

LD 39; Acts 4:18-22; Rom. 13:1-7; Honor and Obey I. The Foundation of this Command II. Refusing to Dishonor Authority III. Committed to Honoring Authority

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it has often been said that as the family goes, so goes society.

Many of the sins so prevalent in society find their roots in the rebellious heart of a child that was never corrected. Children who do not learn to honor and obey in the home will find it hard to do so in the world. As we continue our series through the 10 Commandments, we are moving into the 2<sup>nd</sup> table of the Law. Our love for fellow man is now taking center stage; and as we find this morning, our love for fellow man starts in the home. Indeed, the home is where our closest neighbors live. So the summary of the Law applied today would read; children, love your parents! How do you love them? By honoring and obeying them! So this morning we consider this theme: Jesus Christ teaches children to honor their parents in the Lord.

### **I. The Foundation of this Command**

As we begin to consider our calling to honor and obey, we need to first understand the foundation and principle upon which this commandment is built. And the principle is this- all authority comes from God.

As we read in Rom. 13:1, there is no authority except from God. In other words, whatever ruler or leader that exists is there by God given appointment. From the parent to the president- each in their place by God's sovereign plan and design. So why should we obey those in authority over us? Not because they are bigger and stronger. Not because they are wiser or smarter. Not because they are older either. Nor do we obey because we are afraid of fines and punishment. These are reasons that the world would obey their rulers. No, for us as Christians, the heart of the matter is this; we obey our leaders because God has set them over us! We submit to governing authorities because God has placed them over us! Because of their God-given office! So to answer the question- why should children honor and obey their parents? The answer is this- because God has set them under their parents. The issue before us is concept of limited authority. We obey those who rule because God has placed them each in

their specific office. It is part of our Christian duty and calling to submit to them. This is an aspect of our Christian identity. Giving to each their due as unto the Lord. No person is supreme! Each finds their place under the rule of the supreme Lord of Lords. And since each ruler has authority from God- our submission is a part of our spiritual service of God. But this also means that each ruler remains under God. If a law or decree is handed down that contradicts God's word, we are called to submit to the higher authority. We are to obey our leaders in all things lawful- as unto the Lord. If an earthly ruler demands an action that contradicts God's words- or forbids an action that is demanded in God's word- then we are called to obey God before and above man. This lesson is learned from Acts 4:19 where the apostles were instructed to no longer teach in the name of Jesus Christ. But Peter and John state- you must judge if it right to listen to men rather than God. But we cannot stop speaking of what we have hard and seen? And again in Acts 5:29- we must obey God rather than men. So the lesson is clear- when man's rules or laws contradict with the Word of the Lord, God's Law must win the day. For example, if the government forbids preaching, the word must continue to be proclaimed. Or if your teachers would forbid your praying to God in school- you must obey God first. But this concept of limited authority has something to say to our leaders as well. Not only must those under authority obey God rather than man, those who have authority will have to give an account to God for their use of that authority. As Rom. 14:12 puts it, each of us will give an account to God. So even the rulers of men will have to stand before the Lord of Glory to give an account for their use of that authority. Where the wise or foolish? Were the good servants or were they oppressive? So we recognize the concept of limited earthly authority- seeing it as a gift from God- leading to our rendering to each as they deserve. Yes, we must honor and obey the rulers God has given to us. But above all, we must submit to and revere the King of Kings and Lord of lords. To resist authority is in fact resisting God's good purpose as Rom. 13:2 puts it. But why is authority and the rights of rule so important? Well, as our reading from Rom. 13 explains; the purpose of authority is to restrain evil and defend the righteous. For those who have no

fear of God, the fear of the sword is a powerful motivator as Rom. 13:3 says. Rulers are a terror to bad conduct! The purpose of government and authority is the good of people in general. As v. 4 says- rulers are God's servant for your good. The rule of Law is a gift from God by which sinful man's actions are restrained- the wicked desires of the heart are suppressed; while the lives of the upright are protected and defended. That, in general, is the purpose of authority and the right of rule. So for children, one of the reasons that God gave you parents is to teach you right from wrong. So that the wicked desires in your heart would be exposed and corrected- and so that you would be praised and supported when you act uprightly. When you honor and obey your parents, you are in fact cooperating in the pursuit of good that God has in mind for you. That is why this commandment comes with a promise- that you may live long and that it may go well with you as Eph. 6:2 explains.

## **II. Refusing to Dishonor Authority**

Now that we understand the foundation and reason for authority, in our second point we will consider how this authority is undermined today. As you may know, one of the key tenants of the BLM movement is the destruction of the nuclear family. They want to deconstruct the normal order of parent lead homes and replace them with a so-called community support. But this movement breeds chaos and conflict as we saw two years ago. This is also seen in the communist movement. Karl Marx called for the abolition of the family. Even in many public school setting today- children are seen as the possession of the state and parent's rights are disregarded! This stands to reason- if you undermine authority, people are easier to manipulate! Without parents watching over and instructing your children, their minds are free for the taking! So it is that we see various movements that attack the rightful place of parents and their authority in the home. So what happens when you have a whole generation of kids being raised who do not have a stable home- who have never been instructed or rebuked by their parents? Well, you end up with a lawless society as we see around us. We find the opposite of what is called for in the catechism- where children despise, hate and disregard their parents.

This is a sign of the end times as recorded in II Tim. 3:2 which says, in the last days people will be abuse and disobedient to their parents. Or as Prov. 30 defines them- children who mock their fathers and scorn to obey their mothers. So how do children dishonor their parents? Well, have you ever listened to your friend tell an unflattering story about their parent? Making fun of or ridiculing your parents is clearly a violation of this command. But so is talking back to your parents- or arguing and complaining against them. We find an example of this in the Bible in Gen. 9. This is where Ham mocks his father who was naked and drunk. Ham and his descendants were cursed as a result of this mockery- while his brothers were blessed. So even when your parents sin or act foolishly, we are still to honor them. And we can extend this truth beyond just our parents. It applies to all authority. Even when our rulers say and do foolish things, even when we rightly disagree with them- we still must honor. This is particularly difficult if you disagree with their policies- but our leaders are to be respected for the sake of their office. For an example of this, we need look no further than Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego. In Dan. 3, these three friends refused to bow down to the golden image. But even while they refused to submit to this wicked decree, they still spoke with respect. Yet even as they considered the fiery furnace, They knew that there is no king that has the right to outlaw prayer to the One, True God. O Nebuchadnezzar, know this, we will not bow down to your idol. Come what may!

### **III. Committed to Honoring Authority**

What remains, then is the positive expression of this commandment. As God's people, we will be committed to honoring and obeying all those whom God has placed over us. As we read in Rom. 13- be subject to the authorities. Or in I Peter 2, be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution. For this is the will of God. This starts but never stays in the home. As I said last week, the Christian home is where our brightest light can be seen. Imagine seeing a house where children actually honored and obeyed their parents! Where parents still honored their own, aged parents as well! This is totally foreign to our world. The stable home and obedient children is radically different from what we find in

our world. And to be clear, children must be taught to honor and obey. By nature, we are all rebels who want to do our own thing. But by God's grace and through His Spirit, children can come to see the wisdom of honoring and obeying- for this is right and in this there is blessings. Jesus not only saves us from our sins, He sanctifies us by His Spirit! We will want to obey- and that starts by loving our families! The parts of this commandment include honor, love, loyalty and obedience as LD 39 explains. Added to the different aspects of this commandment are the various circles of authority. God governs us by way of various degrees and relationships. We are all familiar with the authority in the home- mom and dad have been placed over and above their children. But this authority is seen in the church, school, work and state as well. In other words, how you relate to your teachers at school, your elders at church, your boss at work, and the police officers in the state, are all applications of this command. Each must be respected and honored because of the office that they fill- submitting to their instruction as is fitting. Although each person has their own sin and failures- each one is imperfect and makes mistakes- they are still to be respected. To prove this, Jesus, Himself gives us a perfect example of what this looks like. Even though Jesus was without sin and his parents were not, Jesus still submitted to, honored and obeyed. As Luke 2:51 puts it, Jesus was submissive to his father and mother. This carried on until the end of Jesus life. As He hung on the cross, he still cared for and honored His mother by securing a disciple to care for her.

As we close, honor and obedience are not virtues of our society. Disobedience and rebellion are the traits that mark our society. But as God's people, we are all called to be set apart. To honor and obey all authority as is lawful. Jesus Christ teaches children to honor their parents in the Lord. All authority comes from God- and will be held accountable to Him. In this way, we acknowledge Jesus to be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And now our divine King calls us to come, take and eat. We know that in submitting to this command to take and eat, we are also pursuing what is good and leads to life. Praise God that obedience to Him is not only pleasing to Him- but also for our good!