

BRIDGE TO LIFE MINISTRIES
FAMILY WORSHIP HOUR 07/05/2020
THEME: THE CHURCH VS STATE (TOGETHER OR APART)

SCRIPTURE READING MATT 22:17 -21
1 PETER 2:13-17

What is the role of the Church in a secular society?

Many in North America regard our society as a Christian society. I beg to differ the church is existing in a secular capitalist society and there are Christian who are living in our society. There is a strong debate of the role of the church in the affairs of human's beings. There are those who strongly advocate that the church and the state should not mix.

Among the institution of our society, the church has a special place. The Church is the voice of moral and spiritual authority. Anyone who has carefully study or observe the history of the Christian Church during the centuries cannot deny the role the church has played in the molding and shaping of the history of our society and country. It was the voice of conscious.

The best schools, in the land, Yale, Harvard, Princeton etc. were just church school until they were control and liberalized. But on the other hand, how could the church be the church and still be separate from society when its members live in the society. I know Jesus asked us to be separate from the world, but he was referring to the world system of evil control by the satanic forces in the world **Eph 6: 10- 12 .**

There seems to a conflict between the church and state. Should the two be separate? Should we take

Peter literally? Does he mean institution or people representing the institution? God has created a world order. The Greek word cosmos means order, arrangement, system also means earth. The word is used in NT it is word for humanity. The world of men, it denotes as organized humanity – humanity in families' tribes' nations community or state World

We have just pass through another Independence Day celebration, On this post-independence Sunday 2020, we have to reflect that during the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence that had been proposed in June 1776 by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia declaring the United States independent from Great Britain.

After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining this decision, which had been prepared by a Committee of Five, with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author. Congress debated and revised the wording of the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4. 1776

Families these days often celebrate Independence Day by hosting or attending a picnic or barbecue and taking advantage of the day off and, in some years, as in this instance we are given a long weekend to gather with relatives and friends. Decorations e.g., streamers, balloons, and clothing are generally colored red, white, and blue, the colors of the American flag. Parades are often in the morning, while fireworks display occur in

the evening at such places as parks, fairgrounds, or town squares. With all its fireworks and celebration with all its family and friends, barbeque parties etc.

We need to pause and reflect as members of this society or this country, that God does have a message for our society. what is God role and what is the church role in molding and influence societal causes? **John 17:15-18**

In Acts 5:29-32

Let us put it another way, “we don’t obey people we obey God. But in his own writing in the epistle of Peter after many years, Peter reflects on the relationship between state and church in **I Peter 2:13-16** Peter gives us some answers from his 1st Epistle. He is writing in the fulfillment of the commission given to him by Christ. He is a minister to the Jews, so he writes to the dispersed Jews. The letter was written from Babylon regarded as Rome and the letter was addressed to Hebrew congregations, with a wider application to all congregations in Christ.

On this day, our independence Sunday I cannot help but feeling the lack of authority and respect and command that the church has lost over the affairs of the state, and the social lives of its followers and on lookers.

In this twenty-first century the Church must reclaim its lost authority and regain the respect it once had. Gone are the days when men and women, boys and girls would have feared and be scared to touch any of the sacred vessels in the church, but we have no respect for anything sacred these days.

In Daniels 5:17-21 Here we have the lesson from Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar until he was willing to acknowledge that God is the ruler of the universe. And so, we must acknowledge God as the ruler of our nation. **Proverbs 14:34**

I. THE SUBMISSION TO CIVIL AUTHORITY I Peter 2:13-14

Submit is the key theme of this section of the Peter letter. The word means to "subject oneself." It means to acquiescence to the divinely willed order of society.

In Peter’s thought Christians should not seek their own interests but rather assume a voluntary submission of themselves to others. The reason for this submission is expressed in the phrase "because of the Lord." Christ in his divine Lordship is manifested in his creative activity.

Solomon recognized the Lordship of God over his kingdom **2 Chronicles 7:11-16** For church members to be an effective citizen we must humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Humility involves our attitude toward God the idea is that God’s mighty hand is on the destiny of his people if we will humbly and faithfully accept his Divine guidance. God is bringing the world to its knees.

The members of the church should never resent the experiences of life and never rebels against them because we know that the mighty hand of God is on our lives and that God will fulfill his plans and purposes through us.

It may seem as though He is keeping you down, but as Peter said “so that his good time he may exalt us. There have been times in human history when men and women were anxious about the future. This is one of those times in which we live when as human beings we are anxious about the future; for there is so much uncertainty. There is cause for alarm over the economic situation, the lost of jobs, homes, retirement etc.

The more we listen to world news and read our newspapers your blood pressure seems goes up, The political instability, the world political arena is full of tensions and conflicts east vs. west, problems in Middle East, the social life of society is full of injustices and prejudices and disharmony.

Racial prejudice and social injustices is still there under cover waiting for something trigger and tension to make it surface. But what is the church position in all of this? **Matt 6:20-21**. Christ sums it by say **Matt 6:25-34**. God does care for us!

Peter next sums up the social obligation of Church Christian in four succinct commands in **Vs 17**

(1) **"Show proper respect, lit. Means to honor everyone."**

Peter instructs us to recognize the value of each person in his or her place as a creature of God in God world.

(2) **"Love the brotherhood."**

Special love is due to others within the family of believers because they are brothers and sisters.

(3) **"Fear God."**

(4) **"Honor the king."**

God is to be feared, but the emperor or the king or a president is to be honored. Christ taught, **Matt 10:28**.

Normally, the duties to God and Caesar or world leaders do not conflict, and Church must obey them both **Matt 22:15-22**; but in special cases our higher loyalty is clear: "We must obey God rather than men!" **Acts 5:29**.

II. A CALL TO BROTHERHOOD

The danger Christendom faces is the making and sanctioning of racial distinction. Never should the church of Jesus Christ come to the point where it accepts a white Christ and a black church or any other example separate church worship which produce segregation which can exist in the Christian church.

A religion true to its mission knows that segregation is established on pride, hatred, and falsehood. It is un-brotherly and impersonal. Can two segregated souls meet in God? For segregation denies the sacredness of the human personality.

Deeply rooted in our religious heritage is the conviction that every human being is heir to a legacy of dignity and worth. Our Christian traditions see to this inherent dignity as being in the image of God. This image of God is universally shared in equal portions and by all men and women.

There is no graded scale of essential worth. Every human being has engraving in his personality the indelible stamp of the Creator. Every human being must be respected because God loves him. The growth

of an individual does not lie in the measure of his intellect, his racial origin, or his social position. His human worth lies in his relatedness to God.

Whenever this is a recognized whiteness and brown or blackness as determinants to relationship is sin in the eyes of God, instead God required all humans as brothers and sisters. One writer said that all men and women must be treated as ends and never as means to an end.

Men and women must not be treated as things and must not be dealt with as tools or life stock as one historian put it, but as persons sacred in themselves. To do otherwise would be to depersonalize the person.

The essence of human is found in freedom. A man is a man when he is free. Shall I be a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or farmer? Moment by moment we shall be going through life engaged in this interaction with ourselves. Freedom expresses itself in decision. When I decide, I cut off alternatives and make a choice.

Therefore, freedom means responsibility This is the obligation of the person to respond. No one else can respond for us. He alone must respond for his action for they will determine the totality of his being.

Therefore, as church and society we have obligation to live and produced the principles we espouse, or else men and women will all see our inconsistency. And our witness of Christ will not be effective. Let us seek to renew our commitment that as Christian church we live in our societies with the challenge to make the world a

better place will not make it an idle dream but serious reality.

We are called upon as a church to engage in the struggle that will lead to harmony of living on earth. There are two way of looking at this present world system, in an ethically bad sense the world refers to the order or arrangement under which Satan has organized the world of unbelieving humankind upon his cosmic principles of farce, greed, selfishness, ambition and pleasure.

This world system is imposing and powerful with military might is often outward religious, scientific, cultured and elegant but seething with national and commercial revelries and ambitions and is upheld in any real crisis by armed forces and is dominated by satanic principles.

But the church is called to be the moral guardian of the community, called to combat social evils, called to lead men on the highway of brotherhood and sisterhood and summon them to rise above the narrow confines of race, class and social and political prejudice. The church must be the witness which silences critics and honors God.

We are called upon as a Christian church to engage in the struggle which will lead to harmony of living on earth. Nowhere in the history of the life of the Church are we faced with the challenge as an institution to serve the world, to crystallize and blest the pattern of living which will bring harmony and good will to the society.

