

The Christian's responsibilities

Part 4

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[00:00:00] We turn please to Romans chapter 13, Romans 13, and we'll read from verse 1, Romans 13, verse 1.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. [00:01:01] For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all the Jews tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Now 1 Peter chapter 2. 1 Peter chapter 2 and verse 13.

[00:02:03] We read from verse 12. Verse 12.

Having your conversation on it honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. As free and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God, honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Now 1 Timothy chapter 2.

[00:03:12] And verse 1. 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 1.

I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men. For kings and for all that are in authority that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

Now lastly Ephesians chapter 5.

Ephesians chapter 5.

Sorry it's chapter 6.

[00:04:07] Sorry, chapter 6.

Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 5.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling. In singleness of your heart as unto Christ.

Not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. With good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord whether he be bond or free. And ye masters do the same things unto them. Forbearing threatening, knowing that your master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him. We've seen that the Christian life is not simply attending meetings four, five, six, possibly seven times in a week.

[00:05:23] But the Christian life affects us everywhere in every walk of life. We've seen it in relation to God, our responsibilities to him flowing out from the blessings that we have received from him. And then too we've seen the relationships that we have with other believers, the blessings of them and the responsibilities too. And last night we were considering the homes of the believers and the responsibilities, husbands, wives and children. Tonight we want to speak about the Christian responsibility in the world, in secular matters. [00:06:07] And that has a very, very large place indeed in scripture. We're beginning tonight with the references to obeying the powers that be.

I think this is quite a problem at times when people think of powers that exist in the world that are so anti-God. Is it possible that such powers are ordained by God? And we say without question, yes, without question.

And we want to prove this. First of all then, I think it would be wise to consider a little what is called the times of the Gentiles. This is in connection with rule upon earth.

And it's necessary to understand this in order to understand why the apostle enjoins believers to obey the powers that be. [00:07:03] You know that God ordained a nation, blessed it in a very wonderful way, that it should be his particular nation upon earth. A peculiar people, a people of possession for himself. And virtually they were to rule the world.

That's what God had in mind. We'll read in Deuteronomy that the bounds were set for Israel and then the nations round about Israel. This was God's intention that Israel should be the center and all the nations of the Gentiles ruled through them. Well we know how that failed, failed miserably. Not because there was anything wrong with God's plan, but because there was a great deal wrong with men and women in the flesh who did not obey what God enjoined. There was the weakness, disobedience. Well the time came when God scattered the northern kingdom amongst the nations and eventually the southern kingdom Judah was carried into captivity. [00:08:09] And then began the times of the Gentiles.

That is the Gentiles were given the opportunity to rule upon earth to maintain some measure of

peace and law so that anarchy, chaos, might not rule. Now the times of the Gentiles are still running on.

They have not stopped. They have not finished. They won't finish until the Lord Jesus Christ comes in power and glory to set up his kingdom when he will reign over Israel and eventually the whole world. Now I believe it is absolutely necessary to see this in order to understand the injunctions of Paul and Peter. You say, why do you say that?

Because it helps us to understand that God sets up powers that are certainly not favorable towards him. [00:09:06] Idolatrous powers, but they are given the opportunity to rule correctly. Now Romans 13 gives us the clear indication of the responsibility of every government that rules no matter where it rules.

Whether it is Britain, the Far East, or Africa, or anywhere, anywhere in this world, Romans 13 describes to us the responsibility of every government. And that is simply to encourage the good and to curb the evil.

And they have a charge from God to do this.

In the first king who was reigning in the times of the Gentiles, Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet Daniel said to him, King, break off your evil ways and show kindness to the poor.

[00:10:03] Now in that statement we have a simple assertion of what Romans 13 is saying. Don't do evil, do good.

And that's the responsibility of every government. And when it falls down on those two things, it is failing to discharge its responsibility to God.

Now we must make this clear, that although God ordains governments, he is not responsible for the evil that those governments do. Because we've said already, the responsibility of those governments is to do good and not to do evil and to curb evil. So if the government of Russia is ordained by God, and I believe it is, then it is directly responsible to God to curb evil in whatever way it arises and to promote good. [00:11:01] Instead of that, it has adulterated its responsibility and is anti-God in all its ways. Yet there is still a measure of good rule maintained.

Anarchy doesn't rule in Russia or in many other parts of the world. Unfortunately in some parts it does. I think we're seeing the breakdown of rule in society in Northern Ireland. And very, very sad it is to see.

And also in many parts of the world. Now it's in that background that Paul and Peter give their injunctions to the Christians. And remember, we have direct scripture for what we've been saying. Because Nebuchadnezzar had to go through a very, very painful and trying experience to realize that God rules in the kingdoms of men. And he sets up whomsoever he will, even the basest of men.

And that's still true today.

[00:12:03] Now then, Paul says, let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God.

The powers that be are ordained of God.

You cannot get a plainer statement to prove what I've been saying. That whatever power exists in this world, it exists by the authority of God. And remember, God can use the nations to chastise whatever part of the world he chooses to chastise. He used the Assyrian nation to chastise Israel. And in its pride and arrogance, it thought that it was doing its own will instead of doing God's will. And God chastised it for its pride and arrogance. And so here we find those Christians under the Roman power.

The last form of the times of the Gentiles.

[00:13:03] Still in existence in a very powerful way when Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus. And to the Christians at Rome and also his other epistles.

Rome was certainly in the ascendancy at that time.

Well then, Paul says, you have to be obedient to the powers that be.

It's very, very striking that when Pilate spoke to the Lord Jesus and said to him, don't you know that I have power to release you or to crucify you? The Lord said, thou hast no power against me except to be given thee from above. There's a direct reference that Pilate was ruling in the will of God. God had set up the Roman power for his own purpose. [00:14:01] Pilate had delegated power from the emperor. And the Lord Jesus told him plainly that that power that he exercised was from above. But the Lord Jesus submitted to it. That's a very, very striking thing. And as we were singing together and praying together, the Lord Jesus is our example in these things. Just as he was an example for children when he was obedient to his parents, here is an example for us in submitting ourselves to the government of the day, even though it involves suffering, as it did supremely in connection with the Lord Jesus. He could have called upon 12 legions of angels, more than 12 legions of angels, and they would have come to his help and all the power in Rome would have been nothing. But he chose to suffer under the hand of the power of the day, submitted to the evil judgment that was against him, [00:15:03] never complained, never threatened, never rebelled, accepted it in humble submission to the will of God. And so Paul goes on to say that we mustn't resist the powers that be, because if you resist, in principle, you're resisting God. And, as I've said already, rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. He's on to say, he's the minister of God to thee for good, but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he's the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. It's interesting in passing that the word here for minister is diaconess, that is, a deacon.

So here we have an unconverted deacon.

That would make someone's eyebrows rise. But this is a man who's a magistrate. [00:16:02] He's secular ruler, and he has the sword in his hand, and he's to execute wrath against evildoers. Now, I believe the sword is the emblem of capital punishment.

I know that this is a very vexed question in this country and in many parts of the world, but I believe that this scripture, and I want to draw your attention to another two, would indicate to us that the sword is the emblem, the symbol, of capital punishment. I want you to turn to Job chapter 19.

Job chapter 19.

It's better that you should turn up to the portion and read it for yourself. Verse 29. Job chapter 19 and verse 29.

[00:17:08] Be ye afraid of the sword, for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

Well, I think that's plain enough. No one's frightened for a sword that's in a scabbard. No one's frightened for a sword that's carried in a ceremonial way. No one's frightened for a sword that's just pointed towards them. The only fear that anyone can have of a sword is when it's leveled against them in a very, very positive way. So, I believe that this passage in Job would indicate to us that the sword is the symbol of judgment. Now, Ezekiel chapter 30. Ezekiel 30 and verse 25.

[00:18:04] But I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down, and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall stretch it out upon the land of Egypt.

Now, here is a king, and he's using the sword, and using it on behalf of God. Here, of course, it's a matter of chastisement upon this land of Egypt.

I think these two scriptures are quite sufficient, along with the one in Romans 13, to emphasize what I've been saying, that the sword is the symbol of capital punishment. Well, we know there's a great deal of controversy about this, and one would certainly deplore any exercise of judgment upon innocent people, and certainly the Bible never countenances such a thing. [00:19:04] But it does against guilty people, where there has been an endeavor, a deliberate premeditated endeavor, to do sinful things. And so it says in verse 5, Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience's sake.

Now, this is very important. We walk along the street, and we see a policeman, and we say, Oh, I'm not going to break into a house. There's the policeman. I'm not going to steal anything. There's the policeman. That would be absolutely wrong.

I don't steal, because in the sight of God, it's a sin.

So when Paul is speaking about for conscience's sake, it means that you don't do anything wrong that would merit the judgment of the government. You do it because you don't want to sin against God.

[00:20:03] That's the great rule for the Christian. I know that's very, very important indeed. Not seeking to do things that are wrong, and hope we can cover it up well, so that no one will ever know, and the government won't know, and we'll be able to go free. No, no. It's the effect of the conscience working upon the heart and mind, so that we do the things that are pleasing to God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, to have our consciences, not to give offense, rather, to Jew or Gentile, nor to the church of God. Elsewhere, he said, I exercise my conscience to have a conscience void of offense towards God and man.

There's a man with a very tender conscience indeed. He's concerned about doing right before God,

and he's concerned about doing right before men. Then, in verse 7, [00:21:04] I'm going to watch this, I'm going to take this off. In verse 7, we are told, Render, therefore, to all their dues, Tribute to whom tribute is due, Custom to whom custom, Fear to whom fear, Honor to whom honor.

I believe that when the apostle is speaking about tribute, he's speaking about taxes.

The Roman government imposed its will upon captured nations, and then put them under tribute, that is, they exacted taxes from them.

And, of course, those taxes had to be paid, just as it is today, that the taxes are imposed upon us for the running of the economy, and a very necessary thing too.

So the apostle says here that what is due is to be paid. [00:22:02] That's upright Christianity.

It's upright for the ordinary citizens. It's upright for anyone.

And a Christian should never be a tax dodger. A Christian should be able to pay his taxes in a way that's honorable before God. And then it says, Custom to whom custom.

I believe that. Let me see what I've got there now. I had that written down somewhere. Yes, the laws, the laws of the particular nation, particular government, that laws are passed for the running of society. We might be very, very annoyed at some of those laws because they curtail our liberties in some way or another, but we obey the powers that be, and we see that the Lord Jesus, [00:23:03] he came under this kind of thing when his parents were instructed to go to Bethlehem under the wise governing of God, of course. This was all in connection with prophecy, and his parents went down to Bethlehem, not because they had read this in the Bible, but because the Emperor Augustus had decreed that there should be a census, and so they obeyed the law of the land. They obeyed what was decreed.

And that's true, too, for every Christian, that the laws are not there to be broken or to get round about. The laws are there to be obeyed.

If only the governments of the world realized it, that the Bible is the best possible help for them to have citizens that will support the government in righteousness and in energy.

If they would only say to all their citizens, [00:24:02] read the Bible, follow the Bible, they would have citizens, they would have subjects in the kingdom that would support them to the hilt, that is, if they obeyed the Bible. That's another matter. And so we find that, yes, those customs have to be obeyed. Then it says, fear to whom fear.

I think this is the authority of the government. We have to show its reverence, the reverence that's due to it. And that's true for every Christian, too, that there is an authority in the country. The Queen is the head, and she exercises some power through her ministers, the parliament, the government. And so there is the authority ordained of God, and we have to recognize it. And we remember that there was a person or persons referred to in the Epistle of Jude that they didn't think it was a light matter [00:25:02] to speak evil of dignities, didn't think it was a small matter, rather, to speak evil of dignities. Now, the Apostle says that ought not to be.

Christians should not speak evil of dignities. We might have some idea about the Prime Minister that she's doing a bad job, and some might think she's doing a good job. But we should never speak evil of dignities that are ordained of God. We find God speaking about His anointed servant, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus.

We find Him speaking about them in a dignified way. And those who are under such powers were responsible to do this, too. And so when Peter speaks about the king, he says, Fear God, honor the king.

Honor the king?

Kneel a monster, a tyrant, [00:26:01] a man whose hands were steeped in blood, murdered his mother, murdered his wife, did all sorts of evil things. Honor the king?

That's what Peter said. He's the ordained man by God to rule at that particular time.

Oh, how easy it is for our tongues to speak evil of dignities when we ought not. And so we have to give fear to whom the fear is due.

And lastly, honor to whom honor.

The Apostle Paul is a model of dignity in this respect.

When he was speaking to the king, he said, King Agrippa.

When he addressed Festus, most noble Festus.

These people were entitled to the respect that Paul showed to them, and he did it freely because they were in a position [00:27:02] where honor should be given to them, and he did. Now, I want to make this distinction, dear brethren. I'd be quite free to give any man his honor, whether it's in a local way or in a national way, connected with secular government, or in any way whatsoever. If a man has a post, say, at university that entitles him to a certain honor, then we are duty-bound to pay that honor. And any way where a man has an honor that is a legitimate honor, yes, but not in the ecclesiastical world. I wouldn't bow the knee to the Pope and call him Holy Father. I wouldn't call anyone Most Worshipful Master or anything of that kind. That's the Masons.

Anything in that kind of thing where there is a so-called Christian flavor about it, but is in direct opposition to the will of God, no. That's not giving honor to whom honor is due. [00:28:02] God never gave them that honor.

That's something that man has taken to himself. So we must make a clear distinction between honors given by God and honors that men take to themselves. And certainly, in the ecclesiastical realm, these honors are out.

We don't acknowledge them. They are only man-made, and they are not in character with the meek and lowly Savior who was here without any titles from man.

And so we say a clear distinction between ecclesiastical honors and secular honors, yes, we must

bow to those.

Now we move over to 1 Peter. 1 Peter, chapter 2.

[00:29:03] Very, very important verse that, verse 12, that your manner of life is to be such that no one can say anything against it, and you are to submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well, for so is the will of God. Two things here.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake.

Now, doesn't that put a very high honor upon this kind of service, this kind of obedience, that we do it for the Lord's sake? It's not something that we are compelled to do in an arbitrary way.

It's part of our Christian service [00:30:03] to do it for the Lord's sake.

This is part of our Christian testimony that we are obedient, that we do the things that are pleasing to him in our submitting to the laws of the land.

And then he speaks about the will of God, the will of God.

Now, the will of God, in whatever context we find it, is very, very encouraging and helpful and soul-building.

When we accept the will of God, then there is progress and there is blessing. When we reject the will of God, there is nothing but sorrow and breakdown. So Peter, and Peter was a very wise man, he knew what it was to walk with the Lord and see the way he did things. And you remember there was a time when the Lord caught the fish with the money, or rather Peter did, under the Lord's direction, [00:31:02] and he got the money to pay the temple Jews. These were binding upon them, and so they paid the money, as the Lord said, for thee and for me.

And there was the Lord showing to Peter that it was right to submit to certain things that were imposed upon them. It was honoring to God to do these things. And this is what Peter's saying when he's speaking about fearing God and honoring the king, and so on. It's all part of the will of God for us as Christians.

Now, there's one thing we must say, that when a government passes laws that are in direct contradiction to the word of God, a Christian is not bound to obey them.

For instance, the government has legalized homosexuality. The government has legalized gambling.

[00:32:04] The government has legalized abortion.

The government has legalized many things that are contrary to the declared will of God. But because a law has been passed legalizing these things, that in no way encourages a Christian to do any of these things. And then apart from these things, if the government of this land said that we were to stop worshipping God, we would have to say, as the apostles said in their day, we ought to obey God

rather than men. In secular matters, although it goes against the grain to obey the laws, we are bound to do them. But when those laws come in conflict with the declared will of God, then a Christian must not bow.

The first six chapters of the book of Daniel, they are an indication of the refusal of Daniel and his companions to bow to the laws of the land [00:33:04] because they were in direct conflict with the declared will of God. And God supported them against all the might of the king and his power, whatever king it was.

And so there is a clear indication to us and in the acts of the apostles that Christians are not bound by laws that are manifestly against God and so the Christian is free to disobey.

He has to take the consequences, of course. That's another matter. Now we turn to 1 Timothy chapter 2.

I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, [00:34:03] all men.

Most embracing statement by Paul.

We can certainly pray for all men in many ways. We think of the wars that are going on in this world, many wars, and wars bring sorrow. Wars bring death.

Wars bring devastation.

And in a humanitarian way, we should pray to our God that these things should cease and that better conditions should prevail. We know full well that the world will never see stable peace, righteous peace, until the prince of peace reigns according to the will of God. Nevertheless, we can pray for a betterness of condition.

And then we're exhorted to give thanks for all men.

And this is a very important thing for us for the simple reason that men do not give thanks [00:35:02] for the good things that God has given to them. And when you think of the rain and the sunshine and all that this means to crops and food, and when we think of health, and we think of many, many things that we enjoy in the civilized part of the world, then it's a wonderful thing that we can give thanks to God for all the people of Carlisle enjoy and never give God thanks for them. And what's true in Carlisle is true throughout Britain. Then he goes on to say, for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour. You see, pray for kings and for those that are in authority.

[00:36:01] Will that do any good?

Well, I'm perfectly sure, and you are too, that the apostle inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these things to Timothy wouldn't have done so unless he was absolutely sure that what he was writing was valid, was real, was vital, and it is.

And there's one very outstanding instance that I want to bring to your attention. In the book of Jeremiah, God decreed that the nation of Judah, or should I say the tribe of Judah, the southern part of the kingdom, was to go into captivity into Babylon. And through Jeremiah he says, now it doesn't matter what anybody says, this will come to pass, and you'll be there for 70 years. And there were various prophets who laughed at this and tried to upset the prophet's declaration by making other prophecies. [00:37:01] Well, it wasn't very long before God's will became apparent and Judah was taken into captivity. And God said through the prophet, now pray, pray for the peace of Babylon.

What? Pray for the peace of Babylon?

Nebuchadnezzar's devastated Jerusalem? He's taken away all that part of the nation into Babylon as captives?

Pray for the peace of Babylon?

That's what God said.

Because he said you're going to be there for 70 years and you may as well be there in peace. And so pray for it.

Now there is a very striking instance of what the apostle is saying, pray for kings and for rulers that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

And my, didn't Daniel and his three companions live a life of honesty and godliness?

[00:38:04] Why, they went through Daniel's life with a tooth comb and they tried to find something against him and there wasn't a thing they could bring against him in the exercise of his secular duties. And the only thing that they could ensnare him with was his worship of God, which they did, but failed in their purpose. They dugged a hole for themselves, or rather they digged a hole for Daniel, but they themselves fell into it. The scripture tells us that that's a principle. And so this praying for kings is a very powerful thing indeed.

And Daniel himself, he prayed in relation to King Nebuchadnezzar's dream and then he prayed in relation to his illness and he was able to get from God the necessary direction for the king's blessing. And so we today, yes, thank God, we can pray for those who are in authority.

[00:39:04] And there's something missing in our prayer meetings or there's something missing in our home prayers if we forget to do this. This is a specific request by the apostle to Timothy and to us to pray for those that are in authority.

We're very glad that at least in an outward way prayers are still said in Parliament. They haven't been dissolved yet, so we're thankful at least there's some outward acknowledgement of God in these prayers.

We know that the same takes place in the American Senate. We're very thankful that it does, at least as an acknowledgement of God. But we in our part as Christians can pray for those who are in authority.

Now we move to Ephesians chapter 6.

[00:40:03] Ephesians chapter 6.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling and singleness of your heart as unto Christ.

I don't think it would do much good if we sent a letter to the T.U.C. and asked that all their members should have fear and trembling in serving their masters. That certainly would be cast out today. But I think the real meaning of the verse is that there's no casualness about this service. There's a sense of what is due to God in this service. And we find in the portion that we do it as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. We serve with singleness of heart as unto Christ, with good will doing service as to the Lord, [00:41:02] knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Now, what pertains to the employees is to pertain to the employers.

All these things that are mentioned that the servant has to do is equally true for the master.

That the master, as we know elsewhere, is to give to his servants that which is just and due, and the servant is to give to his master that which is honest and upright. Now, we are very thankful that there are examples of this in the Bible. And what better example could we have than Joseph? What an upright man of integrity he was. Whether in the house of Potiphar or in the prison or administering Egypt, he was absolutely reliable and a man of integrity. The Lord was with him. [00:42:02] And he did his service as unto God, knowing that he was doing God's will. What an example he was of this kind of service. Boaz, I think, is the kind of employer that God would approve of.

You remember when he came into the field, his servants addressed him in a very affectionate way and he addressed them in a very affectionate way. A clear indication that there was harmony between master and servant.

But unfortunately, it's not always like that. And sometimes a Christian has to serve under a master that is far from righteous, a master that can be froward or awkward or even hostile and difficult.

But he's still to serve as unto Christ. It's comparatively easy to serve under a good master. I know what it is to serve under a good master. [00:43:02] I know what it is to serve under a bad master. But the great thing is to serve Christ in either of them. And it's a very, very real exercise indeed. We're not here governed by trade union regulations. Indeed, it's a very great question as to whether Christians should be in trade unions. And it's better if a Christian is entirely free from such organizations, that he's free to do the will of God as God directs him to do and not be bound by the directions of men. I know it's extremely difficult and trade unions are legalized, of course, and anyone who's in a trade union is not doing anything wrong as far as the secular government's concerned as to whether he's under powers that direct him to do the wrong thing. Well, that's another matter. And, of course, he would have to exercise his conscience towards God in the matter, which is the prime thing. [00:44:01] And so the employee is very much responsible to God in his service to his master, although he certainly has to be obedient to him and the employer to make sure he did that which was right and just.

Now, as we close, there is one other form of association that we have in this world, and it's our

neighbors.

Now, as Christians, we would be very much concerned about the salvation of our neighbors. After all, we meet them every day of our lives. We see them nearly every day of our lives. We become familiar with their ways.

We become aware of certain difficulties that they are passing through, and all these means give us the opportunity to have contact with them and to be able to help them.

[00:45:02] In Luke chapter 10, the Lord Jesus gave the parable of the good Samaritan. Now, he wasn't giving us a parable so that we could spiritualize it for preaching the gospel. We do that, and it's very, very well suited to do that, but that's not what the Lord intended it to be. The Lord intended it to be a lesson as to how to show mercy.

That was the whole object of the parable, that people might understand what it was to show mercy, to show kindness, and this all sprang from who is my neighbor.

And so we can say clearly, if we as Christians have an opportunity to show mercy to our neighbors, we shouldn't be wanting, and be alert for any opportunity to show Christian kindness in this way. We're also exhorted to love our neighbors [00:46:01] and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Sometimes neighbors can be very trying. Maybe, too, we can be very trying to our neighbors. It can work both ways. But certainly, as Christians, we ought to be loving, ready to do any kindness and mercy, as I've said, ready to do something worthwhile. And if you love a person, you'll be ready to serve them. And then we're told to be at peace with our neighbors, to be at peace with all men, as much as lieth upon you.

Now, that very definitely means the onus is upon you to be at peace with your neighbor, not to be out at elbows with your neighbor. And if there are irritations and things that come from our neighbors that's not very nice, as sometimes they can be, then the onus is upon us to be at peace, not to get angry, not to be frustrated, [00:47:02] not to retaliate, but to show the spirit of Christ. Now, Paul exhorts the Galatians to do good unto all men.

He goes on to say, especially to the household of faith. But I'm concentrating on the first part of the statement, do good unto all men.

Now, this might raise the question about contributing to many of the requests for help that we find in connection with the underdeveloped nations. And I think we ought to be very, very aware of what happens to any financial help that we give.

I don't think that we should close our minds or our hearts to the fact that there is need. Paul says, do good unto all men.

Personally, I would rather see that whatever little money I can give towards help [00:48:01] is through channels that can assure me that that money is going to the best possible use. And, of course, we have missionary objects, missionary projects, rather, where this kind of thing is being done. I remember once, many, many years ago, I gathered about 100 weight and a half of clothing, both children's clothing and adults' clothing, and parceled it up and sent it to a place called War on Want.

And they assured me that they would send it to the particular destination that I desired it should be sent to. And in this case, it was to an island in the Far East.

And it so happened that just before the clothing arrived, there was a terrific flood in the place, and there was a great deal of devastation and need. And eventually, I got a letter back saying, oh, how valuable that clothing was, that it met a need. [00:49:05] The clothing of people had been destroyed. Children needed clothing. Adults needed clothing. And here was just one instance, because the channel was right, that whatever help was given was directed to the place where the need was greatest. And I think that's one of the most important things, that our money doesn't get lost in a great organization, but whatever help, whether it's clothing or materials or money, to make sure it's channeled for the need that you sent it. And this is what I believe in, doing good unto all men. And unfortunately, it may become more and more later on, but unfortunately, in this country in which we live, there is very little in the way of need. In the letters of Mr. Darby, in the letters of the history of the Brethren, you'll find that they did do a tremendous amount [00:50:03] of helping the poor, visiting the poor, caring for them. The state, of course, has taken over that responsibility in this country, and it has become increasingly difficult to find real poverty and meet it. But there might be cases in which we can do this kind of thing.

Well, these are only a few things that we stated tonight. There's much more in the Word of God as to our responsibility in the world in a secular sense and towards those who are in need. Well, may the Lord help us, for his name's sake.