

One Kingdom

Kingdom Authority (September 20th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Father for loving us so much that He came to us in the person of Jesus to sacrifice Himself on our behalf while we were still sinners! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to love one another, just as you have loved us! Pray that the Holy Spirit would give us the words to speak, show us opportunities to serve our neighbors, and continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus so that we might lay down our lives for one another and experience abundant life as your kingdom representatives!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, guest speaker Pastor Rob Hall led us into the fifth week of our series titled *One Kingdom*. Pastor Rob focusses our attention to *Romans 13:1-7* to give us a picture of how we as God's kingdom people are supposed to relate to the governing authorities. Pastor Rob points out that ALL authority is established by God, rebelling against authority brings judgment from God, and obeying authority brings protection through God. Therefore, he challenges us to submit to authority as a matter of conscience knowing that those with governmental authority are God's servants and that the state was primarily established by Him to do good and punish evil.

“The Church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* – What “filters” do you have when it comes to talking about politics?

Study Tip: When studying controversial passages, one suggestion is to start digging into the smallest pieces of context (individual word choices) and move to the largest pieces of context (historical and biblical). *Let’s see how this works.* As we **zoom in**, we see that this passage is essentially a call for *everyone to submit (be subject) to authority* to avoid *God’s wrath* and for the sake of *conscience*. *Everyone* implies that what is being said is a timeless truth. *Submit* is a recognition of subordination leading to certain actions like trust and obedience. Notice, however, that Paul does NOT use the words trust and obedience! Paul often refers to two types of *authority*; spiritual and physical. In this context, Paul uses physical language such as *sword, taxes, and honor*, while in other texts, Paul urges followers of Jesus to wage war on spiritual rulers of darkness. Finally, we are explicitly told that these authorities are *God’s servants*. We obey them to avoid *God’s wrath* up to the point where our *consciences* are violated. Now that we have our words identified, **let’s zoom out** into the context of Romans. After giving a rich theological explanation of Jesus, Paul urges followers of Jesus to present our bodies as living sacrifices (12:2). The surrounding chapters comment on the reality that we are both **(a)** one body and **(b)** different members with different roles (12:3-8). We are united in our call to love others like Jesus and always do good (12:9-21, 13:8-14). This unity prevents us from thinking we are better than anyone else (12:3). At the same time, we are all gifted with individual *consciences* and convictions, some more strong in the faith than others (14:1-15:7). Finally, **let’s zoom out** one last time to see the historical and biblical context of Romans. Romans was written to a church that was most likely founded by Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2:10-11) who were commanded to leave Rome after stirring up heated debates about Jesus. Under Nero, 5 years later, Jewish Christians reentered a Gentile dominated church causing various divisions. We also know that Christians traditionally suffered at the hands of Roman authorities whether it was Pontius Pilate (Jn. 19:11) or Herod, Nero, and Domitian in the coming years. Finally, we know that Romans is a deep theological dive into Jesus and his work of salvation for the Jew and the Gentile. *What do these pieces mean?* As you study this week, seek **(a)** unity as we recognize God’s authority over all things (including government) and **(b)** humility as Paul urges a divided church to always seek to do good!

Objective #1: Reflect on the concept that all authority is established by God and what that means for us.

Primary Texts: Romans 13:1, Ephesians 1:19-23 – Pastor Rob opens up his sermon by pointing to Romans 13 and pointing making his first point that all authority is established by God to do good and punish evil! **One of the hardest questions we face today is, “When do we submit to the government and when do we disobey?” How would you respond to this question?**

Supporting texts: (God’s Authority) Proverbs 8:15; Isaiah 40:15, 23-24 ; [Daniel 2:21, 4:17, 25, 32, 5:21]; John 19:10-11

Objective #2: Rebelling against authority brings judgment from God

Primary Texts: Romans 13:2-3 – Next, Pastor Rob uses Romans 13 to make the point that rebelling against the authority that God has put into place invites God’s judgment upon us because those in authority are merely God’s servants bringing about His will. **How can you be a more faithful citizen of the U.S. and the kingdom of God?**

Supporting texts: (Subject to Authority) 1 Peter 2:13-17; (Rebellion) Acts 4:19-20, 5:29; (Wicked Authority) Revelation 13

Objective #3: Obeying authority brings protection through God

Primary Texts: Romans 13:4-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-2 – Finally, Pastor Rob closes his sermon with his third point that obeying authority brings us practical protection. Therefore, we ought to submit to them for our good and as a matter of conscience. **What insights have you taken away from this discussion about the three primary concepts in this week’s sermon? Do you agree or disagree and why? Have you seen any examples of rebellion resulting in God’s judgment or God bringing protection through the governing authorities in your life?**

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank our Heavenly Father for revealing His love through his selfless life and his sacrificial death on the cross! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to equip us to live, love, and forgive like Jesus in the various hardships and situations we face daily. Finally, pray that we as a church would unite as a people who are *known by* our love for one another as we humbly interact with the church and our surrounding community under the banner of One Kingdom!

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Host a Watch Party: At 3Crosses, we are excited to introduce [Watch Parties](#) for our Sunday Services. If you already have a social bubble meeting on Sundays, great! Be sure to let us know about it! Feel free to take a picture and send it in to AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org. If you are interested in launching a new Watch Party and *safely* opening up your home to new guests and those looking for community, let us know [HERE](#)

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would find a way to bring God's kingdom to the place in which they live this week!

-Community Group Fall 2020: For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org