

SERMON NOTES - Leaders and Authorities #1 - "Kings"

Intro: Authority affects all of us all the time, and how you respond and relate to authority is a major factor in how happy and successful you will be on earth, and in where you spend eternity - heaven or hell.

Romans 13:1 - "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed* by God."

Psalms 47:7 - "For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding."

Why do we allow people to tell us what to do? Why can governments and others control our lives? There are 3 reasons...

1. **UNINFORMED** - We follow the traditions, and norms around us, going with the flow, or the "group think", assuming people have rights to control us due to their class or status in society or the way things have always been done.
2. **COERCED** - People force us to do things because they're stronger, richer, older or more powerful - or because they have coerced, manipulated or deceived us, sometimes using the perceived opinion of a larger group to make us do or believe certain things.

These first 2 reasons for control were Old Fashioned Ways of controlling others and were considered legitimate in the past. Kings, LandLords Etc - They are now largely considered illegitimate. The Modern Way considered legitimate nowadays is that we allow others to control us, even when we don't agree with them, because...

3. **WILLING** - we realise we need to be organised to avoid chaos, and so we voluntarily give someone else authority. Eg a group of kids in a playground, a team, a company, a country. We GIVE them the right...and then we vote regularly. It should work well, but it has pitfalls and risks and often untrustworthy people use the system for their own ends.
4. There is a 4th way - the God way - which we will address below. We submit to men out of our submission to God.

The Israelite example:

1 Samuel 8:4-20 - "4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 "According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day--with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also. 9 "Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behaviour of the king who will reign over them." 10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behaviour of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 "He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 "He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 "And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 "He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 "And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 "He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 "And you will cry out in that day

because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day." 19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20 "that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.""

Points to note:

- God wants to be our king. Having rulers who enforce His will was not His original or best plan for us, but He allows and even guides us in it because He knows that we are sinful and will need this. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 - "14 "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' 15 "you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. 16 "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' 17 "Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. 18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. 19 "And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 "that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel."

- Most of Israel's kings were not good - a few were. After David & Solomon there were 5 Good Kings, & 33 Evil Kings.

Saul was the first and he ruled by FORCE - 1 Samuel 19:9 - "9 Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand."

Absalom was the 3rd and he ruled by democracy but he was manipulative and deceptive - 2 Samuel 15:5 - "5 And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him."

David was a good king and he ruled due to his love for God and the people - Psalms 78:70 - "He also chose David His servant, And took him from the sheepfolds;" 71 "From following the ewes that had young He brought him, To shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance." 72 "So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, And guided them by the skillfulness of his **hands**."

God's ideas about this

Proverbs 29:2 NKJV - "2 When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan."

1 Timothy 2:1-4 — Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Romans 13:1-4 - "1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed* by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to

be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practises evil."

* the perfect tense pictures a past completed action with present ongoing effect or result and so could be translated "Have been ordained and the ordinance remains in force." Wuest translation brings out the perfect tense "the existing authorities stand permanently ordained by God."

1 Peter 2:13-17 - "13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

John 19:11 - "11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.""

Titus 3:1-2 - "1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."

The Roman empire and the Caesars in charge at this time were not good or Godly leaders. Claudius >54 / Nero 54>68 (Romans written 56AD) - persecutors, immoral, evil and unjust.

Hebrews 10:32-34 NKJV - "32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven."

Conclusions

- We need authorities to avoid mayhem and to bring about peace and progress. God's idea behind authority - He wants and uses it even though it is not His initial plan.
- People are flawed and one day Jesus will rule, and God will ensure justice is properly done and served in every way.
- The best is where Godly people rule, but this is very rare. Authorities are His Ministers for God's blessing.
- Believers can and should...
 - Submit to God's rule
 - Pray for their leaders & treat them with respect including our speech - seasoned with salt / grace (Col 4:5-6)
 - Through love and truth introduce others to God's good rule
 - Submit even to evil rulers and in so doing
 - Be a good witness -
 - Promote progress and peace -
 - Trust God's ultimate justice even in the midst of injustice -
 - Be involved in the democratic process - Try to change things by democratic means but not by Godly right
 - We can disobey if they are ungodly rules, but we are also willing to take the consequences.
- Leaders will be judged by God one day with a harsher standard because they represent Him.

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.