

Honor the King **By Kent Heaton**

"I say, Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God. Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him. Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, "What are you doing?" He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful; and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment, because for every matter there is a time and judgment, though the misery of man increases greatly. For he does not know what will happen; so who can tell him when it will occur? No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it. All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: there is a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt" (Ecc. 8:2-9).

Government is established by God. From the first organization of man into a system of laws the Lord has expected His people to give honor to this basic institution. Paul writes about submitting to the government of the Roman Empire in his letter to the saints in Rome. Peter admonishes those (including himself) living under the tyrannical hand of Nero to 'honor the king' because government is established by God. From ancient time this has been the will of God. Solomon reminds us in the book of life our obedience to civil law is imperative because of our oath to God. The rule of government is power. As citizens of the kingdom of God we must submit to the authority of the kingdom of men. Those who obey the law will lessen the chances of being in trouble with the law. Rebellion to civil law is sin.

The pattern of the early disciples explains the relationship of the Christian to government in plain terms. Being warned to stop teaching Christ Peter and the apostles respectfully inform the government officials that obedience to God must come before obedience to man. Disobedience to civil law can only be done when the law of man disobeys the law of God. This does not suggest we can make the law of God apply to our personal gains or needs. Civil disobedience is sinful when the matters do not conflict with the law of God. Solomon was not suggesting that all governments of men are following the law of God. Few if any governments use the word of God for their guides. However children of God are obedient to civil government.

Civil government is established by God and all of the inequities committed will be judged by the Lord God. If there is any vengeance to be given it comes from the throne of God. The people of God are model citizens who obey the laws of the land – whether good or bad. Unless the law forbids the worship of the one true God obedience is required. These are tough lessons. We should always keep before us the words of Solomon: "Keep the king's commandment for the sake of your oath to God."

In the Pit

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12, NASV).

--A man fell into a pit and couldn't get out.

--A Realist said: "You have fallen into a pit."

--An Objective person said: "It's only logical that someone would fall into that pit."

--A Subjective person said: "I sympathize with you down there."

--An Evasive person said: "Let's avoid the subject of his pit altogether."

--A Self-pitying person said: "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit."

--A Christian Scientist said: "You only think that you are in a pit."

--A Pharisee said: "Only bad people fall into a pit."

--Confucius said: "If you would have listened to me, you would not be in that pit."

--Buddha said: "Your pit is only a state of mind."

--An Evolutionist said: "You are a rejected mutant destined to be removed from the evolutionary cycle."

--An Optimist said: "Things could be worse."

--A Pessimist said: "Things will get worse!"

--A Christian, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.

(Author Unknown)

Five Senses

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations” (Psalm 100:4-5). In Robins Reader, Frank W. Mann Jr. writes: “An enlightening pastime is to make a list of favorite things that impact the senses. It sharpens our appreciation of these golden moments in time. For example, one person’s list of ten favorite sounds are: 'A distant train whistle; a mother talking to her new baby; the scrunch of leaves on a bright autumn day; seagulls crying; a hound baying in the woods at night; the absolute silence of a mountain lake at sunset; a crackling fire on a bitter cold day; a stadium crowd singing the national anthem; the screech of an airplane's tires as they touch down; his wife's voice at morning.’” God gave us our five senses and filled His creation with pleasures for each sense. Our God is good. Let us praise His name and be thankful to Him.

Following the Crowd

“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil” (Ex. 23:2). “As a boy in the Middle West, I used to amuse myself by holding stick across a gateway that the sheep had to pass through. After the first few sheep had jumped over the stick, I took it away; but all the other sheep leaped through the gateway over an imaginary barrier. The only reason for their jumping was that those in front of them had jumped. The sheep is not the only animal with that tendency. Almost all of us are prone to do what others are doing, to believe what others are believing, to accept, without question, the testimony of prominent people” (D. Carnegie).

A Moments Wisdom

--If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each man’s life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm our hostility.
--Success is effort draped in day to day self-improvement.
--Obstacles are the frightening things you see when you take your eyes off of the goal.
--Listening is as important as talking. If you are a good listener, people will often compliment you for being a good conversationalist.
--Rebellion against your disabilities gets you nowhere; self-pity gets you nowhere. One must have the daring to accept oneself as a bundle of possibilities and undertake the most interesting challenge in the world -- making the most of one’s best.
--Only those who have the patience to do the simple things well, will ever acquire the skill to do difficult things easily.
--Courtesy is the shortest distance between two people.
--Profanity is the effort of a feeble mind to express itself forcefully.
--Hot heads and cold hearts never solved anything.
--It is not the difference between people that cause problems; it’s the indifference.
--“Money may be the husk of many things, but it is not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintances, but not friends; servants, but not faithfulness; days of pleasure and fun, but not peace and happiness” (Henrik Ibsen).
--When we look into the long avenue of the future, and see the good that is there for each one of us to do, we realize, after all, what a beautiful thing it is to work, and to live, and to be happy” (Robert Louis Stevenson).