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GODLY GOVERNMENT

The Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

October 22, 2023

THEME OF THE DAY: GODLY GOVERNMENT

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established” (Romans 13:1). Note the absolute language: no authority. None. Stated positively, every government and all government authority figures have power only because God gave it to them. Therefore, as citizens of the United States, we don’t support the government because those we voted for were elected or because we approve of the current tax policy or even because freedom of religion is enshrined in the First Amendment. We support our government simply because it was instituted by God. Jesus himself taught that we owe respect and obedience to our government, even when it doesn’t align with our political preferences. Christians sometimes struggle with this. We see that government and rulers can be evil. Certainly, if government asks us to sin, “we must obey God rather than human beings” (Acts 5:29). But the existence of corrupt government and evil rulers does not negate what Scripture says to be true. “There is no authority except that which God has established.” Therefore, when we talk about “godly government” we are not saying that the only legitimate governments are those who do what is perfectly godly. We are confessing our belief that the King of kings is in perfect control of all the governments of this world, and that he works in all things—including tyrants and dictators—for the eternal good of his dear children.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Timothy Richert

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting Two (page 172 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 772 O God Most High, Your Saints Below

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 172

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

CW 213

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful and answer me.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



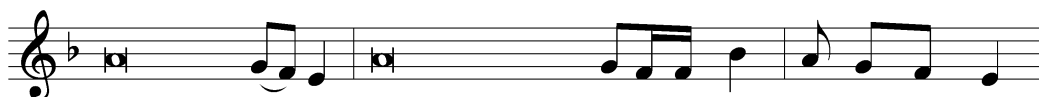
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



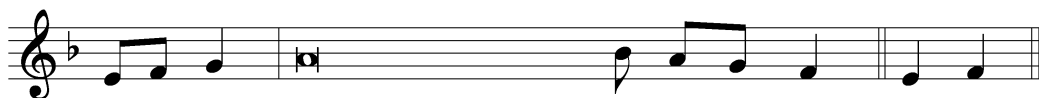
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O Lord our God, so govern the nations on earth and direct the affairs of this world that your church may worship you in peace and joy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Daniel 1:3–21

Daniel and his friends faithfully served the government that God had placed over them. Even though this was the government that had conquered their city and carried them off into exile.

³ The king told Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, to bring some young Israelite men from the royal family or from the nobility. ⁴ He was to choose young men who had no blemish, who were good looking, who had insight into all kinds of wisdom, who possessed knowledge, understanding, and learning, and who were capable of serving in the king's palace, in order to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them daily rations from the special royal food and from the king's own wine. He ordered that they should be trained for three years. At the end of training they were to serve the king. ⁶ In this group of young men were the Judeans Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ⁷ The chief of the officials gave them new names. He gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar, Hananiah the name Shadrak, Mishael the name Meshak, and Azariah the name Abednego. ⁸ Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the special food of the king or with the wine that he drank. So he sought permission from the chief official, so that he would not have to defile himself. ⁹ God made the chief of the officials favorable and sympathetic toward Daniel. ¹⁰ Then the chief of the officials said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink. Why should he see your faces looking less healthy than those of the other young men who are your age? You put my life at risk before the king."

¹¹ Daniel said to the superintendent whom the chief of the officials had placed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Please test your servants for ten days. Tell them to give us only

vegetables, and we will eat them and drink water. ¹³ Observe our appearance and the appearance of the young men who eat the special royal food. Then deal with your servants based on what you see." ¹⁴ So he listened to what they said about this and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵ At the end of ten days, their appearance was noticeably better than that of the others. They were healthier than any of the young men who had been eating the special royal food. ¹⁶ So the superintendent permanently took away the special royal food and the wine they were to drink and gave them only vegetables. ¹⁷ As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and insight into all kinds of literature, as well as wisdom. In addition, Daniel also understood every kind of vision and dream.

¹⁸ At the end of the time which the king had set for them to be brought to him, the chief of the officials brought them before Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king spoke with them, and none of the others were found to be comparable to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they served the king. ²⁰ In every matter concerning wisdom and understanding that the king sought from them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and spell casters in his entire kingdom. ²¹ So Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 96- In front of hymnal: Let the Heavens Rejoice

Second Reading

Romans 13:1-7

St. Paul leaves no loopholes. Everyone is to submit to the governing authorities precisely because they have been established by God.

Submission to Governing Authorities

¹ Everyone must submit to the governing authorities. For no authority exists except by God, and the authorities that do exist have been established by God. ² Therefore the one who rebels against the authority is opposing God's institution, and those who oppose will bring judgment on themselves.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to evil. Would you like to have no fear of the one in authority? Do what is good, and you will receive praise from him, ⁴ because he is God's servant for your benefit. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because he does not carry the sword without reason. He is God's servant, a punisher to bring wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of conscience.

⁶ For this reason you also pay taxes, because the authorities are God's ministers, who are employed to do this very thing. ⁷ Pay what you owe to all of them: taxes to whom taxes are owed,

revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, and honor to whom honor is owed.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Colossians 2:10



Refrain

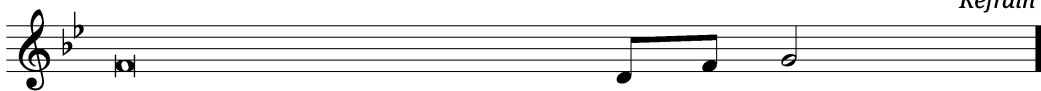


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Tone



In Christ you have been brought to full - ness.



He is the head over every power and au - thor - i - ty.

Refrain

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Gospel

Matthew 22:15–22

Jesus teaches we are to give the government what belongs to the government. But we are not to give to the government what belongs only to God.

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and plotted together how to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in accord with the truth. You are not concerned about gaining anyone’s approval because you are not swayed by appearances. ¹⁷ So tell us, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

¹⁸ But Jesus knew their evil purpose and said, "Why are you testing me, hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax."

They brought him a denarius.

²⁰ He asked them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied to him.

Then he said to them, "Therefore give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

²² When they heard this, they were amazed. Then they left him and went away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 619 Praise the Almighty; My Soul, Adore Him

Sermon: Romans 13:1-7

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.

Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.

Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.

Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.

Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.

Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. [Pour out your special blessing on . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.

Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 800 How Firm a Foundation

sts. 1–2

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done**

on earth as it is in heaven.

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those
who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 774 God Bless Our Native Land

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

Sunday: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Worship 54, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,920.37, Given \$2,115.25. **To God be the glory!**

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