



Saturday, 4/18 at 4:00 | Sunday, 4/19 at 9:00

Second Sunday of Easter – 2020

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Should we obey the government? Under most circumstances, the answer is “Yes,” *but not always*. God established governments *to serve Him for our benefit*, but when the orders of a government conflict with the Word of God, *we obey God rather than that government*. In such cases, that government is no longer serving God, *which is the reason why it was established*. The order is God > Government > People...

It’s interesting that today’s text has come up now – *at this time of the Coronavirus and many government restrictions*. With that said, *please know that our congregation being open is in full compliance with our governor’s official orders*.

1. **Before Today’s Sermon Text** ([Acts 5:12-28](#)): This series of events took place: **▶**The apostles did many miracles among the people, **▶**many people believed in Jesus, **▶**the high priest and the Sadducees became jealous, and **▶**they

put the apostles in prison. However, during the night, *an angel let them out and told them to tell the people about Jesus!* When the Jewish rulers discovered what happened, they brought the apostles to the high priest; he said to them, *“We strictly charged you not to teach in this name [that is, the name of JESUS], yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man’s blood upon us”* (Acts 5:28 ESV). // The Jewish rulers had said, *“Don’t teach about Jesus,”* yet an angel – *a messenger from God* – said, *“Tell the people about Jesus.”* So what is right: Obey the government or obey God?

2. **The Testimony of the Apostles:** ²⁹**But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”** // Some key points: (1) When they said, *“We must obey God,”* they had a clear command from God, unlike others who merely *imagine* they are following God; (2) they proclaimed Jesus, saying: *YOU killed Him, but GOD raised Him;* and (3) they made it clear that God gives repentance and forgiveness, *they are both gifts:* ▶repentance is worked in the heart by the Spirit through the Word, while ▶being forgiven is declared by God in heaven! Lenski wrote: *“...it would be absolutely criminal if [the apostles]... did not testify and proclaim [Jesus and God’s purpose for His work] to all Israel”* (227).
3. **The Response of the Jewish Rulers:** ³³**When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. //**

Those Jewish rulers were boiling mad and, if they had their way, *they would have murdered Jesus' apostles A.S.A.P.!*

- a. Gamaliel's advice: ³⁴**But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people** *[the one who taught Paul, Acts 22:3], stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while.* ³⁵**And he said to them, "Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men.** ³⁶**For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing.** ³⁷**After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.** ³⁸**So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail;** ³⁹**but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!"** // Gamaliel was respected by all, *so they listened as he reminded the others about Theudas and Judas: both were radical leaders with followers, but, once they died, their followers dispersed. Therefore, in the case of Jesus – a radical leader, you should leave His followers alone. These are the two options: (1) they will probably disperse – like the others, or (2) if their claims about Jesus are correct, you will be opposing God! Think about today: If Jesus is a fraud, people can reject Him without consequence; however, because His claims are true, *all who reject Jesus are opposing God, rejecting God's salvation, and condemning themselves!**

b. The rulers' reaction: **So they took [Gamaliel's] advice,⁴⁰ and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.** // Jesus had to die to complete His saving work, *but the apostles had to live to proclaim Jesus to others.* God is in control of all things! And then, since their order to be silent about Jesus was not heeded, *they strengthened their order by beating them: "They were stripped and given thirty-nine blows with rods across the back"* (Lenski, 236).

4. **The Apostles' Reaction:** ⁴¹**Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.** ⁴²**And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.** // So they rejoiced that they were "worthy to suffer dishonor for [Jesus]"! Why? Earlier Jesus had said: "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven..." (Matt. 5:11-12 ESV). And then, did they obey the government? *By no means; they obeyed God!* Therefore, *✦out in public, ✦in the temple, ✦from house to house, and ✦without ceasing* – they continued to tell others about Jesus!

This Week's Challenge: How is God calling you to obey Him?

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, as we ✦are rejoicing in Jesus – *our Risen Savior*, and ✦know that all people desperately need Him, *so move us to start and never stop telling others!*