

# Sermon Notes – October 11, 2020

## Review

- Our fall series is, “Thinking Christianly About All of Life,” emphasizing both \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_.
- We saw last week that, in the Bible, God speaks in bold truth statements, in great contrast to the relativism in our culture that denies absolute truth. The Bible tells us that God is, that God created all that is, that God has spoken in the Bible, and that Christ died a real death on a real cross in real history to pay the penalty for our sin. That’s “propositional truth”!

## Today’s Topic

Part of God’s created order is human government. But where did that come from, what is its purpose, what are its limits, and what is our Christian responsibility when it comes to government?

## God’s Created Order Is Built Around “Spheres of Authority”

READ & Study Genesis 1 & 2; Exodus 20:1; 21:1; 24:3; I Samuel 8

The concept of “Spheres of Authority” – certainly as old as creation – was codified and given life by Abraham Kuyper, a Dutch Theologian, university founder, and politician. In his view, each Sphere of Authority comes with Responsibilities, Limits, & Dangers. This framework is a helpful lens through which to view the interaction of the Christian with the world.

- ⇒ #1: Creation begins with an \_\_\_\_\_ in relation to God (conscience)
- ⇒ #2: In that perfect world, God gives Adam a \_\_\_\_\_; notably, this took place before sin entered God’s perfect world. Work itself is not a result of sin.
- ⇒ #3: In this book of “beginnings,” God created Eve, brought her to Adam, & performed the first wedding, thus creating the first \_\_\_\_\_.
- ⇒ #4: In the Ten Commandments & the books of the law, God established spiritual leadership; in New Testament terms, we would use the term “\_\_\_\_\_.”
- ⇒ #5: Though early Israel was a Theocracy (God as King), the people eventually demanded a human ruler like the nations around them. God tells them very directly what it will be like to have sinful rulers governing them. Human \_\_\_\_\_ means taxes to pay and a “hungry state” (He’s going to take more & more of your stuff unless checked!).

## Let’s Talk About “Responsibilities, Limits, & Dangers”

READ & Study I Samuel 13:9-13; I Kings 21:7; II Chronicles 26:16-21; Daniel 1, 3, 6; Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1-7

- ⇒ In each setting, there are responsibilities that \_\_\_\_\_ in that Sphere of Authority, there are limits, and there are dangers when those limits are violated. There ARE indeed connections between them...but limits!
- ⇒ Question: What happens when one sphere overreaches?  
Answer: Those in the other spheres should \_\_\_\_\_.
- ⇒ The job of the state is to punish evil and promote good; the church & the family do not punish murderers, the state does.
- ⇒ History has additional examples worth briefly noting:
  - Constantine & the Edict of Milan (AD 313) (Coercion) (**CC 161**)
  - The Crusades – “Holy Wars” (Should the church take the sword?)
  - The Anabaptists & the Reformers (Should we drown heretics?)
  - The “American Experiment” (Can we disagree in a civil manner?)
  - The Brethren Church in Germany in the late 1930’s (Compromise)
- ⇒ *“What we are witnessing here in the west today is a move away from sphere sovereignty and its constraints of constitutional and eternal law and toward one of the other models. Kuyper says governments, by their nature, tend to usurp the authority of the other spheres if not constrained, becoming like an octopus with tentacles reaching into all aspects of life.”*

## Hearing & Responding to God’s Word

- ⇒ Kindness and true civility should mark the people of God – especially in politics! (The way of Jesus, not the way of Constantine)
- ⇒ There are dangers on the Left (like focusing on an individual & missing the bigger issues) ...AND there are dangers on the Right as well (beware of wedding the Bible and the flag! Beware of thinking that all good Christians should agree with you).
- ⇒ *“In general, we should support the party that tends most toward gospel purposes & values.”* (Focus on the issues & the platform, not the individuals)
- ⇒ GOSPEL: Never forget Philippians 3:17-20

# Community Group Notes

## Getting Started

Thinking about fall again: What are you missing the most about a “normal” fall – the Western Washington State Fair? College football? Gatherings with friends?

## Talking It Through

1. Review the sermon from Sunday: We looked up LOTS of texts – but for tonight, read Romans 13:1-7— and review the main points & other key texts from your notes. What was this week’s sermon about?
2. We talked about “Spheres of Authority” on Sunday. Can you name the five areas that were mentioned? Where are the lines between them clear, and can you think of examples of when the lines are less clear? (i.e. the government rightly has building codes that apply to churches; Why not have the government regulate how & when we serve coffee & donuts? Is it **always** clear where the lines are?)
3. What spheres do you think are the “hungriest” for greater influence? Why is that so? And talk about THIS: How SHOULD the spheres influence each other? What kind of influence is right & helpful from one area to another?
4. Though Kuyper resisted giving a complete list of Spheres of Authority, many have added “Community” to the list (think HOA, community standards, local government). Are there other spheres you can think of that might reasonably be added to the list? (Kuyper wouldn’t mind!)

5. Let’s make sure we don’t miss the GOSPEL in this whole conversation! READ Philippians 3:17-20 – the final text from Sunday! Why do you think Pastor Jay asked us to land on this text as part of the bigger discussion of politics? How is this text a corrective to our tendency to lose perspective when discussing politics with others who “just don’t get it”?

## Taking It Further & Taking It Home

6. Are the Spheres of Authority clear and balanced in your life? Is family too strong or too weak? Do you give too much priority to YOUR own opinions and relegate the commands of Scripture to second place? (“I know what the Bible says, but surely God won’t mind if I break His commands in this one small area \_\_\_\_\_”)

## Time to PRAY

(Or do this at the beginning of your group time)

Take time to share prayer requests that relate to the people in your group, and then pray for those needs. Here’s a place to list specific prayer needs:

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Next Sunday: October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

“Thinking Christianly About Marriage: Does Traditional Marriage Matter”

Genesis 1-3

Pastor Jay Mosser