

Submitting to authority Living in obedience to authority

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Welcome and Opening Scripture

Hymn: MP 631

Bible Reading: Ps 103

Prayer of adoration and praise.

Children's talk Wordless book

Notices Refreshments after service, Anniversary Service 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. CW

Choruses MP 358 Jesus Christ is alive today.....

Open time to share

Main reading: Titus 3:1 (page 1199), Ecclesiastes 8:15 (page 674)

Hymn: MP 730 We have heard a joyful sound Jesus saves!

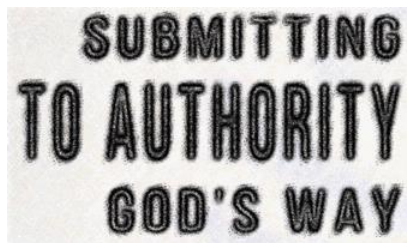
Sermon Living in obedience to authority

Hymn MP 760 When we walk with the Lord, Trust and obey

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at [www.knbc.org](http://www.knbc.org).

The audio file is [21\\_10\\_10.mp3](#). MP 676, 880



## Exordium

- Can you remember the empty streets of London? Almost everything was closed - and remained closed. Remember you wore facemasks in shops, and were not able to come to church? How was it for you? How was it for me to put up a closed sign on the door and window?
- The government was not targetting Christians, this was not persecution for the gospel, No here was a government acting to save lives. Our response was not to fight it but to be subject to our government.

**“1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,**

What is Paul saying? - and why is he writing this? Actually this command strikes at the heart of a Christian's life.... Indeed for everyone.

Let me introduce you to a simple form of logic, a 'syllogism' it's a form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn from two given or assumed propositions (premises).

1. Firstly – All authority is from God
2. Secondly – God has put me under it
3. The conclusion - therefore I should obey it.

There we have it - this morning's teaching is simple. Christians should be obedient. In other words, it honours God when I obey worldly authority.

But there's an evident problems here! Many don't see all authority as from God. Nor do we like being under it - and even if we acknowledge that we are – we don't like having to obey it – especially when we don't want to.

- Every driver knows the highway code is good and necessary – every driver knows that when it's followed it results in smooth running traffic. So why isn't is always obeyed? – because I know better - If it doesn't suit me or I if I become impatient - then I won't follow it.

Let's go through this and *Recognise 1<sup>st</sup> that all authority is from God*  
 This should not surprise us for God is a God of order and therefore he has instituted order in his creation. The body acts as directed by the brain, the cells in my body reproduce as directed by its DNA. The army marches to the officer's order, the rugby game can only be played when the players follow the rules. Etc. etc. Every company and organisation can only function when there is a chain of command, someone has to be 'boss' etc. So too in the country, in society, in the family, in the marriage.

So it should be no surprise when we read in Rom 13:1 **for there is no authority except that which God has established. And the authorities that exist have been established by God.** Paul going on to say: **He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ... for the authorities are God's servants.**

So clearly God has instituted authority – and for a good purpose. Not that in a fallen world it is carried out as it should be, far from it. The more it is influenced by Christianity the better it is, the less influence the worse it is. We should be more grateful for what we still experience in this country.

### *Secondly – God has put me under it*

If God has put it over me - then I am under it – simple logic there!

**“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, Rom 13:1**

As Peter says **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.** 1 Peter 2:13,14

Submit is two words together ‘sub’ and ‘mission’ which means literally to ‘go under’ - Or as Paul says to Titus here **“I Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient.**

### *Therefore I should obey it – Obedience, this is our focus this morning.*

I have gone through this quickly because it is easy to grasp. The scriptures draw our eyes to the teaching on rulers and authorities but it is not really about authority - it is about you, - you and I – how are we with authority?

✚ Remember God's word is always addressing YOU x2, it is speaking to me and you and how we should be.

**“Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient,**

This is one of a number of passages, it is evident that the Apostles had great difficulty in keeping new Christians subject to the authority of magistrates and rulers. Since the fall we are all by nature desirous of power; and the consequence is that no one willingly is subject to another.

**“Remind them”** x2, so my job as a minister is to remind you of your duties.

**So let me remind you this morning of the duties God has laid before you.**

Let me remind you that God is relational, so as image bearers we are to.

✚ The state of your life is a measure of the state of your relationships. x2

What relationships do you have? You are thinking of your spouse, your children your parents, yes they are obvious. But more fundamentally you have three relationships :

1. First your relationship with God
2. Then you have your relationship with others, and
3. Then you have your relationship with yourself.

In our relationship with others this can be broken down - Here in verse 1 we see a Christians duty towards authority, and v2 our duty towards each other.

### *So let us look at our relationship with authority*

Everything comes down to the issue of authority. Am I the authority? or is God the authority? Is Jesus Lord? - or am I Lord?

When Cornelius showed such **great faith** it was because he knew he could trust Jesus implicitly - and why? – because he saw that he had authority.

When Adam and Eve fell from that perfect place with God it was an issue of authority. The devil tempted Eve to take God's authority and make it her own - and that she/they could decide right and wrong - not God.

Why did Satan do this? Because he himself tried to usurp God's authority.

**“You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."** What pride x2 so God rightly says ...

**But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.”** Isa 14:13-15

And because it is the issue with the fall of Adam and Eve it is an issue with you and I. It is the devils settled aim that you should oppose God' authority.

The main change when someone becomes a Christian is that there is a change of authority. It is no longer me but Jesus. I declare that **Jesus is Lord** – and show it in a life subservient to His will – not my will - but his will.

As Jesus so clearly played out in his life **“not my will but yours be done”**

The **CROSS** is the place where tables are turned. The **Cross** shouts **‘your will’**

#### Society

Since Adam and Eve rebelled - mankind has lived in rebellion towards God – and resists His authority. There are times when this has been more prominent than at other times. We are living in one of those times.

Our parents and grandparents were brought up to recognise authority

4. The authority of God.

5. The authority of the leaders of the land.
6. The authority of the teacher, the Policeman, the Magistrate
7. The authority of parents.
8. The authority of father and husband.

**It is easy to see that resistance to authority on one level - affects every level.**

The systematic removal of God and his laws from our society has perverted relationships at all levels.

Sadly there is more - our society is anti-authority, because we do - without realising it – acquiesce to a religious mindset which is anti-authority.

What do I mean by this? There's a marrying together of at least two major influences:

- One is secular humanism which is naturalistic and therefore sees order as counter to nature. Order is seen as a harmful imposition on that which comes 'naturally'. Rules are restrictive – they stop me being me.
- Secondly again without realising it we are influenced by eastern religions such as Taoism. (Pronounced 'dowism'). You have seen the sign. With its balancing of natural forces it is contrary to any externally imposed order.

These are both anti God, who is a God of order – I hope we realise that - so it is easy to see how a rejection of order is a rejection of God.

Those around, balk at authority, they laugh when someone says “you must do it”. “the law says you have to” and so on.....

As a Christian how different are you in this? Do you stand out in this area?

- I was sitting and talking to a friend about the whole pandemic and the vaccination passports – Yes we had much to talk about.

In listening to him I thought ‘does his thinking start with the Bible?’ Is there a desire to obey unless there a good reason not to?

- I often hear “the government is corrupt” that's no reason not to obey.
- “They have their secret agendas” that's no reason not to obey them either.
- “Their policies do more harm than good” that might be a reason.
- “The vaccinations do more harm than good” that might be a reason.

I said if you can clearly show that it does endanger life then it conflicts with God's law which is to save life. Until we can be sure that something is harming – unless we know - we must obey. Lobby your MP, demonstrate peacefully, but obey. There are many ways in England to try to persuade.

- We don't not obey because “it doesn't make sense”, or “I don't like it”

Peter and John when told not to preach the gospel weighed up the conflict and saw it was not **“right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.”** Ac 4:19

If the government is directing you to do something revolting, immoral, blasphemous or contrary to God's Holy law - then don't obey - obey the higher law – otherwise obey the law instituted by God in this land. Not to do so is to disobey God.

✚ **If what we are told to do doesn't contradict God's revealed will – and it usually doesn't - then we must obey!**

In fact we are reminded that for the things that characterise a Christian: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** **Against such things there is no law.** x2 Gal 5:22,23

✚ **To my knowledge no government has every said we mustn't love one another!**

What was Jesus' attitude to authority?

The cruelty of the Roman Empire was legendary, like many empires before it exercised dreadful punishments and torture on an industrial scale.

Yet he says “Give to Caesars what is Caesars”, in other words pay your due, pay your tax, give due respect, give due honour etc. Paul was respectful to the religious leaders who opposed him. Let us follow Jesus's example.....

We are not to withhold paying our taxes, bills or anything else, don't grumble about it, and complain as many do. **The easiest way to start a conversation in public and know that everyone is with you is to complain.**

No, not the Lord's people: **Do everything without complaining or arguing,** Php 2:14

The 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians were good citizens – they offered not begrudging but willing submission to those cruel authorities.

We have no right to make an arbitrary choice based on whether our leaders are good or not. Few authorities are good - and many are terrible.

So obey with a sincere heart, why? because it is done for the Lord we love. **“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”** Col 3:17

We submit to authority as the slave submits to their master - **“Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.”** 1Pe 2:18

Slaves are to act rightly whether their boss is a good boss or a bad boss.

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.” Col 3:22

So there’s the choice, there’s the crisis which reappears in every experience. Caesar, or Christ, that is the question: the vast, attractive, skeptical world, with its pleasures and ambitions and its promises, - or instead the meek, majestic, and winning figure of Jesus of Nazareth? Which way will you go?

Paul is challenging my attitude. Christ submitted to the will of the father and willingly went to the cross. Do you profess Christ as Lord today? Then your attitude must be the same.

**Submit yourselves, then, to God.** James 4:7

**submit to the Father of our spirits and live!** Heb 12:9

**submit to God’s righteousness.** Ro 10:3

**submit to the governing authorities,** Ro 13:1,5 1Pe 2:13

**As the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.** Eph 5:22,24, Col 3:18

**submit ... to your masters with all respect** 1Pe 2:18

**Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.** Heb 13:17

**Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.** Eph 5:21

‘submit’ x3 as a Christian will you change it from being a -ve to being a joy?

That is the essence, the bottom line of every relationship, humble submission

What of the phrase **to be ready to do whatever is good?**

The whole book is about the faith of God’s people showing itself in doing good, it is mentioned repeatedly.

However, is there something specific to the context here? Authorities are charged by God to do good – so to be obedient to authority is to help to do good. It is not just to say “that’s their job”

It the council’s job to pick up the litter, I pay my council tax so let them do the work of clearing the snow, put down the salt, brush the pavement... Cretans were described as ‘**always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons**’ 1:12– they were known to stand by their rights. “That’s my right, I am owed this and I’m owed that”. One public figure said last week ‘don’t say to us “we shouldn’t buy so much petrol at the moment” you should fix the supply’

Add to this the Jews – to whom as new Christians they are in some way aligned, and certainly in the eyes of the Romans, - were known to be a turbulent and rebellious people.

**“1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, Now as Christian they are to yield a cheerful subjection to their superiors.**

✚ Scottish theologian. (1848–1921) Peter T. Forsythe was right when he said, "The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master".

*So finally as Christians there are pressures to resist*

We are surrounded by those who defy authority. It’s an ingrained attitude...

It is cool to be ‘anti’, to ‘rebel’, to be a ‘rebel’, I was brought up on songs that such as David Bowie’s ‘Rebel Rebel’, so too with Steve Harley and others. From the sixties seedbed of rebelliousness we now have two/three generations, who will submit to no-one, bow to no-one, except in mockery.

I had a serious teenage rebellion, against the law with which I regularly fell foul, and against my parents particularly my father. I am now ashamed.

■ As new Christian - Coming in to KNBC and sitting next to PC Jones

Now as a Christian this rebelliousness has to be brought into the subjugation of Christ. The Lord is at work in my heart, it’s a daily battle,

✚ So as a Christian watch out for the influence of others - and watch out for the influence of your own heart – The fight is on!

When Christ called you - he called you to the **obedience that comes from faith.** Ro 1:5

How sad it is to see Christians who have professed the lordship of Christ - who won’t be told what to do.

A Christin resisting authority said the other day “the Holy Spirit told me”

How wrong - The Holy Spirit will always guide me to honour Jesus Christ.

■ Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace. Thomas a Kempis.

“Peter speaking to the new Christians scattered across the Roman Empire said they **have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience** x2 to Jesus Christ:

Where our Captain bids us go, 'Tis not ours to murmur no; He that gives the sword and shield, chooses too the battlefield, where we are to fight the foe.

It is to this end that we are chosen - A Christian's attitude to authority is a major witness for Christ. - Christians we are to be good citizens. We are to obey willingly -and not begrudgingly.

I was given a parking ticket a while back – how it grated I was tempted to complain as I thought that's a bit off as I was sitting in the car. But fair cop, I should have seen the sign and not stopped there.

– Jesus looks for a submissive attitude – Lord I need your grace, and he gives us grace - **Grace and peace be yours in abundance.**” 1Pe 1:1-2

How wonderful to see humble willing obedience in a child. So the same beauty should be seen in a child of God. It is a very strong commendation for Christ. **men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ,** 2Co 9:13

- Is there a heart that will not bend to thy divine control?
- Descend, O sovereign love, descend, - And melt my stubborn soul!

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*END*