

Daniel 6 NLT
Do You Dare to be Daniel?
WRCoB 11.3.19

If asked to do something for the government
That goes against your Christian principles
Would you do it? No?

But we believe in the total sovereignty of God
That the rulers who rule over us
Are placed there and ordained by God. Right?

This was Paul's argument in Romans 13 when he said

1

Romans 13:1-2 (NLT)

13 Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

Paul's argument can only go so far.

As long as the governing authorities
Govern within certain moral and ethical standards
Prescribed by our Christian values
Then, yes, we are to submit.

We pay our taxes. We follow its laws
We support it through our prayers and service.

However, what happens when the governing authorities
Cross certain ethical or moral lines, what then?

And what if they demand us to do the same?

Do we continue to submit to its authority?
Or do we resist and oppose it?

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The current impeachment inquiry in the House
Was initiated because of a whistleblower.

Someone felt his/her integrity
And the integrity of our country was at stake.

Someone spoke out against perceived unethical
And perhaps even possible illegal activity.

He/she defied government authority
And came forward with information
Concerning the appropriateness of certain actions.

Were they right or wrong for doing so?

Is there biblical precedent for something like this?

Yes, there is!

There are examples in the Bible
Of individuals who stood opposed
To the rulers over them.

They risked not only their reputations
Their job security
But their lives as well
For standing firm on their moral principles.

The story before us is one of them.

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Our story today takes place in Babylon,
In the present-day country of Iraq.

The year was approximately 535 B.C.

Daniel, along with other citizens of Jerusalem
Had been taken captive and sent to Babylonia
By King Nebuchadnezzar in around 587 BC.

This period is known as the Jewish Exile.

But the Jews were not treated as prisoners or as slaves.

The Persians conquered Babylonia
Under the leadership of King Cyrus.

Its government allowed the Jews to build homes
Marry, have children, find occupations
And for the most part, practice their faith.

They were encouraged to assimilate into Persian culture.

Following King Cyrus, King Darius took over as King.

This is where we find Daniel working for the government.

He served as an advisor for 60 years
Surviving the reigns of four kings
Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus and Darius.

Daniel, was in his eighties.

King Darius trusted Daniel more than anyone else.

Due to his faithfulness, honesty, and hard work
King Darius wanted to make him 2nd in command.

This would have made Daniel more powerful
Than anyone except the king.

Daniel's colleagues became jealous.

They gathered to conspire against him.

They would trap Daniel using his unswerving faith in God.

And so they tricked King Darius
Into signing a decree declaring

That during a 30-day period
Anyone who prayed to any other god or human
Other than King Darius

Would be thrown into a den of lions.

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Upon hearing this governmental
How did Daniel respond?

He went home and knelt down to pray as usual.

He could have quietly continued his prayer life
Kept his windows closed and curtains drawn.

He could have decided to give his prayer life a hiatus.

But not Daniel.

Just as he had done his whole life
He went home
Opened his windows wide
Knelt down, faced Jerusalem,
And prayed to God.

Nothing would compromise his faith.

The conspirators told King Darius of Daniel's actions.

And even though the king loved Daniel
He could not revoke his own decree.

At sundown, Darius ordered
That Daniel be thrown into the den of lions.

The following morning, the king ran to the lions' den
To see whether Daniel survived the night.

Daniel replied that God sent an angel
To shut the mouth of the lions.

Our story ends with Daniel prospering
Under the reign of Darius.

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Daniel, in the face of certain death, took his stand.

Do we dare do as Daniel did?

It's not easy to stand in opposition to the powers that be
To speak truth to power.

The easier way is to acquiesce to the governing authorities.

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So then, as followers of Jesus Christ
How are we to relate to the government?

Martin Luther King, Jr. in his book *A Knock at Midnight*
Informs us

2

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state and never its tool.

We have an allegiance to the United States
As her law-abiding citizens.

We have a deep love and respect
For the principles the nation was founded on.

We are to submit to its authority.

However, as Christians, we have a greater allegiance
Than the allegiance to our nation.

And that, is our allegiances to God
Through Jesus Christ.

In that perspective
We are neither above nor below the state.

The church (in an ideal scenario) is a moral presence
That influences and guides the government

Calling our nation to ethical standards
Prescribed by our understanding of the kingdom of God.

Like the parable of the yeast

3

Luke 13:20-21 (NLT)

²⁰ [Jesus] also asked, “What else is the Kingdom of God like? ²¹ It is like the yeast a woman used in making bread. Even though she put only a little yeast in three measures of flour, it permeated every part of the dough.”

The church is to be the yeast in society.

The church’s presence in the world
Declares the Lordship of Christ
And the ethics of Jesus.

If there are things in our society
That oppose the ethical standards
Within the concept of God’s kingdom

Then we are to speak out against it.
Again from Martin Luther King, Jr

4

If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.

This is where I see a problem today
With leaders of the church.

I just finished reading the book, *The Immoral Majority*
By Ben Howe.

The subtitle to his book explains his thesis.

Why Evangelicals Chose Political Power over Christian Values.

Howe describes an interview in 2016
With Mike Gallagher,
A conservative radio talk show host

With the Rev. Robert Jeffress
Pastor at the First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Gallagher asked whether he wanted a president
Who would govern according to the principles
Of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

"Heck no," Jeffress said, "I would run from that candidate as far as possible, because the Sermon on the Mount was not given as a governing principle for this nation" (p. 46).

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We must be the voice that speaks out
On behalf of the ethics of God's kingdom

Rather than quietly and passively
Submitting to governing authorities.

Daniel's governing authority

Required that he stop praying to God
And pray instead to King Darius.

He would not, could not do that!

At the risk of his life

He chose to oppose his king
For a greater allegiance.

Do we dare to be Daniel?

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Following the death and resurrection of Jesus
Peter and John, empowered by the Holy Spirit
Preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Sanhedrin arrested them and threw them in jail.

The following day

They were called up before the governing authorities
Ordered not to speak or teach at all
In the name of Jesus.

5

Acts 4:19 (NLT) But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?”

Do we dare to be John or Peter?

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They continued to preach Jesus Christ
Throughout Jerusalem.

Again they were arrested and thrown in jail.

Again, the authorities ordered them to stop.

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Acts 5:28-29 (NRSV)

28 saying, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man’s blood on us.” **29** But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.

Do we dare to be Peter?

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According to tradition

In 1717 Brethren minister, Johannes Naas

Traveled throughout the Palatinate, Germany

Preaching, baptizing and holding love feasts.

On one occasion he was captured and tortured

To try and force him to enlist

In an elite regiment of the Prussian army.

Due to his faith in Jesus Christ

He could not in good conscience

Take another person’s life.

And so he refused to enlist stating

He was already a soldier in another’s army

The army of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

On hearing Naas’ confession of faith

And witnessing his courageous act

The King of Prussia allowed him to go free.

Do we dare to be Johannes?

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And so, in the final analysis

If asked to do something for the government

That goes against your Christian principles

Would you do it?

As long as the governing authorities

Govern within certain moral and ethical guidelines

As prescribed in the ethics of God's kingdom

Then, yes, we are to submit.

But if not . . .

Do we dare to be a follower of Jesus?