

Heavenly Citizens in an Earth

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[0 : 00] I want you all to open up your Bibles to 1 Peter 2. 1 Peter 2. We're right in the middle of chapter 2 of 1 Peter. And this morning we're going to be spending our time on verses 13 through 17.

So as you turn there in your Bibles, I want to ask you all to stand as we always do in honor of God's Word as we read together. 1 Peter 2 beginning in verse 13.

The apostle writes, 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. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. Father, take this word now by the power of your spirit and make it come alive in our hearts.

[1 : 10] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I don't know if you guys who've been coming to the church for a while have noticed, but I tend not to change my sermons and not to alter course for holidays, for anything other than, say, Christmas or Easter.

We usually do a special sermon when it comes to Reformation Day and at the end of October. But when it comes to other holidays, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, I don't stop what I'm doing and have a special sermon on that.

It's not because I'm opposed to that. It's just that I just don't feel like doing it. I just want to keep moving in the book that we're in and keep moving forward. So we're not covering these verses that happen to do with our relationship to the government because it's the weekend following July 4th.

That's God's providence because I map these things out and outline these things out without ever giving a whole lot of thought to what those sorts of holidays are. I mark down Christmas and Easter on my little calendar that I outline my sermon series on and that's it.

Other than that, I just divide it up as I study through, divide up the verses. And so it's sheerly by God's providence that on the first Sunday of the month when we always pray for our leaders and the Sunday following July 4th that we would be covering here in 1 Peter 2 a passage that deals explicitly with our relationship to human government.

[2 : 36] That's a tricky subject to deal with because as we've seen, particularly walking through the first half of the second chapter of this letter, we have seen that we are no longer as followers of Christ.

We are no longer first and foremost citizens of this world. We're not. The Apostle Paul says in the book of Philippians that we are citizens of heaven. And Peter says, if you'll look up in verse 9 of this same chapter, Peter says that we are, as believers, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession.

And we saw over the last few weeks that those terms, those phrases are all drawn from the Old Testament. And they all describe Old Testament Israel under the Old Covenant.

So that now here we stand as the church, as New Covenant followers of Christ, and we see a lot of the labels of Old Testament Israel applied to us, so that we are in a very real sense, we are a holy nation, just as Israel was intended to be.

We are God's people, separate and distinct from all the other peoples in the world. No longer, though, are we identified by national markers and physical boundaries on a map.

[3 : 53] We are now identified by faith in Christ. We really and truly have a citizenship in heaven. We are a heavenly, holy nation and people of God.

And so you have to ask the question, when a heavenly people lives in an earthly country, what is the relationship between those people and the earthly rulers in the countries in which they live?

And Peter answers that question for us briefly, but he answers it for us in these verses. There are two mistakes that you can make in regards to our relationship to the governments and institutions of this world.

You can, on the one hand, say that, well, because we are in Christ, and because we belong to Christ, and because our citizenship is in heaven, we no longer are bound by all the rules and regulations of the nation in which we live, and all we need to do is follow Christ, and we need not pay any attention to those other rules, those other boundaries that are laid out for us.

And Peter's going to take that view to task. Or you can say, on the other hand, that we must, in all things, obey human governments. Whatever they tell us to do, we have to do everything that they say to do, and Peter is going to set that view aside as well.

[5 : 17] So I want us to look at this passage, and here's what we're going to see in this passage. We're going to see a kind of freedom that Peter describes alongside a kind of submission to earthly rulers.

So there's both submission here, and there's freedom. And what we're going to see is we're going to see two different approaches to the freedom that we have, and two different motives for the kind of submission that we're supposed to offer to human governments.

Take a look, though, at how Peter begins this passage. He tells us to be subject, for the Lord's sake, to every human institution. Or at least that's how most English translations say something along those lines.

Be subject to every human institution. But literally it says, be subject to every human creation. The word that's used here that's translated institution is a word that's used everywhere else in the New Testament.

It's almost always translated creation. So what does Peter mean here when he says to be subject to every human creation? Well, he doesn't mean be subject to everything that humans create.

[6 : 22] That's not what he's saying. He's using two words to describe the same reality. Human and creation, or created. And so what Peter is saying is that the things which we are to be subject to recognize first and foremost that they are human, and they are created.

It's Peter's way of saying that those to whom we submit in this world are not ultimate. They are not the final authorities, because they are merely created human subjects.

He goes on to describe exactly what the creation, the aspects of creation that he wants us to submit to are. Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human creation, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him.

So now we see it very clearly, that the very human, very created things that he has in mind are indeed human governments. Whether we're talking about those at the very top of the government, in this context it would have been the emperor in Rome, although the word here is simply the word for king.

It would have been the emperor in Rome, and then in the first century it would have been all of the various governors sent out to the different regions of the Roman Empire. So that we know the story of Christ's crucifixion, we have Pilate who's called a governor in the Gospels.

[7 : 51] He was one under the authority of Caesar, under the authority of the emperor, sent out to execute the emperor's will in the region of Judea.

And every region in the Roman Empire had a governor who was to report to Caesar. And so Peter says, whether we're talking about direct submission to the emperor, or we're talking about submission to those who come in the name of the emperor, and with the authority of the king, whatever the case may be, the rightful attitude that a Christian ought to have is of submission.

Not absolute submission, because these are, after all, men. They're just men. They're just human beings. They are not, as the Romans would have had them believe, they are not divine persons.

The Romans often believed that whoever was Caesar was endowed with a kind of divine power, and that the Caesars, when they died, became, in a very real sense, they believed that they became gods.

And so there was a cult of emperor worship spread throughout the empire. And in fact, Christians were often persecuted because they would not participate in emperor worship. And so Peter doesn't want us to be confused here.

[9 : 09] He wants us to remain steadfast in our resolve to recognize that these are merely men. These are merely human beings. And yet, as followers of Christ, we are commanded to submit to them, to be subject to them.

What can we say about that? What else can we say about this submission? We know that it's not absolute, because only our submission to God is absolute. So what sort of submission is it?

What kind of subjecting are we to do here? It says, Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution.

So there is a kind of submission that's not born out of fear towards the king, or the emperor, or the president, or the police officers, or whatever secular authorities might be present with you at the moment.

There is a kind of honor and reverence and submission that you give to those in authority over you that is not simply born out of fear. It's born out of a desire to honor Christ.

[10 : 25] Do it for, he says, for the Lord's sake. This distinguishes our submission from the submission to the government authorities that everyone else offers. Notice what he says is the essential role of human governments.

He says that these governors have been sent out by the emperor, verse 14, to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

It's very similar to what Paul says in Romans chapter 13 when Paul takes up this same subject of what is the relationship of the followers of Christ to human secular governments. And both of these writers, both of these apostles identify the essential task of human governments to be the punishment of those who do wrong and the rewarding or the praising of those who do right.

So that in the Roman world, punishment was often swift. You were executed or some other physical means of punishment. You were whipped or you were beaten.

They didn't imprison people for long periods of time, just shortly until they could come to trial. And then when they came to trial, there was a punishment, whether it was death or some sort of flogging or beating, the death, the punishment was meted out and the person went on their way.

[11 : 38] So that what drove obedience to the secular authorities was, first and foremost, fear. Fear of that kind of punishment.

Because these things were done publicly. Executions were public. You could be crucified out on the side of the road so that everyone would see it.

You could be flogged in the middle of the town square, in the middle of the market, so that everyone would see you being flogged. They would see you bleeding and screaming and they would think, I'm not going to do whatever this guy's done to deserve that sort of punishment.

And so the primary driving motive for submission to the government was, and I think still is today, fear.

Fear of punishment. But then there was also the secondary motive added in there that the government exists to praise those who do what is right. And so oftentimes in the Roman world, if you had a citizen who gave some extraordinary gift, perhaps to the government, perhaps some charitable gift to a group in the city, they'd done something over and above, something extraordinary, oftentimes the government, the local Roman governor, would have some sort of statue or some sort of plaque dedicated to you.

[12 : 57] And so it became a great honor among Roman citizens, among the wealthy, to be able to do good things and receive the praise of the governor and, if you were really lucky, to receive praise from the emperor himself.

And so there was this kind of motive of saying, if you go beyond mere submission and you do good, you not only avoid doing evil, but you do some sort of civil good for the society around you.

If you do that, you will be rewarded. And Peter and the Apostle Paul say, that is one of the functions of the government. The government is to punish those who do wrong and reward those who do good, who do right.

Now that's going to be applied in all sorts of different ways in different nations, in different cultures, at different periods of time. But those are the essential functions of the government. Whatever else we may add on, whatever else various governments may tack on and take upon themselves as their responsibilities, those are the essential duties.

And they become the essential motives for submission to secular authorities. For the world. Not for Christ's followers.

[14 : 09] For Christ's followers, submission to the government has nothing to do with fear that we might be punished. Because the reality is we might receive punishment.

Because we know that although God institutes human governments and God has set up the purpose of human governments, they are nevertheless still human, they are still created, they are still sinful, and they do not always fulfill these obligations.

And they do not always fulfill these obligations in the ways that God would have them to fulfill them. So that oftentimes you see governments punishing those who do good and rewarding those who do bad.

We see that all the time. And it is entirely possible that things can become reversed for us as followers of Christ and we can be punished for doing good.

In fact, if you look up just a little bit earlier in verse 12, we are told that the Gentiles, that is non-believers here in verse 12, they will speak against you as evildoers.

[15 : 18] It's going to happen. We're going to be slandered as evildoers at times. Jesus Himself was put to death on a Roman cross.

His trial was held before Pilate, the Roman governor. Peter, Peter, not many years after the writing of this letter, will be beheaded by a Roman emperor.

So will the Apostle Paul. And yet Peter and Paul both, fully aware of the sinful tendencies of human government, fully aware of the likelihood of circumstances being reversed and them being punished for doing good, nevertheless says, submit.

Why? For the Lord's sake. Submit for His sake, for His honor, and for His glory. Not because you expect a reward for doing good.

Not because you fear the government and you're afraid of being put in jail, or you're afraid of being fined. Submit because in it, Christ is greatly honored.

[16 : 28] That's the kind of submission that's required. A submission that is born of a Christ-centered, Christ-honoring motive. And that in the end, although outwardly it may look very much like the submission of others, it's driven by a wholly different motive beneath.

But Peter has more to say than submit. Because he helps us to understand exactly what characterizes this submission. And he digs a little bit deeper into what is the motive precisely.

How does this motive function? How does it work? When he begins to talk about the other end of the spectrum and he begins to talk about the kind of freedom that we have. Take a look there.

If you look down just a couple of verses in verse 16. In verse 16, we are told that we are to, my translation says, live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Now, I have to kind of give you a bit of a warning here that the word live is not in this verse. In fact, there's not a verb here. It just simply says, as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as servants of God.

[17 : 46] There's no verb in this verse. You just have to sort of supply one in order to make it to make sense. But I think that the one that we should supply is not the word live, but we reach up in the passage and find the main thought, the main verb in the passage.

And the main thought, the only command that we've really received is to be subject, to be submissive. So here's how I would take this. That we are to submit or be submitting as people who are free.

Not using our freedom as a cover-up for evil, but submitting as servants of God. So all this language about freedom is describing the kind of submission that we offer up to the government authorities.

And that submission is, first and foremost, a submission that is born out of spiritual freedom. We are free people. In fact, we are the only truly, ultimately free people in the world.

Because we are free, we have seen. Christ has redeemed us from the futile ways inherited from our forefathers, we learned in chapter 1. We are free, in Paul's language, we have been set free from bondage to sin.

[19 : 08] Set free from the power of sin. We are genuinely, authentically, spiritually free from the oppressive forces within us and from the oppressive forces without us.

We are free from sin. We have the ability to live lives that are pleasing to God and that honor God. We have the ability to do that.

The rest of the world does not. And so Peter says that the submission that you're going to offer up to worldly human rulers is a submission that will flow out of your freedom.

That's a strange thought. Submit because you are free. And then he says, and don't use the freedom that you have as a cover up for evil.

There are two ways to express the freedom that we have in Christ. we can't either say we are free from the law. We are free from the constraints of the law and so we will simply live and do whatever we want to do.

[20 : 18] And we will flaunt our freedom. We will show everyone that we have a kind of freedom that no one else has. And so you can picture the temptation in the first century when followers of Christ by the world were often just identified as more Jews.

They're just more Jews. They didn't even consider the followers of Jesus whether they be Jew or Gentile ethnically. They didn't consider them to be distinct from those who were adherents of Judaism. The Romans just didn't look at them as any different.

It was just another sect of Judaism. That's the only way that they viewed it. And so you can imagine that there would be a temptation among the followers of Christ to emphasize the freedom that they now have as opposed to all of those others who are still enslaved and in bondage to Judaism and to the law.

And so there would be this temptation to use the freedom that you have as a covering for evil. Well, I'm not bound by the law so I can I can do these things and I can skirt the edges here.

Peter says that's not how we use our freedom. Rather, a follower of Christ rather than flaunt freedom and use freedom in that kind of way a follower of Christ uses their freedoms as a motive for submission.

[21 : 52] It's very similar to the ways in which Christ will turn things on their heads so that the first will be last. The last will be first. The free here, the free will submit.

And ultimately, we submit to human governments because, he says, we submit as serpents, that is, as slaves of God.

That's our identity. Our identity doesn't end at free from sin. our identity terminates in. Free from sin and now enslaved to God.

Free from unrighteousness and now bound to righteousness. You can never have the freedom from sin and the world that Christ offers unless you become bound to him as his servant and slave.

Jesus himself came into this world as a servant, as a slave, and he calls his followers to do no different than what he did.

[23 : 01] He calls us in our freedom for the sake of the glory of Christ made manifest among the nations to submit to the rulers of the nations.

what do we make of this practically? What do you make of this in terms of your view of politics?

How does this affect your political ideology and your view of the political realm and the political world? What does this do to that? I think that it requires that we pause and we think long and hard on our attitudes towards civil authorities.

There's a strong stream of thought and feeling that runs through I'd say the western world but it runs more strongly through Americans.

and it is this hyper view of our freedom that we have so that nothing else matters.

[24 : 18] Everything else is laid aside in pursuit of freedom. And freedom I think has been often times the idol of the American mind.

So much so that in our pursuit of freedom we have failed to consider that perhaps real freedom in Christ results not in a throwing off of everyone's chains but in submission to secular human authorities.

It's not ultimate. It's not an unwillingness to ever throw off the chains that bind us because there are times when that becomes necessary.

The government does have a role to perform to punish those who do evil to reward those who do good. God says that he hates those who reward evil. He hates that.

And so I think that there is a boiling over point. There is a threshold at which point we say this government this is no longer functioning as a government.

[25 : 24] It's no longer doing that. But that threshold is rarely met in society. Rarely is it ever met. Was it met at the founding of our country?

Perhaps. Perhaps not. Is it met now? No. I don't think so. Is it met at the Civil War?

That's the wrong question. it's a battle between opposing governments. A battle between a government that would ensure freedom and a government that would strip freedom and a lot of other issues involved.

Well aware of that. My point is that we don't live in a simplistic world. We don't live in a world where we look around and we say here's an easy answer here and here's an easy answer there and well this government's good and this government's bad and this president's good and this president's bad and this dictator's good and this one's bad and the world is simple and we can easily identify those sorts of things.

That's not the kind of world that we live in a fallen world where sin is woven into everything and yet even in a world in which sin is woven into the fabric of our governments yet there is a place for submission.

[26 : 57] submission. A place for God honoring Christ exalting submission to fallible sinful leaders.

It's not simple. It's not easy. And what we need is not a rallying cry to freedom. It's not what we need.

What we need is a full biblical worldview so that in every complicated intricate situation we will have basic principles out of which to live our lives and out of which to make decisions.

How do you decide for whom you will vote as a Christian? How do you decide living in a democratic society when you will have a recall vote for someone who's in authority over you?

Those are questions that we have as Americans. That's not even to touch on the issues of what if you live in a nation that's filled, that's led by a brutal dictator. Just here, just in our situation, in our context, in America, how do you navigate these difficult choppy waters?

[28 : 07] How do you do it? You do it with firm Christ centered biblical principles. And the principles that Peter lays out here for us are first and foremost we are free in Christ yet slaves of God and because of that able for the glory of God and for the honor of Jesus to submit to human leaders.

Able to do that. Able to do it when it seems impossible. Able to do it when no one else around us seems to have the ability to do it.

And it doesn't just have to do with large political issues. How do you respond to the police officer when he pulls you over and you feel like, and you look at your speedometer and you feel fairly certain that you weren't speeding at all.

You're not aware of any laws. You check your stickers on your car windshield really quickly just to make sure that maybe something's not wrong there and you think, well those are fine and I can't think of anything that I've done wrong.

And all that happens in an instant in your mind before he even walks up to your window. And the question becomes, what will be your default attitude toward the police officer who's pulled you over when you feel like you've done nothing wrong?

[29 : 29] Will your default attitude be, I'm going to argue with this guy. I'm going to prove myself right. Or will your default attitude be, I'm going to submit to his authority.

Now we live in a society where there are limits to the authority of the police. That's true. So they're not allowed to just yank us out of the car and beat us over the head with their sticks and shoot us in the foot and leave us bleeding in the middle of the street.

They can do that in some places. We're not allowed to do that here and we should be thankful for that. And we recognize the boundaries and the limits. But in that moment, what is your default attitude?

To argue? To shrug off his authority as if he has no real authority over you? Or to recognize my ultimate submission is to Christ and Christ has called me to submit to those in authority over me?

It's not as if I can stand here and give you an answer for every incident that might arise in your interactions with all the various government officials.

[30 : 46] I mean, we have so many government officials in our day and age. I couldn't possibly do that. I mean, how do you react at the DMV in long lines? What do you do there? I mean, what do you do in various instances when the police pull you over?

What do you do when other people around you are calling, as they did in Colorado recently, for a recall vote on a senator? What is your participation level in that? I can't give you just an answer for every individual situation.

What I can give you are biblical principles by which to navigate those very muddy, choppy, difficult waters. And the principles are free in Christ, enslaved to God, and therefore submitting to human governments so long as that submission doesn't require you to violate your prior submission to God.

You see? Those principles are applied in innumerable ways in our lives. And they affect the ways that we vote, they affect the ways that we participate in the political process, they affect the ways that we talk to police officers, they affect the ways that we talk to those who are in bureaucratic positions, and we have to deal and fill out papers, they affect all the various ways in which we interact with those people.

And if we come with a default Americanized, idolized freedom perspective that I'm free, don't make me do anything I don't want to do, we will not honor Christ.

[32 : 24] Remember the overall context of all the instructions from here in verse 13 all the way down to the middle of chapter 4. We set the context last week and the context was found in verse 12.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak evil against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Verse 15, it's applied in our passage. This is the will of God. Here it is. That by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

We're surrounded by foolish people filled with ignorance and the way to silence them is not to brashly call them out on their ignorance, but to do good in the face of their evil.

Jesus says, it's like heaping burning coals on the heads of your enemies. You pray for those who persecute you. You love those who speak evil against you.

[33 : 41] You do good and put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Then he gives sort of a summary of all these things in verse 17.

What's the broader context in which we put this relationship between ourselves as citizens of a heavenly country and the rulers of this earthly? That relationship fits in a broader context here.

Here it is in verse 17. Four areas of life. The one we're considering is mentioned last. Honor everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the emperor.

Four very broad areas of our lives. Social relationships. Honor everyone refers to our general relationships with society around us.

How do we talk to our co-workers? How do we relate to our neighbors? How do you relate to the person you're standing next to in line at the grocery store? And all those sorts of things. And the teller at your bank. The millions of relationships and interactions that you have every week.

[34 : 51] What's the default position on those? Honor them. Be nice to them. Be kind to them. Not rude. Not disrespectful. Alright? Honor people. And then it ratchets up a level.

Love the brotherhood. That's another level. Love the brotherhood. Now I realize Jesus says we're to love our neighbors so there's a sense in which we love everyone. So there's a sense in which that honoring of everyone is a display of love towards everyone.

But there's a unique kind of love that exists between believers that's higher than and stronger than the love that exists between us and the rest of the world. Love the brotherhood.

He's reflecting here upon things that he has already said to us earlier in the book where he's spoken to us about loving one another over and over.

He talks about this throughout the book that we are to love one another. Love the brotherhood. It's a higher level than our relationship with everyone else.

[35 : 52] Love the brotherhood. And then it attains another level. Fear God. Fear him. It's not the first time that we've seen that command.

Chapter 1 verse 16 It is written you shall be holy for I am holy and if you call on him as father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds. Conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile.

Fear. Conduct yourselves with fear of a holy God. It's not doesn't exclude love just as honor everyone doesn't exclude love.

But Peter's switching up terms here I believe so that we can see the various levels of relationship that these are different. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood in a unique way. And then when it comes to God it's not only honor and love but stacked on top of that is fear.

Fear God. He is the highest authority. He is the supreme moral purity. Fear him he says.

[37 : 00] And then all of a sudden it drops all the way back down to honor. Honor the king. Honor the emperor. Why this order? Why do it this way?

I would think that you would want to maybe start with honor everyone and the emperor. Love your fellow Christians and fear God so that you just have this constant rising.

Right? You end with God. It's the most important relationship of all. So why begin here to go here only to come back down to here? Why would you do that?

So that all of this business about submitting out of freedom, honoring those in positions of authority over you would be put in its proper context in your heart.

Our submission to government authorities never comes at the price of our fellow believers. others. Our fellow citizens in the kingdom of Christ are of infinitely more importance to us than our relationship and our submission to human governments.

[38 : 18] Notice that. Recognize that. And then our fear of God and our ultimate final submission to Him trumps everything else but especially our submission to human governments.

After all, if the original command here in verse 13 is to be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution or to every human creation to these governments, then any time that that submission no longer honors the Lord, that submission is nullified.

So again, as we saw at the beginning, it's not absolute. There are two things that outweigh our honoring of the King, our love for the brothers, our fear and love and respect for God.

These things have to be ordered rightly in your heart or they'll never be ordered rightly in your application in the real world. So that our default position as followers of Christ is to submit to merely human, sinful, fallen, civil leaders.

Unless, unless they come against our brothers in Christ, unless they call us to violate God's Word in our relationship to Christ and everything else.

[39 : 51] you don't argue, you don't argue with the police officer over whether or not you've sped. You can tell him what you think, tell him your opinion, don't argue with him, he's in authority over you.

Accept the ticket, go to the judge, talk to the judge, there's systems put in place. We have these new t-shirts in the back. I don't know if you guys saw them when you came in.

Church at the Cross t-shirts so you can be a walking billboard right? Everywhere you go so people will know we exist. Same reason for our signs we put out. We don't have a building that people see every week. We have to have other ways of people knowing that we're even here.

And the internet's not quite sufficient even in our day and age. So we have the signs. Now you can be a walking billboard. Don't be a walking billboard for this church. It's supposed to represent Christ and then argue with the police officer on the side of the road.

Okay? The will not honor Christ. Christ. And if I get a report about it, I'll be a little upset. Okay? But you're always a walking billboard for Christ.

[41 : 00] You always are. So why would you disregard this word on the side of the road with the police officer?

Why would you disregard this word and fly off your handle when you're trying to renew your driver's license because you don't like the fact that they've told you to wait in the long line rather than the short line?

And you perceive that there's some sort of reason for that that's a little bit under the table there and you want to know why would you fly off the handle and argue with them in front of everyone when two minutes ago somebody was looking over your shoulder while you were reading on your Bible app on your phone?

You see the default position is submission and you only violate that for the sake of Christ and Christ's people.

Let's pray. Your word is clear on so many things and yet at times doesn't answer every question we have.

[42 : 09] We want to come and get detailed answers for every little situation in our lives but you often times provide us with bigger answers. Solutions to bigger questions than we have.

And so I pray Father that you would give us wisdom as we go through the week to see the multitude of ways in which we're to apply this scripture. I pray that none of us would be default Democrats or default Republicans or default Green Party or default Libertarians or default anything else other than default followers of Christ and everything else gets weighed against your word.

So that as a people, as your people, we would be faithful, holy, consecrated representatives of Christ in the world.

As we honor our neighbors and our co-workers, as we love one another, as we walk in the fear of God, and as we interact in an increasingly politicized world with civil authorities, help us in everything to bring honor and glory to our true ultimate King, Jesus.

It's in his name that we pray. Amen.