

The New Normal #7 "Restraining Evil"

Things in America seem to be out of control. There has been vandalism, violence, destruction of public and private property. There is a cry for justice in the cities of our country that has led to protesting over the tragic death of George Floyd. Some of our national monuments are being pulled down, hundreds of police have been injured, some killed and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight. It looks like law and order is fading away. What is happening to our society? What does the Bible say about restraining evil that exists in the world? Are there God-given mechanisms in place that help to preserve peace and order? If so, what are they? Today's message will answer these questions and more.

1. GOD MUST RESTRAIN EVIL BECAUSE OF HUMAN SINFULNESS

- A. The flood, Gen 6:5-13
- B. The human heart is wicked, Mat 15:18-20
- C. Every person is depraved, Rom 3:10-18

2. GOD ESTABLISHED THE CONSCIENCE AS A MEANS OF RESTRAINING EVIL

- A. God gives conscience as a moral guide, Rom 1:18-32, 3:10-18, 2:13-15
- B. People must listen to their conscience, 1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12
- C. The conscience can be become inoperative, 1 Tim 4:2, Titus 1:15
- D. The conscience must be governed by Scripture, 1 Tim 4:1-2
- E. America seems to have lost its conscience, Jer 8:12

3. GOD ESTABLISHED THE FAMILY AS A MEANS OF RESTRAINING EVIL

- A. Society is structured on the family, Gen 2:23-24
- B. Parents are to raise godly offspring, Deu 4:9, 6:6-7
- C. Parents role is authoritative, Eph 6:1-4
- D. Parental absence weakens society, Rom 1:30

4. GOD ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENTS AS A MEANS OF RESTRAINING EVIL, Rom 13:1-6, 1 Pet 2:13-18

- A. All governments are of God, Rom 13:1-2
- B. Government is it protect the people, Rom 13:3-4
- C. People must submit to the authorities, Rom 13:5
- D. Christians are obligated to pay their taxes, Rom 13:6
- E. Christians must be model citizens, 1 Pet 2:12, Titus 3:1-2

5. GOD ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH AS A MEANS OF RESTRAINING EVIL,

- A. The church is the salt of the earth, Mat 5:13
- B. The church is the light of the world, Mat 5:14
- C. The church is a change agent in the world, Mat 5:15-16
- D. The has a mission to transforms sinners, Mat 28:16f

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 6:5-13: The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth-- men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. ¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

Matthew 15:18-20: But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.' ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.'"

Romans 3:10-18: As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³"Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." ¹⁴"Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." ¹⁵"Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ruin and misery mark their ways, ¹⁷and the way of peace they do not know." ¹⁸"There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 2:13-15: For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

1 Corinthians 8:7: But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

1 Timothy 4:1-2: The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. ²Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

Titus 1:15: To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.

Jeremiah 8:12: Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished, says the LORD.

Genesis 2:22-24: Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." ²⁴For this reason a man will

leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Deuteronomy 4:9: Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Deuteronomy 6:1-7: These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ²so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. ⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Ephesians 6:1-4: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother"-- which is the first commandment with a promise--³that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Romans 13:1-6: Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ²Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. ⁴For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but

also because of conscience. ⁶This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

1 Peter 2:13-17: Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Titus 3:1-2: Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

1 Peter 2:12: Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Matthew 5:13-16: "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#1. In what way(s) did God make himself known to people? (Romans 1:18-21)

#2. What does it mean by "God gave them over" to their sins? (Rom 1:24, 26)

#3. Why is it important to listen to our conscience? (1 Cor 8)

#4. Is the conscience always right? Can the conscience be guided by Scripture? Can the conscience be guided by false teaching?

#5. What is significant about God ordering society around the family?

#6. Describe the role of parents.

#7. What happens to a society when the family is weak? (divorce, single parents, absentee fathers, etc.)

#8. Describe the role of Christians as citizens? (Rom 13, 1 Pet 2:13-17)

#9. Does the Bible teach capital punishment? (Rom 13:4)

#10. Should we view government & all its institutions as a gift from God? Why or why not?

#11. In what sense is the church a restraining influence in a society?

#12. What is your takeaway from this teaching?