

Shayla: May believers be social activists?

Meforshim:

- **Romans 13:1-2 HCSB** Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. (2) So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves.

Many people throughout the centuries have used this passage to support the concept of the divine right of kings. Today it is used by some to support the idea there we should not express our opinions to our government but should simply obey it.

However, we must not make too much of this verse. The principle reason for this verse is that the early Christians were thinking that because their government was not righteous (after all, it was trying to kill them) that they did not need to obey the laws of the land and did not need to pay taxes. The same question was addressed to Jesus. Paul is simply saying that government is necessary. Without it there would be chaos. Taxes are necessary because the government must have money to run. No more than that must be understood. After all, the apostles also said "We must obey God rather than men."¹ They actively disobeyed whenever they preached against the orders of the Sanhedrin. Each Christian who died for his or her faith was practicing a form of civil disobedience by refusing to say that Caesar was the sovereign lord of the universe.

- **2 Samuel 23:3-4 HCSB** The God of Israel spoke; the Rock of Israel said to me, "The one who rules the people with justice, who rules in the fear of God, (4) is like the morning light when the sun rises on a cloudless morning, the glisten of rain on sprouting grass."

God Himself advocates righteous people being involved in government. We Christians have come to believe the great lie of the separation of Church and State to the point where we are losing the battle for our country by default. Is political activism the most important role in a Christian's role? No. The battle for souls is far more important than the battle for political freedom. But without political freedom, the battle for souls becomes far more difficult. Without righteous judgment from our judges and lawmakers it becomes more and more difficult for people to be righteous.

From where do we get the idea that in a democratic society that is supposed to represent the people only the homosexuals and abortionists should have a right to speak out? Are Christians not part of the population? Should they not also receive proper representation in a free society?

- **Deuteronomy 16:18 HCSB** "Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment.

Moses here exhorts the people to choose judges that would judge righteously. Some may say, "This is the people of Israel – a theocracy – and should not be taken as an example of what modern day Christians in a different form of government should do." Really? So the Ten Commandments should not apply either? The moral laws that have formed the backbone of a Judeo-Christian society for centuries should not be considered? That is ridiculous on its face and it is absurd theologically. After all, we Christians were "grafted into the tree" of Israel. Their promises are ours. Their blessings are equally ours. And their laws (that do not pertain to salvation or ritualistic temple worship etc) are also ours. We are responsible to choose

¹ Acts 5:29

judges that will give righteous judgment. If we do not, then we will have to be content to bear the burden of an unjust society that does not care for the needs of its people.

- **2 Chronicles 19:5-7 HCSB** He appointed judges in all the fortified cities of the land of Judah, city by city. (6) Then he said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the matter of judgment. (7) And now, may the terror of the LORD be on you. Watch what you do, for there is no injustice or partiality or taking bribes with the LORD our God."

King Jehoshaphat said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the Lord." His exhortation to judge righteously is a form of political activism. There was once a judge that refused to label a man who had sex on a regular basis with an eleven year old girl a pedophile. His reasoning? Since the girl was the man's daughter, if we removed the man from the presence of the daughter, he would not likely act sexually with other little girls. How outrageous! If you have sex with a child, you are a pedophile! The fact that it was incestuous pedophilia makes it worse, not better!

We need to stand up to our judges like Jehoshaphat did and ask them to consider what they are doing. We need to remind them that they are accountable to God and to the people to judge righteously. If they will not, then we should exercise our constitutional right to vote them out of office.

- **Luke 10:25-27 HCSB** Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (26) **"What is written in the law?"** He asked him. **"How do you read it?"** (27) He answered: **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.**

Here we learn a very important point. Everyone we encounter is our neighbor. Further, we are responsible to help in any way possible everyone we can. We are responsible to the unborn children of our land. We are responsible to the young children who are taught that you may practice Wicca, you make carry around banners proclaiming Satanism, but you may not pray a Christian prayer in school. We are responsible to the immigrants (legal and illegal) who come to our nation with hope in their hearts for a better life. We are responsible even to the judges, be they wicked or righteous! We have learned that we Christians should witness to our neighbors, our families and our co-workers. Are we not equally responsible to testify about the truth, the life and the way to our government leaders? If the Church cannot speak to the moral and ethical issues of our society, who can?

- **Judges 6:25-27 HCSB** On that very night the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull and a second bull seven years old. Then tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. (26) Build a well-constructed altar to the LORD your God on the top of this rock. Take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down." (27) So Gideon took 10 of his male servants and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his father's household and the men of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it at night.

On Gideon's orders Gideon broke down the village idol that was built by his father and destroyed it. Some may gasp, "But that was another faith! Surely you are not advocating activism against another faith? Should we not respect other faith traditions, while holding faithfully to our own?" Not at the expense of young children.

You see, that "faith" advocated the sacrifice of children in order to get the god's blessing on a house. The priests would come to the home at the birth of the couple's first child, kill the

child and encase it in a corner stone of the building in order to gain the god's favor. The Asherah pole was usually accompanied by young boys and girls who served as temple prostitutes. Should we stand by and give tacit agreement to the systematic subjugation of young children simply because it is done in the name of another religion?

Should we look on with silent pity as another "faith" in our time systematically persecutes women, keeps them at home, without education, without representation and subject to death by stoning if they leave their houses without their father?

Should we not cry out against the practice of genital mutilation on young girls so that they will never know anything but pain from the sexual act simply because it is done in the name of a strange god?

Consider the role of homosexuality in the following two religious instances:

- **1 Kings 15:11-12 HCSB** Asa did what was right in the LORD's eyes, as his ancestor David had done. (12) He banished the male shrine prostitutes from the land and removed all of the idols that his fathers had made.
- **2 Kings 23:7 HCSB** He (*Josiah*) also tore down the houses of the male shrine prostitutes that were in the LORD's temple, in which the women were weaving tapestries for Asherah. (8) Then Josiah brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and he defiled the high places from Geba to Beer-sheba, where the priests had burned incense. He tore down the high places of the gates at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city (on the left at the city gate).

Two righteous kings named Asa and Josiah each had to put away the homosexual prostitutes out of the land. We sometimes think that the homosexual movement is something new, but society has struggled with this vocal minority since the dawn of time. And in every instance, when this group has been given place, morality and justice have gone by the way side.

We are required to do what is right, we are required to stand for justice whether the injustice is perpetrated by atheists, theists, or animists.

- **1 Samuel 14:24 HCSB** and the men of Israel were worn out that day, for Saul had placed the troops under an oath: "Cursed is the man who eats food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted *any* food.

In this passage Saul and the people of Israel battled the Philistines. Saul gave the supremely stupid order that no one was to eat until the battle was complete. So his people had to fight weakened by hunger. In fact they got so famished that they ended up eating meat raw with the blood still in it!² Saul's order had so injured his people that they were going against centuries of practice by eating blood.

His son Jonathan did not hear the order because he was too busy actually fighting to be standing around giving flamboyant orders. He ate some honey and immediately felt better. The people around him gasped, "You shouldn't have done that! Your dad said anyone who ate would be cursed!" Jonathan responded "That's about the stupidest thing I've ever heard! Look how much better I feel for having eaten. We could have killed a lot more Philistines today if we had all eaten."³ When Saul discovered that his son had disobeyed him, instead of simply acknowledging (based on the evidence of the people eating blood, not that it was his son) that his order was wrong and rescinding it, he actually stated that he would kill Jonathan as he had promised.⁴ However, the people were apparently wiser than their king for they

² 1 Samuel 14:32

³ 1 Samuel 14:27-30

⁴ 1 Samuel 14:43

stood against him and protected Jonathan.⁵ Unfortunately, with the people now standing against him on this moral issue, Saul was forced to give up pursuing his enemies, who returned to their own territory, only to continue harassing Israel later on.

While Jonathan provides us with an example of civil disobedience, the crowd gives us an example of lobbying. When we see a law that is unjust, a case that is being judged unfairly, a moral cause that is being ignored, we have the right if not the moral imperative to stand together against our government and force them to do what is right. As Moses commanded us, we must not follow a crowd in wrong doing.⁶ Otherwise we are equally responsible for the injustice.⁷

- **Acts 5:26 HCSB** Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them in without force, because they were afraid the people might stone them.

The Bible says that the guards were so afraid of the mob that gathered around the apostles that they treated them gently. You may say, “We don’t know that that crowd was Christian. Can we take them as an example?” To my mind that actually makes the case stronger. If even Lowlanders can influence a situation for good, how much more should Highlanders?

Where do we see a biblical injunction to remain silent about injustice? If you examine Isaiah 58 carefully you will see the exact opposite! We are required to free those who are imprisoned unjustly. When we see a pastor going to jail because he refuses to get a license from the government for his church’s runaway shelter, we should protest. We should at the very least require the government to treat him gently!

King David was lobbied for justice on more than one occasion. At one point he was about to do something very stupid that would have hurt his political career, but a woman who lobbied for a more subtle and gentle approach influenced him and saved him from a blunder.⁸ As a righteous leader, he thanked the woman for helping him.

⁵ 1 Samuel 14:45

⁶ Exodus 23:2

⁷ 2 John 1:11

⁸ 1 Samuel 25:33