

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#05-1125

Silly Talk

January 25, 2011

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. (Romans 13:1 NASB)

At the outset, I must state that I agree with Paul's exhortation that we must subject ourselves to the governing authorities, for all authority comes from God, without exception. However, we need to understand that not all authority is exercised in a good, righteous, and just fashion. History itself records that there have been many bad and ungodly governing authorities that go back as far as Nimrod and his kingdom of Babel. God alone builds up nations and their governing authorities and tears them down; what He plants He also uproots (Jeremiah 45:4). The Lord has made this very clear through the word spoken through Jeremiah.

(5) Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, (6) "Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel. (7) "At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it; (8) if that nation against which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. (9) "Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it; (10) if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it. (Jeremiah 18:5-10 NASB)

In addition, to accomplish His plan, the Lord hardens hearts of governing authorities, as in the case of Pharaoh (Exodus 9:12), and even takes ones that do not acknowledge Him as their God and makes them His servant, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10), or makes them His shepherd and anointed, as in the case of Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1).

In other words, the Lord works through good, believing governing authorities just as easily as He does through bad or evil, unbelieving governing authorities, even raising them up, in order to accomplish His plan that will lead to the fulfillment of His eonian purpose. It is called **the sovereignty of God**.

Of course, biblical history reveals that it is not uncommon for bad or unrighteous governing authorities to be God's judgment upon the people for their sin, as in the case of King Saul. History also reveals that governing authorities that start out on a good foundation can end up on a bad one, leading the Lord to either destroy or divide a kingdom, as in the case of King Solomon and his United Kingdom of Israel.

This leads to what is on my mind for this issue.

There is little doubt that during 2010 and now into 2011, the US governing authorities, represented by our executive and legislative branches of government and the two political parties that continually vie for power to run them, have been spewing out venomous and wicked attacks on one another that makes them look like immature school boys and girls getting into food fights and name calling. We could say that there is much **pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness** (Isaiah 58:9). The disingenuous part about all this is that as they fling their mud, pointing their finger, as if in righteous indignation, they stress that their sole purpose is to protect and help the American people.

To make matters worse, the media, of all types, continually (24/7) fuels these food fights with their non-stop analyses and opinions that, unfortunately, sway the views of the American public as evidenced by daily and weekly polls that, frankly, I find foolish and a waste of time. Who cares what the polls say? After all, they are only a reflection of the tone of the dialogue of the governing authorities and how and what the media is presenting. As I have stated previously, Americans are being played like strings on a fiddle. It is time to stop listening to all this garbage and listen for the voice of the Spirit of God.

Now, as if things are not bad enough, tonight is the **State of the Union** address by the president, and the governing authorities have gone from foolish to silly. It is hard to imagine that they are adults. It has been big news of late that some members of the two parties are going to sit together tonight rather than sit together as a party, like they have traditionally done. Personally, I am all in favor of breaking with tradition, but is this truly what this is about?

On the surface, this might appear to be a good thing. After all, they are talking about being civil to one another and making an effort at bipartisanship. Really! Do we honestly believe the rhetoric and the play for power is going to change? Do they believe it themselves? Do they even want it? How long did it last after 9/11? Weeks! Months!

The question is: Does bipartisanship lead to righteous government, or is bipartisanship by definition righteous government? No, on both counts; at least as it pertains to God's righteousness!

It has been the same old story down through the history of governments that place a high premium on appearance, outward show, and symbolism, as if to hide their true motive and drive from the people. Most, if not all, governments of the world today place a much lower premium, if at all, on God's righteousness. How do we know when God's righteousness is in play? We know it when the authorities seek to govern according to God's divine law and not man's law. When was the last time you heard any US politician state that we must return to God's law and seek first His righteousness?

Stating it in reverse; following God's law is seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Or, yet, stated another way; God's law is His righteousness. If governments ignore God's law in favor of man's law, then they are on the ground of man's self-righteousness, bolstered by haughty eyes and a proud heart. It is every man's way, not the Lord's way.

(2) Every man's way is right in his own eyes [self-righteous], but the LORD weighs the hearts. (3) To do righteousness and justice is desired by the LORD more than sacrifice. (4) Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, is sin. (Proverbs 21:2-4 NASB)

The unrighteous and proud governing authorities want us to look at their appearance, their words, even their silly actions, for they know that this is how man sees things. But how does God see things?

For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7 NASB)

As Christians, most of us know that it is all about the heart and not outward appearance; but do we know that God's law must be written on our hearts (Hebrews 8:10) so that we are governed by it every moment of our day? At Mount Horeb, the sons of Israel heard the Ten Commandments and had an opportunity for the whole law of God to be written on their hearts, but they rejected the offer and instead told Moses to go up on the mountain, who alone had the law written on his heart. Instead of God's law taking root in their hearts, it remained something external that later was more about appearance than about righteous judgment (John 7:24). As Christians, have we fallen into the same trap?

Before we go pointing the finger at our elected officials that we put in office in the first place, we need to consider our own hearts and the heart of the church of God. When was the last time you heard a cry go up from the pulpit that we must return to the whole of God's law as seen through the New Covenant and the Holy Spirit? To be sure, many in the church call for seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness, but how many are seeking for God's spiritual and holy law? The fact of the matter is that the church has rejected God's law just as much as the governing authorities have.

Dear brethren, we are living in a day of proud hearts that have rejected God's law. I believe our governing authorities are an indication of the condition of our own hearts and of God's judgment of us, especially of the church of God that has rejected His divine law in favor of church law and has been engaged in its own version of silly talk and the pointing of the finger. Judgment begins with the house of God, and, I believe, all the silliness of our elected officials is an indictment of the church. We need to look in the mirror! Have you heard some of the silly talk coming from some pulpits and Christian media? **There must be no silly talk** (Ephesians 5:4), and we must cease pointing of the finger. It is time to repent and cry out to God on behalf of the church and our nation.