If you're a Christian, can you do that? No, you can't. And if all you do is quote, Romans 13, and you say, well, obey the government, well, you need to obey God who says you're not supposed to take innocent human life. And so what happened in China is that they decided many did, that they'd rather have a son and a daughter, because the son could help with the business and then he would care for his parents in their old age. So now they have massive distance between the number of males and females and it's created a cultural crisis. If you're a Christian in China, you're like, I love Jesus. I'm trying to be a good citizen but if being a good citizen means murdering my daughter, the answer is no. Something similar was in the news this week. It was in Missouri. There's a Christian college, I've lectured right near there at a different university, but this college is Christian. And now they've come out with new governmental policy that says in colleges, boys and girls can share dorm rooms and bathrooms and possibly locker rooms. Okay dads let's just vote on this, yes or no. Your daughter goes to college, you want her to be assigned to a male roommate and to shower with the boys, yes or no? No. We just had a, this is the first time in America we've had a unanimous vote on anything, okay. We all agree with this. And let me just say this, when you're a guy and you're single, it looks very different than when you're the dad. It just looks totally different, guys are like, "I don't know that's a good idea." Dads are like, "No, no, I'm gonna kill you." It just looks different. And so what the college said was the government is telling us to do things that our God forbids. And we can't put those who are Christian females in those kinds of dangerous or unhealthy, unholy environments. So it actually cultivated into a court case. And so ultimately, you can be generally respectful of your nation and then you can disagree with certain policies and laws. In addition, my next point would be this, just because you remove old authority and replace it with new authority does not mean you get better authority. That's the big thing right now. Everybody's like, well, let's just re-imagine the police force. Let's just finger paint and drink decaf tea, and sit in the Lotus position and see if crime stops. And it won't, just so you know. And so just because you remove one government and you replace it with another doesn't mean that you've made an improvement. I'll give you an example. Jesus has something that I'll call the principle of seven demons. The principle of seven demons, Jesus says, is this. Somebody has a demon, you cast it out. You don't replace the demon with the Holy Spirit. What do you get? Seven more demons, which is different but not better. There's nobody like, "I used to have one demon and now I upgraded to seven, I'm demon possessed 7.0." It's not better. The point is this, just because you replace a government doesn't mean you improve a government. I'll give you a case study historically in regards to nation states. So Saddam Hussein, horrible dictator, godless, demonic, thought he was literally the reincarnation of the ancient Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar. Iraq is in modern, it is modern day Babylon on

the map. So I'm not saying he's a good guy, I'm not defending him. Please don't say that I'm co-Hussein saying, okay, 'cause I do Jesus, not jihad. So that's not my team, okay? But that being said, when he was in power, he was a brutal dictator, but it did keep some semblance of peace. And the result is once he was toppled around 2003, there was a massive power vacuum in that part of the world. And what came seeking to fill that vacuum were various disparate terrorist organizations and jihadist groups. This included something called ISIS, came into existence and rose to power, trying to create some sort of jihadist state that would rule through imposition, not proposition, not inviting people to Jesus, but threatening people with the sword. The result is that in the days of Saddam Hussein, there were 1.5 million Christians living in Iraq. Many of them trace their ancestry all the way back to the days of Jesus. They had been there, their families as Christians for 2000 years and some of these people, their families had kept the original language that Jesus spoke when he walked the earth. Now, today there are 150,000 Christians in Iraq. 90% of the Christians have either died or fled. They were either put to death because they would not deny Jesus or they had to leave the country to save their own family. So it has gone from 1.5 million to 150,000 and that number is rapidly diminishing and declining. The point is simply this, just because you remove and replace a government does not mean that you will get a better government and that it'll create better social order. In addition, when Christians are responsible citizens, it does for us two things. It allows us to worship more freely and privately because we're not picking fights with the government unnecessarily. Number two, for those who have a spiritual gift of governance and I believe it is a spiritual gift. They have the opportunity through character to earn the trust of secular governmental leaders, to go into positions of influence, seeking to make some sort of positive change on behalf of God. I'll give you a couple of examples biblically, and historically, number one, there's a guy named Joseph. He's betrayed by his brothers. He's thrown in a hole, he's sold as a slave. He's literally left for dead and disowned. He is then bought by a governmental leader named Potiphar and he is one who then works his way up to be the right hand of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh was the ruler in Egypt and he was worshiped as a God. He was actually called the son of God. So Egypt is the counterfeit of God's kingdom and Pharaoh is the counterfeit of Jesus Christ. Now what happens is that Joseph, it is said repeatedly that they recognize that he is filled with the Holy Spirit, that the anointing of God is on his life and as a result, he's an integrous man of character. Eventually he assumes the position, literally a vice president in Egypt. Had he not had character and the anointing, he would have not been elevated to that position of influence. So now you have a godless demonic country with a counterfeit, demonic, false leader, but the vice-president overseeing a lot of the affairs and finances is filled with the Holy Spirit and he has a love and concern for justice and God's people. In addition, I'll give you another historical example. There's a book in the Old Testament called Nehemiah. Nehemiah is a man who's working for the Persian government, Persian government, ancient godless government, demonic. And his job is cup bearer to the king. Now, this is a highly trusted cabinet position in government because people were trying continually to poison and to murder the king. And so what they'd say is, "Well, you drank it and you ate it and if you're alive, then he will eat it and drink it." So that's your job. I don't care what your job is, it's not that bad, right? Every day you're a kamikaze pilot. It could be your last day on the job. Now how much trust and confidence must they have in Nehemiah's character because he could kill the king. He actually is in the position that he has

the greatest opportunity for some sort of plot to undermine and murder the king. But he's trustworthy because of his character. So he rises up to this influential cabinet position in Persia, and then God burdens and breaks his heart to go rebuild Israel, God's nation, Jerusalem, God's city and the temple, the home for God's people. And so what he asks is, "Can I go do that with governmental blessing and support?" They say, "Yes." "Can you give me legal paperwork so that I will be protected on the journey?" And they do. "Can you give me resources, finances, timber, the commodities that I will need to rebuild the city and the walls?" And he did. And as a result, he rebuilt the wall so that the city could be fortified and protected. And then the worship of God began again in Jerusalem, in Israel, because of the support of a godless, counterfeit, Persian king, and kingdom and all of that was brokered because of the spirit build character of Nehemiah. The point is, if you can't change the government, serve God, have character and see if he doesn't anoint you to a position where you can change government. The third example I will give you biblically is Daniel. So we looked at the story of Daniel last year, we went through the whole book. If you missed it, just go to RealFaith.com, it's all there. We started Daniel and we're looking at, oh my gosh, the government takes over, the churches closed, it's apocalyptic, everything is horrible. I didn't know we'd be living Daniel. I mean, it was quite a thing. And so we finished Daniel online because what Daniel was experiencing is some of what we started experiencing. Now, the story of Daniel is this, that the Babylonians, a horrific demonic nation, invaded Israel, they murdered and put to death many of God's people. And then they see some as captives, prisoners of war, took them in exile back to Babylon and that included Daniel and his friends. Now, Daniel is immediately sent to college to be brainwashed. And we're still doing that. And then he had gender reassignment surgery that was prescribed upon him and forced upon him and he was castrated and emasculated. And I don't know about you at this point, I wouldn't wanna work for that government, right? I'd be like one, two, three, not it, right? But what Daniel does, because it says repeatedly in the book again, that he is filled with and anointed with the Spirit of God, that he lives with character and integrity. And what happens is eventually, political leaders start getting dreams and only he can interpret them because those dreams come from God and those people have not the Spirit of God. So it takes someone with a Spirit of God to interpret revelation from God. As a result, Daniel becomes a prominent political leader in Babylon for decades and the rule and reign of multiple kings and kingdoms because he conducted himself with character. By being a good citizen of the state, we are not agreeing with the state, but we are submitting to the Lord, seeking to earn the freedom to worship our God and also seeking positions of influence to change that, which is against our God. That's what I would submit to you. Now, the reason that all of this is necessary and something else, why do we need government? Here's why, because evil won't stop itself. Satan and demons are real and so are evildoers and sinners. If you don't believe that some people are totally deprived. If you don't believe that when the Bible says that some are quote, wicked or evil or evildoers, you are naive and you are gullible and you are susceptible to destruction. Not everyone is good and not everyone is safe and evil will never stop itself because the goal of evil is just death. It doesn't reach a point where it inflicts enough pain to stop until everyone is dead. And so since evil won't stop itself, our God of authority works through governmental authority to restrain evil. He says this, therefore, Romans 13, two through four, "Whoever resists the authorities, resists what God has appointed. And those who resist will incur judgment from God who was over that

authority, for rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority then do what is good and you will receive his approval for he is God's servant, God's working through authority for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid for it does not bear the sword." We're gonna talk about the sword in vain. "For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on wrongdoers." Two things, number one, civil authority exists to restrain vice and church authority exists to promote virtue. We're not looking to the government to create virtue. And if you are, you're adorable. Government does not create virtue. How many of you look at current political landscape and say, "Well, there's virtue for your kids." It's not, this job of the civil authorities is not to promote virtue, but to restrain vice. So when it comes to civil authority, it is simply this, people are sinners by nature and choice. Were not good and getting better, lie is a pernicious and powerful illusion and delusion. The more we increase technology, the more we increase the capacity to cause human suffering and death. And so what happens is in addition to the people we see behind them, or at work, powerful, counterfeit, demonic forces that are empowering them in what the Bible calls the "World System" to do great injustice, atrocity, and evil. This includes lying and false testimony and murder and harassment and assault and all kinds of things. And if you believe the Bible, you believe that this world is a dangerous place to live. And that there are people on this planet who are our foe, not friend, no matter what you do. Now, that being said, human life and flourishing matters to our God. Our God is the living God, he made us in his image and likeness to live. And as a result, he wants the government or the state to preserve human life. Now, those who don't believe the Bible, here's what they are doing, they are seeking to decriminalize and defund, which leads to destruction. Some would say, "Well, so many people are committing this crime that we should decriminalize it. And what we should do is we should defend the police who are enforcing that, which is a crime." So if we decriminalize the behavior and we defend the law enforcement, the assumption is that life will get better. And the truth is it only gets worse. This is not just an ancient text, this is an eternal text about how everything works. I'll tell you this, I come from the future. I'll give you some examples since you asked and thank you for asking. Say, "Mark, could you please give me some examples?" Well, I wasn't going to, but since he asked, I for sure will now. So I come from the future. I've not always lived in Arizona. I was talking to a friend of mine who pastors a church, where I used to pastor. He was driving home. And I think he may have had his family in the car. And he was stopped by a roadblock in his neighborhood with anarchists who had their faces covered with masks and they were wielding machetes and stopping every car to get to his house, in America. So he calls, if he called the police, the police will say, "Is there a threat to human life?" No, because we only defend property. Excuse me, we don't defend property, we only defend human life. So they won't come. There's another guy now, he was downtown, his business got looted in a riot. It wasn't covered because there's no such thing as civil unrest insurance. So he saved up the money and he took out a second mortgage and he restocked his store to reopen and they looted him again and bankrupted him and he's out of business because they won't come to defend property only human life. Well, this pastor friend of mine, he finally gets to his house, comes to find that in his front yard, there is a naked, homeless guy showering under the hose. Kids are like, "What's going on, dad?" Let me say this, if you live out in the country and you take a shower in the hose in your front yard, I'm not saying it's right, but that's your property. When you come to your house in the city and there's another

naked guy with your hose, that's just wrong, amen. Okay, that's not rural, that's wrong. Now he's got homeless people because here's what happens, when you decriminalize drugs, let's say pot, do the drug dealers suddenly go find good paying honorable jobs or the drug dealers are like, "Oh my gosh, we can't sell weed anymore, they took a boat. Everybody would go get a blue vest, go sign up a Walmart. We're gonna stock shelves and be graters. We're good with people and sell and stuff, right?" No. What do drug dealers do? They change their product to heroin and meth, which now means you have a far worse drug addiction problem, which leads to mental illness and problems, which means then they tax people to create safe spaces, to get clean needles so that they can get high and they can take heroin and black tar heroin and they can do so in a way that is safe and protected by the government. And then we decriminalize panhandling and loitering. Well then all of a sudden people are living at the park. The park that I used to take my kids to, I couldn't take them to anymore. I showed up one day and there are needles at the park. There are used condoms underneath the swing set. I'm not making this up. My son said, "Hey, let's go for a walk dad." We go for a walk and there is prostitution in the woods. And we come across prostitution in effect in the woods at the park. Son, we can't go to the park anymore. Where we used to live there is a school that is nearby, when COVID hit and the school was unoccupied, those with mental health and drug addiction that had been decriminalized, they moved onto the property of this school. So when they reopened the school, they don't want to remove those who are squatting on the school property. So now the kids can't go out for recess. What they can do is look out the window and see people doing drugs, having sex and fighting and sex trafficking and drug trading at the school. I kid you not, at that school that is right near where I used to live, there's a big target and there's a homeless guy, probably with mental health and drug addiction and he's practicing axe throwing at the school. And the point is simply this, our God cares about human life and flourishing. And when people are like, "What do we need laws for?" We need laws because people are sinners, the world is broken and fallen, Satan and demons are real. And if you let people do whatever the hell they want, all you get is hell, that's what happens. So let me just say this, I'll just come right out and tell you what I think. I know I've been shy up until this point. Let me just be honest with you, I like soldiers, I like police officers, I like law enforcement, I like first responders. So thank you on Memorial Day weekend for seeking to bring order to chaos. My wife and I went for a walk the other night, we're holding hands and a police officer drives by with a window down. I'm that guy, "Thank you, we're praying for your safety." I'm that guy. If you are wearing a uniform and you're in a restaurant with me, I'm buying your meal. If you're in a barber shop with me and you're wearing a uniform, I'm paying for your haircut. I will walk up to you, I will shake your hand. I will look you in the eye. I will say, "Thank you, I'm praying for you. Please thank your family for your service." And I teach my children to do the same. That ultimately, when you dishonor authority, you dishonor God. And if you are rebellious, do not expect anointing and blessing because when honor goes up, blessing comes down and when dishonor goes up, cursing comes down. I wanna live a blessed life, not a cursed life, which means I wanna honor authority and the God who is in authority. That we live in a very broken and flawed world and some of you are raising and training your children toward rebellion. And the Bible says that rebellion is equal to the sin of witchcraft. It's demonic. Now, in addition to the civil authority existing to restrain vice, the church exists to promote virtue. What this means is God has of his people, higher moral

expectations. So the government's laws are fairly broad and God's laws are more narrow. So the Bible says, "Don't kill anybody." and Jesus says, "And don't assault them with your words or in your heart." And the Bible says, excuse me, the government says, "Don't rape anybody." And the Bible says also, "Don't commit adultery and don't commit adultery in your heart." So the expectations for God's people are far more specific and narrow because the moral capacity of a human being with the Holy Spirit is significantly different than a fallen person without the Holy Spirit. And what that means is God's people we need to seek to not only honor the government, but honor the God and his laws and authority over the government and in so doing, even when we disagree, we conduct ourselves in such a way that we're demonstrating moral character. And so that leads to this subject of the state and the sword. I'm gonna talk about the sword. This concept of the sword is something that is large looming in the Bible. The first person to wheel the sword in the Bible was an angel in Genesis 3, "Sin occurred, then an angel arrived with the sword in hand." The point is this, the sword comes to deal with the sin. There was no sword until there was sin because you don't need a sword where there is no sin. The last person to wheel the sword is the Lord Jesus in Revelation 19, it says, "When our king comes back, he will be wielding a sword with which to judge the nations." So the first sword is in the hand of an angel and the second and last sword is in the hand of the Lord. And in the middle, God hands out swords to enact justice, to deal with sin and to protect the sanctity of human life. And what the sword represents is the just taking human life. Now, some Christians well-intended and meaning have been misunderstanding of one of God's Ten Commandments. And one of the Ten commandments is, thou shall not... Some of you said kill. Some of you said murder hence the debate. In that ancient language of Hebrew, there are a multitude of words for the taking of human life. If you take an innocent human life that is murder. If you take a guilty human life that is killing and there is a profound difference because one is unjust and the other is just. The Bible does not say, "Thou shall not kill." It says, "Thou shall not murder." It doesn't say you can't take human life. It says you can only take guilty, not innocent human life. That being said, this is done so in three ways. Now, first, let me just say, some of you hold a position that human life should never be taken under any circumstances or conditions. You would be called pacifists. I would be more of a past the fist, that's more my position, okay, that's more my position. So some of you are pacifists, I'm more past the fist. And I talked to somebody not too long ago. They were a consistent pacifist. And I said, "What if somebody breaks into your home and they're gonna harm your wife or your daughter?" He said, "Well, I would reason with them." I said, "I think you're gonna need more than syllogisms, I would recommend a sword, a sword." So let me talk a little bit about the sword. First and foremost, the Bible says that this is a spiritual source. It says that in Hebrews and Ephesians. And what that means is that we use it to take every thought captive in obedience to Christ. That's military language for taking an enemy and then interrogating it to receive the truth. What that means is friends, we don't just go to church, when we open the Bible, we go to war. What this means is when I get up, I'm preaching, not against just people, but powers, principalities, and spirits that just like any war, there's going to be a strong reaction. And the deeper we get into enemy territory, the more return fire we will receive. That's why preaching is so exhausting. It is not just speaking, it is warring in the unseen realm to bring forth the word of God so that light can penetrate darkness, the truth can refute lies and the captives can be set free in Jesus Christ. So this is a weapon. Regarding the sword in the seen

realm or in the physical realm, what this refers to is three things, the right use of deadly force, capital punishment, and just war. I'll deal with them in succession, but this is the heart of the debate regarding the concept of the sword in Romans 13. Deadly force is where someone is justifiably self-defending, and as a result, taking a human life, but doing so to preserve human life. This is what a police officer does when they arrive on the scene and someone has a weapon and they're threatening to destroy someone and they say, you know, "Drop the weapon, drop the weapon, drop the weapon." And if that person escalates, then they have to engage. And I'll just submit to you that those are difficult moments. And what I find just fascinating is the people on the internet, in their home, in their pajamas, in their underwear are sitting at home, watching a video, going and saying, you know, eating a snack saying, "I would have done it differently." You would have wet yourself and wept like a baby. You would have not known what to do. If you've ever had a weapon pulled on you and I have. I've had people try to stab me while I'm preaching. I've had knives and guns pulled on me on my life. When you're in those moments, those are very difficult, urgent decisions. And let me say this, on occasion, does someone let's say, for example, a police officer make a bad decision or occasionally get a bad apple? They do. So let me say this occasionally, in education do you get a teacher who's a bad apple? Yeah, they both make the news. And what we don't see is riding and looting and protesting and defund the teachers and let's re-imagine education. So what I'm saying is this, most teachers and also most law enforcement officers and first responders, they're underpaid, they're overworked, they're underappreciated. They're trying to help. And occasionally you get a bad apple. And in both occasions we don't eliminate authority, we appeal to authority to correct the error, that's all I'm saying. But because there's a different political agenda from the left and the right, these things are treated very differently when I see them very similarly. There is the occasion for right use of force that is to defend your self or your family or someone else so that is under a sincere threat of harm or death. The second use of the sword is capital punishment. Capital punishment is simply this, that someone won't stop and the only way to stop them is to stop their life. There are some people that are not beyond God's help, but they're beyond any other help. Until they meet the Lord Jesus, until the Holy Spirit rehardwires their soul, there is just such a profound brokenness and darkness that there is no hope for them apart from a miracle of God. If you think that sex traffickers and child pedophiles and drug cartel leaders are just going to suddenly come up with a moral conscience, you have no understanding of reality. There are certain people that won't stop and the only way to stop them is to end them. This comes through the right use of force through the state and this is what we mean by capital punishment. Capital punishment, number one, it discourages anarchy. It's like, "Hey, if you do that, you could die." That is an incentive to not do that. In addition, it reduces vengeance. If something happens and nothing is done, then those who were victims of the families of the victims, they escalate and usually the response is not proportionate to the offense. And so then there needs to be some sort of additional response and this is how you get escalation of vengeance. In addition, one of the things that capital punishment provides is simply an end to the worst evildoers. They can't do it anymore because they're not breathing anymore. The third use rightly of the sword is just war. And the question is, not only can an individual protect themselves, but can a nation protect its citizens? And so this is the concept of just war. Now, there are some basic principles historically, the Christian emphasis have laid down for a just

war. Number one, it needs to be a legitimate authority. Anarchist, some mob, some angry cell of terrorists be they on the left or the right is not legitimate authority, it's illegitimate authority. The Marines, the cops, the fire department, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the national guard, those would be legitimate authorities. Number two, it is defensive, not offensive. When Adolf Hitler ignited a world war invading Poland from Germany, that was not just war because they were not provoked in any way, this just wasn't attack in every way and it was offensive, not defensive. So Adolf Hitler's action in Poland was not just war, but they're seeking to defend themselves despite their loss, was just war and just response. Number three, needs to be for a noble cause, needs to be some noble cause because if we're going to sacrifice the preciousness of human life, it needs to be for something that is worthwhile in maritus. Number four, it needs to be proportional force. If Mexico or Canada comes in in the middle of the night and moves the fence and takes a couple of hundred yards of America and then we nuclear bomb all of their major cities, that is not proportional use of force. So it needs to be a response that is commensurate. In addition, number five, soldiers, not civilians need to be targeted. If this nation is invaded by soldiers, then the response needs to be to stop these soldiers, not to punish these civilians. When you see civilians targeted, you know, it's unjust war. We're now taking human life when we need to be stopping military progress. Number six, just war requires that it preserves more lives than it takes. If we're going to send our best and brightest, our young who have their entire future before them, and now that I'm older and I'm a father and my kids would be sort of military in draft age, if you're going to sacrifice my sons and daughters, it must be for something that is virtuous and the benefit must outweigh the expense and we must save more human lives than we take through war. In addition, lastly, it must be used as a last resort. You start with diplomacy, you start with sanctions, you start with economic or military advancement, but without full engagement, you're trying everything you can until it is finally a last resort. Now that being said, God works through authority because evil won't stop itself. And then what he's gonna talk about is in our relationship to government, the part of government that we hate the most and we're most frustrated by, and we just wish we could get around and that is? Taxes. Here we go, Jesus paid his taxes, Romans 13, five through seven, "Therefore, one must be in subjugation, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience, for because of this you also pay taxes." That was originally written in Greek. I looked it up, I hate to break it to you. Taxes means taxes, yeah. There's always a guy who's like, "I don't think it does." That guy's in prison, okay. For the authorities are ministers of God attending to this very thing, pay what is owed to them. Taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. He's talking about our taxes. A couple of things I'll say about taxes. Government doesn't create wealth. Government is not a business. Government doesn't produce anything. It just takes what you produce. If government was a business, it would be a business for 30 seconds and no more because it is not profitable and it has no income generation strategy. Some of you will ask, "Pastor Mark, where does the government get its money?" From you. Okay, here's how it works. Now, if this sounds like pickpocketing, it's because it is. So the way pickpocketing works is there's a guy that doesn't have any money in his pocket, he sees you've got money in your pocket, he walks up and he takes the money out of your pocket and he puts it in his pocket. That's also called government. That's how it works. They take it from you. And so the government is never incentivized to be

good stewards because unlike a business owner, all they need to do is just take more from you rather than expect more of themselves. In addition, this'll be debatable. We've not said controversial things so I feel like it's time. And so that tithe is more just and fair and right than our government's taxation structure. So God's tithe, so God's tithe is what? 10%. And it's off the gross or the net? The gross. That's why it's called the first fruits, it's first. I've told you this before, I didn't know this. So I worked my first job and I got my first paycheck and there was money missing and I'm like, who is FICA? And why the FICA did they take my money? It's a brand new F-word for me as a 16 year old kid with my first job, okay? The government jumped in front of God in the waterfall and just took the money, they didn't even ask. Now, God, conversely, he's a gentleman, "He's like, I want you to give cheerfully out of a joyful heart." The government doesn't care about your heart, they just want your money. Now God is to be in first position, you give the first fruits to the Lord. And the difference is this, a 10%, is that equitable, fair and just, it is. You're rich or poor, you all pay the same percentage in different amounts. The way our world government works, it is a sliding escalating tax structure. The more you make, the higher percentage you pay. And I would submit to you that this is unfair and unjust. Everybody right now is talking about justice. I'm like, I think 10% is just, this escalating scale seems unjust to me because here's the way that it works, I'll explain to you how America's working and why it's failing. So what you have in certain major urban centers are high net worth income earners. And then you have people that are lower net worth income earners. And so what they do, they vote for people who are progressive or liberal or socialistic or wrong, those are all synonyms. So they vote for those people. And then what those people do, they then go seek to increase the tax burden on those who are income earners to redistribute the wealth, to those who are not income earners. What happens in those cities is the very rich can afford to live there and the poor gets support so that they can also afford to live there but you cannot make it if you're middle-class or a family or crazy, you get married, a guy and a gal, you have a baby and mom raises it. I mean, I know we're just, I know it's just crazy talk, but let's say you wanna do some outlier behavior like that, you can't afford to live there because you don't make enough to qualify for that kind of lifestyle, but you also don't qualify for the government support. And so what you're seeing is middle-class and families in wholesale record historic numbers fleeing major urban cities because you're not viable there. And so where are they coming? Arizona, well, that's why you're here. So here's two things we'd say, we love you, don't vote. That's our only ask, okay. So what happens is, what happens is, what happens then is, let me tell you a little secret about people who make money, they can afford to move, that's a crazy thought. So eventually you tax them to the point that they say, "You know what, we're leaving, we're moving, we're relocating or we're relocating our business. And then the entire city collapses, because these people have made promises that they can't keep, these people have needs that aren't met because these people have reached their pain threshold and will no longer fund it. That's why we're seeing in our country, perhaps not a national, but a series of regional depressions. Now, the reason the taxes are so frustrating, it pays for things we like and things we don't like. So let's talk about this. What are some things that your taxes pay for but you're actually like, "Okay, I like that." Police, roads, anybody pro-roads, I'm pro-roads, anybody pro-roads? Pro-police, everybody liked the fire department? I do, the house is on fire, they show up with a hose. They don't show up with a squirt gun and say we were defunded. I'm glad, I'm glad, I'm

glad. Okay, so there are things we like, what are some of the things about our taxes that we don't like? Funding abortion, where you need me to pay for your murder. Public schools. Okay, let's talk about that. So, here's what I don't get about education. So if you're pregnant, all of a sudden the government is pro-choice. You can choose whether or not the child lives or dies. Once the child is born, there's no pro-educational choice. So like, if I can decide to kill them, why can I not decide to educate them? At what point that they're born, they're the property of the government when the Bible says, that parents need to train their children. The Bible has zero verses about the government's responsibility to educate a child. It is the parent's decision, which means the parents should decide public, private, homeschool, charter school, whatever works for you, the parents should seek the best interest of their child. Now we live in a place quite frankly, where we are blessed because we have school choice. And so we have more options. But for example, where we lived previously, all you had was a strong, very progressive, liberal, agenda-driven, Babylonian educational system. And I would not send my kids to it in large part because of critical theory, the confusion regarding sex gender, and also an absolutely corrupt, horrific, sex education curriculum that was going to set my children up for abuse and or some sort of sick behavior. And so we had to pay in addition for Christian school and for Christians, this gets frustrating, amen. Imagine you'd be like, you want more of my money to do things that my God hates. But here's the big idea. Number one, did Jesus' parents pay their taxes? They did, the story read every year in Luke is that the family went to Bethlehem, which was the hometown of the adoptive father, Joseph to register for the Roman census because they wanted to make sure they were taxing everybody. And his parents complied paying their taxes. Question, did Jesus Christ pay his taxes? He did, this is what's so crazy. God shows up, they're like, "Well, we could worship him or tax him? Let's tax him." They don't worship him, they tax him, they tax God. We heard streets lined with gold, we're gonna need 37% of that. So they tax him and Jesus pays his taxes. And he says, "Render unto Caesar, what is Caesar's." That's your taxes. "Render unto the Lord, what is the Lord's." That's your tithe. But here's the thing, if you're gonna pay your taxes, pay your tithe. If you're gonna fund things you hate, fund the one you love. Now that being said, some of you can sense this, that there is conflict between God and government. And when you are in the middle and God is against government, and there is a collision between the two, how do you live as a good resident of your nation, but ultimately a citizen of his heaven? So this is where we get into civil disobedience. It's when God and government collide. Now, let me say this about civil disobedience. To be biblical, you can't just quote a verse, you have to quote all verses that pertain to that subject. Otherwise, if all you did was quoted Romans 13, in North Korea, for example, where it's a cult run by a military dictator who forbids Christianity. I go, I can't read the Bible and pray to Jesus cause you know why, I need to do Romans 13 and obey the government. Well, the government is possessed by Satan. And so you probably should appeal to higher authority. And so you can't just quote a verse, you need to look at all that the Bible says. So in additions to Romans 13, I want to look at other parts of God's word to also bring up the subject of civil disobedience. In Romans 13, this year with elections and riots and protests and masks and vaccines, oh my, we have been really debating as a church. God's people have, Romans 13. Romans 13, but civil disobedience happens in one of two ways. Number one, the government commands you to do something God forbids, or number two, the government forbids you to do something God commands. So let me give you a

technical definition of civil disobedience. It is defined as quote, "A public, non-violent and conscientious act contrary to law, usually done with the intent to bring about change in the policies or laws of government." Now, a few things I wanna preface this by, you realize that something is wrong and you decide that you're going to oppose it in an effort to change it but what I would submit to you is this, be very, very careful basing your decisions on misinformation or disinformation. There are many people are like, "Well, we need demonstrate civil disobedience." Let me just say this, what's on social media and the blogosphere is not covered by the rules or integrity of any sort of journalistic standards. There is no fact-finders who come and confirm what it said. It's under the auspices of freedom of speech. And as a result, all kinds of wild and inappropriate and erroneous things are said, and this includes on the left and the right, crazy conspiracy theorists. They're on both sides. I mean, these people should all be drug tested. I mean, they are just nuts. And if you believe that and then act on that, you're thinking you're doing civil disobedience, but it's based on lie, misinformation, disinformation. And what happens is that many of our media platforms have gone totally digital and online, which means that they're now competing with social media and blogs for clickbait and salacious material, which means that it goes from sort of the bottom of the septic tank up to the top of the septic tank. And it's picked up by more credible news outlets. So just as God's people, what I would tell you is this, he began this section of Romans 12 saying, "Don't be conformed to the power of this world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Don't just hear everything that everybody else is hearing and respond how everyone else is responding. Get with God, discern that which is true and false. And if you do respond, respond to fact and do so in a way that rightly represents our faith. Now, that being said, I will submit to you this, the culture is trending against faith, freedom and family. The general direction of our culture is south, not north in regards to faith, freedom and family. It's because critical theory is the great antithesis of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the demonic counterfeits way of asserting itself over every discipline in life. And you, it's like a jihadist proposition, convert or die. And the result is, that's the suppression of faith, freedom, and family. And that's what we are seeing. And so what this means is that Christians need to avail ourselves to legal, right, honorable ways of effecting cultural change. I'll give you two organizations that are doing that right here in our backyard. There is the Center for Arizona policy that works for faith, freedom and family initiatives in our state. They are godly people. I've done some training with their staff. I love them, I appreciate them, I personally have supported them. In addition, on the national level, there's something called the Alliance Defending Freedom, ADF. These are Christian attorneys who seek to defend faith, freedom and family. They're right here on our backyard. I recently did a training for them on where I think culture is going. I was a little more buttoned up in this, but we hit some of these points for they're attorneys that are litigating and they have something called, it's a church collective where you pay a monthly amount and that money becomes a fund so that if other churches have first amendment issues, then those churches can have legal defense. And we were one of the first churches to sign up for that. And I encourage all pastors to join them. And so we appreciate those people who love God and use their law degrees to engage in a way that is civil, but is working toward obedience to God, which sometimes is disobedience to the government's agenda. Historically, we have some additional examples, Martin Luther king Jr. won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1955 for civil disobedience. Rosa Parks, loved Jesus. Now what they don't tell

you oftentimes is the civil rights pioneers, including like Jackie Robinson, they love Jesus and they were motivated by their biblical convictions. So Rosa Parks is on a bus and they're saying, you need to sit in the back. She's like, "Hey, we're all made in the image and likeness of God. And I belong to Jesus and he died for us all. And he calls us family and we're all gonna rise and be together forever. So we should sit together on the bus." She's driven by biblical convictions and her act was an act of civil disobedience by a godly woman who was doing the right thing. And there are examples of that for us, not only in history, but in scripture. So let me first deal with the first cause for civil disobedience, the government commands you to do something that God forbids. I'll give you some biblical examples. So back in the book of Exodus, Pharaoh, as I told you a demonic counterfeit, horrible nation, the Hebrews are slaves and Pharaoh realizes they are increasing in number. There's now millions of them. And they could rise up and cause an insurrection and not wanna be slaves anymore. So what he decides is let's keep the boys, let's keep the girls rather, let's kill the boys. So he tells the midwives, all right, when the baby is born, if it's a girl, let it live, if it's a boy, kill it. This is now government forced infanticide. This is a postnatal abortion, which is the same thing as a prenatal abortion. It's the taking of an innocent human life. It's murder, not killing. That being said, the Hebrew midwives determine that they're not going to take innocent human life, so they let the boys live. Boys like Moses, who are used of God to bring about change and deliverance. And so ultimately, what the Bible does, it names these two women and it never names the Pharaoh because God is like, he's the Pharaoh, he doesn't need to be honored in antiquity throughout history, but it does tell us that these two likely senior midwives who oversee the other midwives, their names are , which means beautiful and poor, which means fragrant blossom. What God says is these gals are legends and heroes, we're putting them in the Bible and for thousands of years, these women are gonna be examples of integrity because they were pro-life. In addition, Joseph, as I told you was taken as a slave and he was employed by the governmental leader named Potiphar. Potiphar would have been able to tell him to do anything, he had no legal rights as a slave and as an employee of the government, that authority would have extended to Potiphar's wife. And so Joseph is home, Potiphar's wife is home, Potiphar is not home. The wife gives a command to Joseph sleep with me. The command is adultery. Joseph says, "No." He's not allowed to do that legally because he's a slave and this is from the household of a governmental official. And what he says is, "I obey God, not you. I'm not gonna betray my God or your husband." As a result, he's falsely accused of rape and thrown in prison. Don't believe everything you hear. What you would have heard about Joseph is, that slave raped a powerful politician's wife. And the truth is he did nothing and she was demonic. But what he did was an act of civil disobedience. In addition, there's a gal named Rahab in the Old Testament. She's a prostitute. She's on the bottom rung of the social structure. In the days of Joshua, they send spies into the land on behalf of the people of God. Now the government hears of this and they wanna come and destroy the spies coming into the land. So they take refuge with Rahab, she hides them. Now the soldiers come looking for God's people and what does she do? She lies, "She's like, I don't know where they are." Now, usually you shouldn't lie but when you're preserving human life from that which is going to murder, what you're doing is civil disobedience and an act of worship. So the Bible says that she converts and she worships the God of the Bible. We read of her in Hebrews, listed among the greatest heroes of our faith and in the genealogy in Matthew's gospel, she is listed in the family

tree of Jesus Christ. And Jesus is like, I love that gal put her in the family because she did civil disobedience, which was ultimately divine obedience. In addition, Daniel's friends, we looked at this some last year in the book of Daniel. So Nebuchadnezzar, he had a high self-esteem. He was raised in the 1970s, American home. I'm a good person with high self-esteem. He woke up one day, he's like, "You know what? We need a 300 foot high statue of me. That's what we need, we need more of me." And so he makes a 300 foot high statue. He's like, "While we're at it, why don't you all bow down and worship me?" So 300,000 people bow down, three people don't, that had to be an awkward day. Everybody's like, "Huh?" It had to be weird, right? Those were Daniel's three friends and they're standing up was an act of civil disobedience because the first two of the Ten commandments are, "There's one God and you worship him alone." And they said, "You know what? We worship God not Nebuchadnezzar. We won't bow down because we only bend our knee to our God, not to this fake demonic counterfeit." That was an act of civil disobedience. Jesus' parents practiced civil disobedience. When Jesus was born, word got to Herod the political leader that the king of Kings and the Lord of Lords was born. He was like, "Oh no, that is a threat to my political rule." So he put out a hit, an execution on baby Jesus. When that didn't work, he then put a death sentence on a whole generation of firstborn, Hebrew boys. Jesus' parents in an effort to preserve his life. They left the country, they fled to Egypt. The point is this, rather than submitting to the government and murdering Jesus, they changed their citizenship until the political regime changed and then they returned to their nation. In addition, Jesus, himself Christ and Christians practiced civil disobedience. So I'll give you a couple of examples. So in that day, your pledge of allegiance, your highest loyalty was simply stated with this, "Caesar is Lord." Can Christ say that? No, he's like, "Actually, that's not true, it's not true. Don't even need to pray about it. I just know that's not true." Now, Christians, we couldn't say Caesar is Lord. So we would say, Jesus Christ is Lord. So let's just do that, repeat after me, Jesus Christ is Lord. That's our highest allegiance, above our government is our God, above our president is our Lord. For us Jesus Christ is Lord. In the first century, that was an act of civil disobedience. And people were put to death for simply saying, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Number two, you can also practice civil disobedience when the government forbids you to do something God commands. Give you a couple examples. In the days of Daniel, the government said no praying to your God for 30 days. Daniel's like, "Sorry, I pray three times a day. That's just what I do." And he lived up, you know, second or third floor or something you could see, it had a window. So what he literally does is he opens the window, he does like he always does. He gets down on a knee and he prays three times a day. He's breaking the law, he's not breaking God's law, he's obeying God's law to pray. So then they throw him into a lion's den. He's like, that's okay, "I worship, the line of the tribe of Judah. He's got me." And he comes out very much alive because sometimes when you do the right thing, God honors that publicly. And your faith ignites faith in others. Another example of this form of civil disobedience is the apostle in the first century, they're told in Acts 4 and 5, "No more preaching Jesus, no more preaching his death, burial, resurrection, it's getting popular. It's catching on, this is a problem. We need to put this out and say, sorry, we need to preach Jesus." He actually rose from death. It's a thing for us, we want everyone to know. So then they said, okay, "Well, if you don't stop preaching, we're gonna arrest you." They arrested him. And then they roughed him up, they beat him a little bit. And then they told him, we'll release you, but you're not allowed to preach

anymore. It says, they said, "We must obey God not man." And they left leaping and praising God. They're like, "Hey, at least they know who we're talking about. You know, we're talking about Jesus and at least we were clear enough that they know who we're for because preaching Jesus can never stop and should never stop." Now, lastly, who writes the book of Romans where we've been studying in Romans chapter 13? Oh, did he ever practice civil disobedience? Did he ever go to jail? He did some jail time. He got an orange jumpsuit, he had a number. I mean, can you imagine that on social media today, Billy Graham arrested again. You're like, "Huh, that would be a thing." So Paul spent some time in prison and he wrote whole books of the Bible from prison because sometimes when he had nothing else to do, the Holy Spirit would show up and give him one of the most important things to do, that's to give us the word of God. Paul also started riots. Every time there's a revival in the spirit, there is a riot in the demonic. So he pulled into town, a lot of people get saved and then there's a riot. And so one of the accusations against him in Acts 19 is, "Everywhere this guy goes, he starts a riot." Actually the Holy Spirit causes a revival, the demonic spirits cause a riot, for every action there's a reaction, for every convert there's a critic. And so what happens is ultimately his goal in writing Romans is to get to the City of Rome. Now we don't know exactly how he died, but the best hypothesis from theologians is he made it to Rome, he was arrested and beheaded. But he obeyed Romans 13 and he closed his eyes and his life ended and he opened them and he saw Jesus who told him, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Okay, here's what we need to do, we need to enjoy on this Memorial Day weekend, our freedoms of religious assembly, speech, worship. And so what we're gonna do, we're gonna bring the band up and we're gonna spend some time worshipping Jesus Christ. Because you know what? Governments will come and go but the kingdom of God endures forever. And as the band prepares to lead us in worship, I wanna read to you from revelation 19, what we're waiting for, that is the final, last second coming of our God and savior Jesus Christ and he's going to come to establish a kingdom that judges all the governments and nations, and he's going to come bearing a what? Bearing a sword. So I'll read it to you. Revelation 19:11, "Then I saw heaven open. I can't wait for that day and behold, a white horse." Okay, you all guys, you watched the westerns, who rides the white horse? The good guy always rides the white horse, here he comes. "The one sitting on it is called faithful and true. And in righteousness, he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire. And on his head are many crowns because he is the king of kings, and he has a name written that no one knows, but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood. And the name by which he is called is the Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure were following him on white horses. This is divine beings and departed saints." How many of you have seen soldiers march to war? How many of you have seen soldiers march to war in white linen that is ironed? Well that tells you two things, we anticipate a victory and it's not gonna get very messy, this is already a settled battle. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations and he will rule them, all the governments, all of the dictators, all of the injustice, all of the oppression, all of the evil with a rod of iron. And he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty and on his robe and on his thigh, he has a name written tattooed, "Oh Jesus king of Kings. Lord of Lords."

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