

Romans 13: 2-5 - Christianity & Politics 2 – 14 April 2013

Before we hear the Word of God, before we hear about Christianity and politics, as revealed by the Scriptures, shall we all arise, and ask God to teach us and bless us as we dig into the Scriptures.

Father, we are thankful this morning, we can all gather before your presence and we know, it is only possible because, Jesus, Your Son came, to die on the cross, to pay for all our sins. Lord, you know the needs of the people who are gathered here today. You know, some of them are struggling through life, some of them are going through difficult trials and we pray that, as we gather before Your presence, Your Holy Spirit, would draw us to Jesus Christ Your Son, because they're on the cross, as He died there, we know, your love towards us is eternal and unchanging. And our prayer this day, is for those who have believed already in Jesus to continue to be assured, to continue to rejoice in your steadfast love and grace.

And for those who have yet to come to Jesus Christ, we pray, Your blessed Holy Spirit will open the eyes of understanding that they may come into this relationship with Jesus Christ as well. Lord, we come gathered, celebrating your goodness, your love. Thank you, that while we were yet sinners, you spent not Your Son, but gave Him to us, that through His death, we might have life, through His sacrifice, we may be forgiven. Lord, we rejoice in You, thank You, we have the hope of glory, we thank You that we are heirs, and co-heirs with Jesus. So, pray today, that all of us, our hearts, will be corrected to Jesus Christ, Your Son. May He be lifted up amongst us. Again, we thank You for this time, we could look into the Bible, we pray that the Word of God would come forth alive, we pray, it would not just be words on pages, but it would be words inscribed on the tables of our hearts. So, we pray today, for Spirit led preaching and Spirit led listening, that we might become the people You desire us to be. So we gather here, asking for Your blessings, Your power that we may be more like Your Son, Jesus Christ. Bless this time now, we pray all this, in Jesus name, amen. Please be seated.

Time stamp in audio 0:02:31.0.

So, once again, a very big welcome to all of you and welcome to our series, this is our second sermon on the series, on Christianity and politics. We started this last week and we recognize, that in this day and age, in our nation, we are swept with a political

fever, people are passionate about politics and the reasons is because this hits right at home, the way we lived.

The recent white paper, released by the government, tells us of a population of 6.9 million and that's a target that's the kind of an upper limit that we have an people, get uneasy, because in this tiny land that we live in, people feel that maybe we're not as concerned about Singaporeans in Singapore like before. That's the kind of growing phobia towards foreigners and we are concerned about issues like overcrowding on our public transports, we are concerned about lack of supply in housing and therefore, skyrocketing, property prices. We talk about pay cuts for ministers because, that's a reflection of maybe of unhappiness within the hearts of people. And people write about this all the time in forums, if you just check on it, there are plenty of it.

Time stamp in audio 0:03:46.1.

Now, what does this has to do with Christians, what does this have to do with you and me who believe the Bible, who believe in Jesus Christ, does God have anything to say or is religion and politics really separate. We began last week, looking at this verse and I think we need to start there again to lay the groundwork. It says here, in Romans 13,

"Let every person, be subject to the governing authorities."

This is a very simple clear statement. God does not make any exception by saying, "Let every person be subject to the good authorities, or to the kind authorities, or to the wise authorities, or to the capable authorities."

He simply said, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities"

Time stamp in audio 0:04:25.8.

In other words, we are not in the position to say, I will not submit if you're not good enough for me. The word subject, is the word hupotasso, that means, to rank ourselves beneath. It means, I'm willing to submit, to follow, to respect, to hold up the governing authorities. Again, it makes it easier when you understand, this is the same word used on your wives, said "I do", to your own husbands, many years ago. Some of you, maybe just a few months ago, some of you, many years ago, but, when they said, "I do", before the pastor and before your husbands to be, you are pledging yourselves, to a position of hupotasso. You are saying, for the rest of my life, I am

willing to follow you, submit to you, even though we were not agree on every single issue of life.

I believe that the real test of submission is when you don't disagree, because, when you agree, there is no real need to submit. But when you don't see eye to eye, that's where real submission takes place. And the Bible tells us today, we are to submit ourselves to the governing authorities.

Time stamp in audio 0:05:46.0.

It really hits right at home, when you understand the context it was written in. It was written in the day, when Caesar was the governing authorities and he was not a very good person at all. I mean, there was slavery, there was exorbitant taxation, it was a persecution of Christians. People who believe in God and it was a very difficult time to live in. Yet, Paul himself said "Let us all, subject ourselves to the governing authorities, to pray for them, to respect them, to support them."

Why? Why should I do so. Again, Scripture tells us, last week as we have studied, the reason, is not because of their perfection; these guys are not perfect, nobody is perfect. But we submit ourselves to them, because of their position. God instituted them, install them as the authorities in our lives and therefore, we are to submit. We had a sticky statement last Sunday, in other words, a little kind of a phrase, that I hope, allows you to remember and to follow and can you do me a favor. First service, really discourage me, big time. Nobody was, I am just kidding.

Are you able to tell me, the sticky statement, last Sunday. Oh, not very sticky, and that's why I have to repeat it this week. The dentist, talking, great memory, you are right, Kim Cheong. He is absolutely right, your response to authority, is a reflection of your response to God. You see, when we understand that people and authority, placed over us are placed by God. Then it makes sense, that when we respond well to the authority, it is a reflection that I respond well to my God, who placed the authority.

Time stamp in audio 0:07:45.1.

Your response to authority is a reflection of your response to God. This is an exciting concept, because it means that when I drive carefully, responsibly, obeying the laws of the traffic rules in Singapore, I do it as an act of worship. Driving can be an act of worship, because you're submitting to this authority, because you're submitting to your God, who placed that authority. It means, that when I obey my mom, when I didn't feel like it in the beginning, it's an act of worship. It means, that when I respect

my boss, even when he is unreasonable, it is an act of worship, because I respond well, because I respond well to my God. It's exciting, every day, you can leave a life of worship. Worship is not just on Sunday, is every day, in the thousand little choices of life.

But, at the very same time, the same concept is a scary one. Because, when we despise authority, we despise God who placed the authority over our lives. Remember Korah, who instigated 250 people to stand up against Moses. Moses say, you have not despised me, but you have despised the Lord. It's scary that when I despise the people, God has placed over my life, is a reflection of my despising of God.

And so the Scriptures are clear. Principle number 1: believers, followers of Jesus, the Bible is crystal clear. It is our responsibility, it is the Christian life, it is the outworking of the Gospel, for us to submit to authority even when they are terrible. Now, usually after I preached messages, there may be some feedback, some responses and I'm really thankful for that. Over the course of these years, a subject that has drawn a lot of feedback and response is the subject of election and sovereignty of God, naturally so. But the other one, that I got most feedback for, is probably the sermon last Sunday.

Time stamp in audio 0:09:59.1.

People wrote back, and say, pastor, how can this be. Let me share with you, I got to share this with you, with permission from those who wrote to me and asked me. They said this. Pastor, next week I hope you can address some concerns I have. Despite today's sermon, I would never submit to a regime like Hitler's or Pol Pot's, Khmer Rouge and the killing fields, you might be familiar with it, just in our Asia continent. There must be some issues, on which we are free to disobey authorities; for example we wouldn't operate the authorities if they asked us to kill all foreigners. Very good, logical thinking. (Laughter in the congregation). Very legitimate question. Same person asked, please, think, also about South Korean pastors, rescuing North Koreans. Pastor, think also about Oscar Schindler; you might be familiar with him, of how he saved the Jews from the Nazi regime, from murder and death. I am sorry for giving you a hard time, but it is a topic, very close to my heart.

So, this dear brethren in our church, shared this with me and he says, a lot of people in my small group, asking hard questions already. You know what, as a pastor, I am very, very glad. I am very happy, the people of God are thinking about the Word of

God and how they should respond in their lives. I think, it's terrible, when we just sit there and never really think through. We sat through the service without digesting, understanding, and being willing to apply it meaningfully in our lives. I am grateful for this dear brethren who are thinking these tough things through.

Another brethren said, my mom and I were discussing it in the car today, too. In our first service, I'm glad you talking about the Scriptures. I think many people were having questions about it, Wah, rumors going around. In summary, we thought it was a little bit unrealistic to us people to submit to our government in today's modern society. I do understand and agree with wives submitting to husbands, children submitting to the parents. These make sense in strengthening the family unit, but when it comes to government, especially corrupt ones, it's a really tricky question.

Anyway, I do agree with so and so, it's a bit too early to tell, I am definitely interested in the latest sermons to see how it concludes. Wah, I am glad you have this anticipation, alright.

Another person asked, "Can we submit without obeying, because, during the sermon, you mentioned that the essence of submission is to do what you don't want to do. Does submission stem from obedience or are they the same?" The sermon yesterday, spark of some argument with the folks, they are all waiting to hear your second sermon this Sunday, to see if it addresses their concerns. You know, how can I do not address their concerns, when you write like this. (Laughter in the congregation). Thanks for taking up the challenge, we will be praying for you (Loud laughter in the congregation). Thank you so much.

Time stamp in audio 0:13:12.9.

Anyone wants my job. (Laughter in the congregation). Anyway, I love my job, I love to share the Scriptures, I love to look at what God has to say and I just want to share what these concerns are about and how, Scripture sheds light on how we should respond.

Now, let me just say what I can't do. Today, I can't, in a sense, tell you every single factor, that goes through people's minds. Neither can I give an answer for every specific circumstance of your life. But, I'm just going to share with you principles. The Scriptures, is full of principles and in this case, I'm going to share with you, principles and I want you to be able to talk this through, even with your care group leader, mentor, your friends and how these can apply to your lives. But let me put

this in a very simple way first. What are the issues involved, what are some of the examples that you would love to have addressed.

Well, one is, when you live under a terrible regime like that of the Nazis. I don't think, there is anyone in this world who believe that this is a good regime, is a godly regime. No, it has many, many flaws. It's murderous, it's brutal, and it's wicked in many counts. So, how can we live under the regime like this. The Italian version is Mussolini and then, in our Asian version, maybe, the closest to that would be that of Pol Pot in Cambodia. These are terrible regimes. How do you respond and that is the question that has been asked. What about Oscar Schindler, the man, who in a sense, used his wealth, his personal finances, to safeguard the lives of many Jews, in a sense, blindsiding the Germans, Nazis authorities. And you didn't ask this, but I thought about this man, brother Andrew. You know who is brother Andrew? He is called God's smuggler, he brings Bibles, he smuggles Bibles into nations where the Bible is not allowed, into restricted access nations. How do you respond to someone who lives his life of faith, in this way, smuggling, illegally, Bibles into lands. How do you respond to this man called Dietrich Bonhoeffer, some of you may have heard of this German, theologian, he is a pastor, as you could be, pastor, martyr and spy. It's interesting, Bonhoeffer is a great theologian. I am sure, many of you have read some of his works, his books and Bonhoeffer, himself, however was involved in an assassination plan. You see, he lived under Hitler and he was, he was able to be part of a plot that was hatched, to kill Hitler. He sees Hitler with all the treacherous, murderous deeds, he found that he himself, maybe have an opportunity to kill him. What you say, to someone like Dietrich Bonhoeffer? He said this, silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless, not to speak is to speak, not to act, is to act. Wow, and he says, we're not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice. We are to drive a spoke into the wheels itself.

Time stamp in audio 0:16:31.2.

Now, I cannot say I know that all that Dietrich Bonhoeffer is thinking, therefore, might attempt here, is not to tell you every single situation, what it should be and what it should not be. But, I want to share with you, principles and one last illustration, before I share the principles, is that of China. I have been to China, some of you have been to China and we had visited the underground churches in China, they are not legal, in the eyes of the government. Is it right, that they should continue to worship in an underground fashion, should they be registered with the government and let the government dictate what is being preached or control, what is being preached, is it right, is it wrong, what does the Bible have to say?

Again, let me reemphasize, I'm not here, to tell you every single factor, I know him in Bonhoeffer's mind or in brother Andrew's mind or in the church leaders mind. Neither, am I here to give you every single answer to every single situation. But I want you to see from the Bible principles. You see, the Bible gives us principles, that's why it's timeless. It doesn't tell you about a situation, 2000 years ago that is irrelevant for today, it is timeless because, it operates, via the transmission of principles, principles that will shape, renovate, renew our minds. We sang just now right, Speak O Lord, renew our minds, make our minds like that of Jesus, so that for every given situation, I have the mind of Christ, to process it and to live it out. You see, so many of us, we look at the Bible as if it is a crystal ball. We want answers from the Bible just like that.

You must have heard of this story, where a man was seeking God's will for his life and he was doing the Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Mo game in the Bible, flipping the pages, Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Mo, he points to a verse in the Bible that says, "Judah went out and hang himself." He says, no, no, no, that cannot be God's will for me and he flips again and he Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Mo and pointed to the verse that says "Go and do likewise." And then, one more time, he says, last one, God, I know you are humorous, but not like this, okay and Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Mo and the verse he points to is "That we should do, do quickly." (Laughter in the congregation).

Time stamp in audio 0:18:49.4.

Now, that's the way, some of us approach the Bible, reading it as if it is a crystal ball. By the way, the Bible doesn't look like a crystal ball at all, isn't it? It is a book that gives us beautiful principles that will renew and shape our minds. So, today, I just want to lay down, two principles, not very hard, right? Two principles, can you accept that? Can? Two simple principles, that I hope will help us approach the various circumstances that will come into your lives in a helpful, biblical, godly way and they are these:

So, look at this, for a moment, I will explain what it is and how it works.

Two principles:

1. Unconditional Submission
2. Conditional Obedience

Can you say this with me, unconditional submission, conditional obedience. Wah, this is a mouthful, I understand. In the beginning, I had three principles, but I boiled it down to two. It's like, you cooked chicken essence, in the beginning, they are a lot

of things, and I boil, boil, boil, okay, the irreducible minimum for me is these two principles, alright. Originally, I just wanted to put, submission and obedience, but it will not be very clear, so, the best I know, this is the way I think will help you understand it better, unconditional submission, 2, conditional obedience. Let me explain what each one means and how it integrates, synergizes together to give a balanced approach to the issues of authorities.

Time stamp in audio 0:20:31.9.

1. Unconditional Submission

The word, or the term itself, means this, to me. It means, I am to submit to the governing authorities regardless, of how good, how bad, how competent, incompetent, wise and foolish they are. As long as God sets them as authorities over my life, I, submit unconditionally, unless God removes them from my life. But, as long, as I and under them, I have to hupotasso, I have to subject myself to governing authorities.

The Scripture, again I remind you is clear in verse one and to add on to that, verse 2 says, "Whosoever resist the authorities, resists, what God has appointed."

Reinforcement of what I have said last Sunday. Now, besides that, let me go through with you, a little bit more in verse 4, when he says "He is God's servant for your good." The government, and the governing authorities God sets into our lives is for our good. They restrain evil, they restrain crime, they restrain wickedness in any given society. This is the premise, that Paul starts, this is the way God has designed it to be.

Robert Haldane, he is a Bible commentator, a preacher in times past, he says:

The institution of civil government is a dispensation of mercy. It's a good thing. Many of us complain about government, but according to the teachings of Scripture, the governments are a gift from God, is a dispensation of mercy and its existence is so indispensable that the moment it ceases under one form, it re-establishes itself in another. So, once, there is a destruction of authority, very quickly, there will be another kind of authority set up, because, society cannot live without authority and government. Without the powerful obstacle presented by civil government to the selfish and malignant passions of men, it would be better to live among the beasts of the forest than in human society. As soon as its restraints are removed, man shows himself in his real character. When there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes,"

This is a reference to Judges 21:25 and if you have time, go back and read Judges, it is a very depressing book especially, the last few chapters, last few pages, because, it speaks of a time of anarchy, there were no judges, there was no rules, there was no authority. Everyone did that was right in his own eyes and you know what is the conclusion? There was rape, there was murder, there was brutality like nothing you have read of the newspapers today. It was a day where there was no king in Israel and there was no restraint, and people manifested the evil, malignant passions within.

Time stamp in audio 0:23:46.5.

So, the Bible says, the government is God's servant for your good. The word servant here is the word diakonos, oh, from which we get, in our church, the word deacon, officers. If you read on, in verse six, you would see the word, ministers, is the word that refers to liturgical worship. Wow, you mean our governmental authorities are servants of God's like deacons and worship people? Yes, because they serve God, God placed them there and we are to submit to God's ordained ministers.

When you look at the Prime Minister of Singapore, when you look at the defense minister of any country, remember, they are ministers of God. So the Scriptures doesn't give us leeway to say, good, bad or not, you submit. And then, in verse 5, he says, therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience, in our hearts, we know this is right.

Let me say this, unconditional submission, is ordered, and commanded by Scriptures. No two ways about it, because number one, God appoints them, number 2, they are meant for our good, to restrain evil, number 3, simply it is right.

Time stamp in audio 0:25:12.0.

But, pastor, how about those terrible regimes? I don't think the regime in Rome, is a good one as well and I don't think, Paul, gave himself any excuse. At the end of the day, he sees that this is a God thing, he submits because he believes that God is able to accomplish His will, through those that are placed above him. It takes faith, I am not saying that it is easy and let me say this, I know it's never easy. If you have lived under terrible regimes, you know what people were to live under terrible regimes, I hope you don't see these as oh, you do not know what it means, you never feel what is felt like. I think, there are other factors that I may not know, but there is no way we could say, as a result that we, we neglect the clear principles of Scriptures.

Time stamp in audio 0:26:07.5.

Let me give you examples, alright, nothing beats examples. Paul, was a man who was unfairly treated, he was abused. He lived a really suffered under a terrible regime. The Bible says,

the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods, he was inflicted with many blows and he was eventually thrown into prison.

the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

(Acts 16:22-23 ESV)

Time stamp in audio 0:26:30.7.

So, here was a man, who really felt the terrible repercussions, but did he complain, but did he retaliate? He didn't, in fact he gave us Romans 13:1-5. And when we read of him, approaching the governor, the people of authority, I see in him a respect towards authority. In acts 26,

I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa and so on and so forth, therefore, I bet you to listen to me patiently.

“I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. (Acts 26:2-3 ESV)

Here is a man, who suffered injustice but demonstrates, submission, respect, honor, to the authorities set above him.

Another example, you might want to know, is David, King David, Old Testament, alright. New Testament, Old Testament. King David, was his whole life or maybe, large parts of his life, is somewhat like a prey because he's been hunted by the king, King Saul. And Saul was met with jealousy, he was met with envy, he wanted to kill David and so, he set off his whole army, chasing after this one little rabbit called David. David, had a hard time. In fact, if you read the Bible, you would realize, David, had to pretend to be a madman, he was drooling, acting like a crazy guy, because he was trying to escape from Saul, preserving his own life. And there were times, that he

would have lost his life very easily. And then, came a day, wonderful opportunity. David and his men are hiding in a cave, dark cave, no lights. And amazingly, Saul, the hunter came and wanted to relieve himself in the cave. And it was so amazing that David was right next to Saul and Saul didn't know. Wow, this is such a one in 1 million opportunity, this is time and if you were David, if I were David, would you think, "God you are so good, you are so good, amen, hallelujah, praise the Lord, blah, blah, blah, blah." And you say, here you go, piak, you deserved it. Wouldn't you think that, I would've thought like that, you know, if I was a man who was hunted all my life. David couldn't resist, of course, right next to me. He got a knife and zzzst, cut off what? Cut off? You all think what, cut off head ah, no! David, cut off a little piece of cloth from Saul's clothing. Hah? That's what he did? Yah, Hah, shouldn't he stab harder, shouldn't he cut off more? No, that's all David did and you know what David felt like after that? The Bible tells us,

He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed."

(1 Samuel 24:6 ESV)

But, but, David why are you feeling so bad, he is a terrible guy? Yes, but he is the Lord's anointed. But, David, he wants kill you? Yes, but he is the Lord's anointed. David, you would not have this opportunity again! Yes, but he is the Lord's anointed. Here is a man, who demonstrated in the most difficult of times, unconditional submission, simply because Saul is the Lord's anointed.

Time stamp in audio 0:30:21.4.

I wonder if you have lived a life like David. If you haven't, David is your example. Ah, the government, makes me pay so much taxes, oh the government squeeze, and we all may have suffered under bad policies, but it gives us no rights, to squirm away from the principle of Scriptures, unconditional submission.

Now, hang on there, because I know you say, Wah, pastor, like that, then, Siow Liao lah (colloquial he means crazy already), hang on that, because there is a 2nd principle you need to grasp. Besides unconditional submission, you have got to understand conditional obedience. Now, this is where it balances out, alright. Unconditional submission on one hand, I am to submit at all times, but there is conditional obedience. You say, what's the difference. All right, submission is the spirit and attitude from within, alright. Submission is the spirit and attitude from

within, seeing yourself, hupotasso, under the someone else. Obedience, is to listen and to follow, to do. So, submission is the spirit within, obedience is literally, carrying out what is commanded of you.

So, I am to submit, my spirit should be one of the respect and support, all the time, but my obedience, is not all the time, because there are times, I will not follow what you want me to do. Yet, undergirding it, is still a spirit of submission, you get that tension, you get the balance, don't lose either of them. Because, some of us will say, I submit unconditionally, therefore, I obey unconditionally. That, you will realize, not quite correct. On the other hand, there are those who would say, because, I can't disobey sometimes and because you have made poor decisions, I don't have to submit to you at all and you lose that respect and regard for authority. That's also, not balanced. So, you have got to keep both, unconditional submission spirit, conditional obedience.

Time stamp in audio 0:32:37.2.

Now, I have explained that, let me explain to you conditional obedience. In general, Scriptures is clear, you submit, you obey your government, the authorities, by extension, your mum, your dad, your employer. But, there are times, you don't obey them. Why? Because, what they tell you to obey, is in direct contradiction to what God tells you to obey. So, when you have a clash, for example, mummy tells you to murder your cousin, what you do? Well, conditional obedience, you don't do it, because murder is wrong, forbidden in Scriptures. Is this biblical, look at some examples in Scriptures.

There was once, when the apostles were preaching, the resurrection of Jesus and the leaders gathered the apostles, Peter and John and say, you cannot preach anymore. What did the apostle say,? Peter and John answered them, saying "“Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,
(Acts 4:19 ESV)

Hey, come on, who should we listen to? You or God? Obviously, they chose to obey God rather than men. This was not the 1st time they preached, they preached again, they turned, they filled the city of Jerusalem with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Acts 5, they gathered these men again and said, "We strictly charged you,

we told you already, don't preach, yet you still do so." Peter and the apostles then said, "We must obey God rather than men."

saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."
(Acts 5:28-29 ESV)

Conditional obedience. If you tell us to do things that are in line with Scriptures, doesn't violate principles, we will obey. But when you tell us to do things that God has commanded us or not to do things that God has commanded us to do, we have to obey God rather than men. Conditional obedience. Again, let me say this, "Whilst you may disobey authorities, when they tell you to do something against the Bible, don't lose the spirit of submission". This is where we often go so wrong, ah, he tells us to do something bad, you throw the baby together with the bathwater, everything is thrown out, no submission needed. No, submit still. Obey conditionally.

Time stamp in audio 0:35:11.9.

Another example, you might want to know, is in the Old Testament, exciting. Let me ask this, if, if the Singaporean government says, but what was asked, they are too many foreigners and when the foreigners give birth to a child, kill the child and you are the midwife in KK Hospital. They commanded all the midwives in KK Hospital, NUH, Mount E, Gleneagles, if you all see foreigners, give birth to children, kill them. If you are a midwife then, what will you do? So difficult, ah (Laughter in the congregation). What would you do? You will... How many say, you will do it. (Laughter in the congregation) okay, I am glad, you will obey God, rather than men. You were not do it, right. Now, this is not strange, okay very strange in Singapore, but it is not strange in the Bible, because thousands of years ago, there was someone who said to the midwives, kill all the foreigners boys. You said, who? Pharaoh.

There arose a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph, and this Pharaoh, saying that the people of Israel, the Jewish people, living in Egypt for so long, has been multiplying, they are particularly fertile, don't know why, but they will multiplying and multiplying until the population, exit that of the Egyptian nation. The Pharaoh says, put all the men to hard work and if a woman was to give birth, and if it is a boy, kill him. If it is a girl, let her live, but if it is a boy, kill him. Wow, you know what the midwives did, they had a dilemma but you did, you were stunned for a while, what should I do. And this is how they resolved the dilemma, the midwives feared God and

did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them. They did not obey unconditionally. They disobeyed in this regard. And the reason, given in Scriptures, according to Moses who wrote this book is that they feared God.

But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.
(Exodus 1:17 ESV)

By the way, for them to disobey Pharaoh, takes guts, because, they would be killed, for disobeying Pharaoh, simple as that. But he chose, to obey God rather than men and subsequently, the Bible says, So God dealt well with the midwives, the people multiplied, grew very strong, because the midwives feared God, obey God rather than men.

So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.
(Exodus 1:20-21 ESV)

Time stamp in audio 0:38:05.3.

Another final character, that would give you a good example, is this man who is a star, the star of his times, he is, if you have the Times Magazine, man of the year, figure of the year, he would feature on that list, many times. Phenomenal young man, who went to a different country, at a very early age. And when he was challenged with this proposition, bow down to this golden statue and worship the statue, this young man, together with his friends had guts, had courage, had convictions and said no, king, we will not bow down to any statue nor to worship it. By now, you would know, this man is Daniel.

The Bible says

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, these are the Babylonian names given to them, answered and said to the king, ".....we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image..."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ".....we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
(Daniel 3:16-18 ESV)

Now, didn't the king command them, but he chose to obey God rather than men and you know the story, God delivered them, delivered them from the fiery furnace, they were prepared to pay the price. Thrown into the furnace; miraculously delivered, vindicated to obey God rather than men.

Some years later, same story, this time, the king forbids the people in his nation to worship anyone else but himself, no prayer, the worship and looked Daniel. Daniel knew, the document had been signed, the white paper has been passed. He went to his house, where he had windows in his upper chamber, open towards, he is not hiding it, he is not doing this like a secretive little thing, he was so clear that this is God's will for him, to even disobey the king that he opened the windows and prayed on his knees, 3 times a day, gave thanks before his God as he had done previously, basically, disobeyed the king in order to obey the God he worshipped.

Time stamp in audio 0:40:08.7.

When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously. (Daniel 6:10 ESV)

Unconditional submission and conditional obedience, you got that? I can close the sermon here, if you get it. All of you, start nodding your head, alright. That's it really, that's all it is. Now, pastor, is this really true, can it stand? Well, let me just give you the examples you have looked at again and look at it in this diagrammatic form, just simple way.

Peter and John, I believe, were submissive citizens in the Roman Empire, but they did not obey all the time. They practiced, I feel, unconditional submission and conditional obedience. Daniel, in Old Testament, by the way, he is a submissive guy to his king, that's why I think, he rose through the ranks. I mean, the king could recognize a good man and he was a good man. He had his principles, he obeyed God, but in general, if you read his story, he was submissive. Unconditional submission, conditional obedience.

King David, demonstrated unconditional submission. Apostle Paul, demonstrated unconditional submission in his writings. Hebrew midwives, demonstrated conditional obedience through their lives. Let me you erase this away and let's put back the questions you guys have asked.

1st question, wouldn't we be allowed to obey, or to disobey the authorities if they told us to kill all foreigners? My answer to you, sure, disobey them, because, this is a direct contradiction to God's Word. But please, don't because, you disobey them or you feel that there is a right to disobey them, loose the spirit of submission towards them. There must be a spirit and attitude of submission, even when you disobey in some specific counts.

China, that's where it gets sensitive and that's where I feel it is not appropriate for me to share all that I am convicted about, but this is where I think your small group really kicks in, this is where you share one with another and talk through convictions. How can I balance this and this together, in a situation like this. What if one day, we live under a regime like Hitler's or Pol Pot. How would you think if you were Dietrich Bonhoeffer's position. How should you respond by Oscar Schindler and brother Andrew. Am I here to give you all the answers, no. I am smart you see, I do want to get myself into trouble, but what I want you to do, is to know the principle and how it can apply in circumstances like this.

Let me erase this and bring it back down to your daily life. How should you respond, when your boss tells you to lie? You shake your head immediately; shake your head to which one? Shake your head to which one, it's important right? You've got to nod your head to this and shake your head to that. You understand what I'm trying to say? You nod your head to this, because God placed them over you; you shake your head at this, because they are so wicked. They tell you to do something that is not according to Scriptures. So, boss tells you to inflate your sales figures, or to give a bottom line price that is much higher than what it really is, so that you can get a better deal. Now, although subtle things are what you've got to be careful about. At no time, should you lose your submissive spirit to your boss, alright, at no time. He may be an Army officer, your Sgt., but this is the tension you've always got to maintain, I've got to submit unconditionally, yet I can disobey conditionally as well. I have got to have that toggle, I have got to have that balance.

Time stamp in audio 0:44:22.4.

How about your husband tells you to go for abortion? There is no money dear, we can't cope, for practical reasons, go for abortion. He is not a believer, he doesn't understand. Hey, what do you do? Ah, this guy, useless guy, I am not going to bother with him anymore. That's, that's dangerous because you are losing somewhere here. On the other hand, you may say, since he's my husband, I have to follow everything he says. Hey, something goes wrong here. Tension, balance, poise. Husband stops

you from attending church service. I can change that, parents stop you from attending church service. How biblical is attending church service? Where do you draw that line? Is church service necessarily in a hall like this or the exhorting and gathering of one another, in a different format.

These are the little factors that will have to come in, and I think it's best discussed in a small group. What about if mom wants you to throw away your Bible. I don't want to see the Bible ah, but I can have my Bible in my iPhone. (Laughter in the congregation). She doesn't know how to touch, don't know how to play. How, how do you balance that? This is common, many of you are Chinese, holding incense at Chinese funeral services. In fact, I know, many of you have these niggling questions, pastor, I don't dare to believe in Jesus, because I'm scared I am called to holding incense, I don't know what to do. Great questions, great questions, I am not going to answer it here. (Laughter in the congregation)

Parents stop you from baptism, what should I do? Well, have a fun time in your small group. (Laughter in the congregation). In GLCC, we believe that, for you to grow best, for you to learn best, you don't do this just on Sunday mornings, there's got to be one another, there got to be that good discussions, learning and sharing in your small groups, discipleship groups, with your mentors, with your leaders. I want to encourage you to do that, because, that's the way, the book of Acts did it, right. They went, they discussed, they learn Scriptures day by day, in a very, very real sense. So, I want to encourage you to do so, but these are the 2 principles, you should anchor your thinking on. Unconditional submission, conditional obedience.

I want to close with this focus and emphasis. I understand, questions generated is because there is a fear of wholehearted submission. You just can't see how you can respect and follow them. Let me bring you back to you again. While there is grounds for us to disobey because you want to obey God rather than men. The thrust and the emphasis of Scriptures, is the spirit of submission, don't lose it. Is not something called alone said.

Time stamp in audio 0:47:26.8.

It's something Peter himself as well said. I close, I just have 2 more slides, this one and another one. Peter said, be subject for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, they are flawed, they are wicked sometimes, but you subject yourself for the Lord's sake. Your husband can be flawed, your husband can be wicked, but you subject yourself to your own husbands, as unto the Lord, the Scripture says to the

wife, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. Whether it's the Prime Minister or the policemen, corporal, private, submit yourself. God said so for the Lord's sake, for this is the will of God, that by doing good, if you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people, fear God, honor the emperor.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.Fear God. Honor the emperor.

(1 Peter 2:13-17 ESV)

Time stamp in audio 0:48:27.2.

What kind of emperor, emperor Nero at that time. He's a terrible guy, he burnt Christians on stakes, he fried them in boiling oil, he sent animals to chew up Christians, he and forces exorbitant taxes, allow slavery, he is a terrible guy. Hah, Peter? Honor the emperor. We have lots of grievances against terrible tyrants, monarchies but the Scriptures principles, remain the same. You say why, I still can't see it. The closer here, in verses 21-23, just a few verses down

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

(1 Peter 2:21-23 ESV)

Jesus came into a very bad political system, but there was no insubmission on our Lord's part. He submitted to his mother, he submitted to the governor, he says, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, he did not retaliate against Pilate when he was unjustly punished and sentenced. Our Lord, in His life, is a perfect example, far beyond David, Paul, Peter, Hebrew midwives, He is our supreme example. Follow in His footsteps.

Let's bow for a word of prayer.

Time stamp in audio 0:50:08.4.

This morning, where learning about the beauty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, reaches us, sinful men and changes the way we live, because, it changes the way we think, it changes our motivations. Maybe, the emphasis of your life today is political reform. Jesus didn't come for political reform, He came for spiritual reform, He did not come to change the world, outside us, He came to change the world inside us. He came to send peace not on the outside, He came to send peace on the inside. He came to bring peace by reconciling sinful man to the Holy God. That's what Jesus is all about, He came to save us sinners from our sins. And today, my friends, there is nothing greater than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Politics is important, submission to authority is important, the way we relate to government is important, but my friends, that's not really the ultimate thing, the ultimate thing is Jesus, His Gospel, His kingdom, that He is ushering today in many many, human hearts. That is our emphasis and in order, for us to bring about that spiritual reform, it begins with our lives. Alive, that is transformed, by the renewing of the Word, a life that does not conform to the world, a life that says, "Lord, this is difficult for me to submit to my authorities but I will live it as a living sacrifice unto You, this is my worship, and this is the aroma, of this burnt offering that I won the world around me to know, to smell, to feel, so that, they will know, Jesus is in me." The Gospel, reveals to us, the life, the death, the resurrection, the purpose of Jesus Christ. This morning, we began with politics, we began with our country, but I want to end today, with your heart that is aligned, to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

May I say, if you are here today, and you do not know Jesus, He came, to suffer a cruel, unjust death, in order to set us free. He came for you, He came for you, He came to die for you, to save you from your sins. He came to pay for you what you will never be able to pay. He came to heal your sins, heal your life, to re-create a new man that can know God, rejoice in God and enjoy God. This morning, as you gather here today, I want to meet you, I want to point you to Jesus, my Savior. The Bible says, "Whosoever believe in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." You say why? Because, Jesus gave His life that you may have life, He died, that you may live and whosoever believe, would you believe in Jesus today. Come to Him, recognizing you are a sinner, in need of forgiveness and cry out, dear Lord, save me from my sins.

Father, thank You so much. It's all about Jesus. It's all about how He came and died and through His life, His death, we learned so much, we get so much, we are blessed

so much. Thank You today we are saved, by His blood, by His grace and I pray that, as in response to that grace of God in the Gospel, we would be willing to lay down our lives as living sacrifices, to pursue, the real peace that this world needs. To send forth that aroma that he needs out of a life that submits himself and herself do that authorities you have sent. And even in these matters, we pray for the beauty, the life of Jesus to be seen in your people. Our prayer this morning as well, is for all our friends, our guests to come to know Jesus Christ, because He died for us. And, so, dear God, may you bless each one, we thank You today for the cross. Everything makes sense, at the cross of Jesus. May all these make sense to us today, in a fresh new way, by the help of your Holy Spirit, we ask this now in Jesus name, amen.