



THE MOST SACRED DUTY OF A CIVIL MAGISTRATE

BY: PASTOR MATT TREWHELLA

On June 26th, 2023, Pastor Matthew Trehella was asked to give the sermon at the Prayer Breakfast of the National Sheriffs Association (NSA) which was held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Here is part of the sermon wherein Pastor Matt addressed the sheriffs from the Word of God

In Romans chapter 13, the Scripture declares that the civil magistrate is the servant or minister of God. As the Scripture reads in verse 3 and 4,

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain, for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”

The Greek word translated “minister” here in verse 4 is *doulos*. It means servant or minister. The civil magistrate is the servant or minister of God. The civil magistrates are as verse 4 states “God’s minister.” And this is why we refer to the duty of the civil authority as sacred – *because it is given to you of God*.

As the passage continues, we see this term used again in verse 6,

“For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing.”

Again, the civil authorities are referred to as “God’s ministers,” but here the apostle Paul does not use the Greek word *doulos* for the word “minister”, rather he employs the Greek word *leitourgoi*. Both words mean servant or minister.

So, Paul, after clearly establishing that the civil magistrate is a servant or minister of God in verse 4 with the word *doulos*, employs the word *leitourgoi* in verse 6 and he does so for a very specific reason.

In the Roman world, *leitourgoi* was a plainly religious term used to speak of work done to promote the social order in service to the divine state. Paul wants to make clear that the civil authority is *not* the servant or minister of the divine state, but of the divine Creator, God Himself.

So he applies *leitourgoi* to God Himself, not to the state.

In the Roman world, both the emperor and the state thought they were divine – that the emperor was a god – but Paul is making clear they are not. Rather they are servants or ministers of God.

This is what most magistrates have forgotten in America and throughout the West.

That they are ministers of God first, not ministers of the state. They have forgotten that they must punish the evil and reward the good.

**And how do we know what is good and what is evil?
By the law of God.**

Notice what Paul immediately appeals to next in Romans 13:8-10. The apostle appeals to the law of God to know what is evil and what is good.

The law of God was the objective standard in Western Civilization for well over 1500 years by which men could know if a law, policy, or court opinion was just or unjust; good or evil; right or wrong.

William Blackstone, who was the most cited legal scholar by America's founders, stated of God's law:

"It [God's law] is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force and all their authority, mediately or immediately, from this original. The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or divine law, and they are found only in the Holy Scriptures."

And now, because our society has thrown the law of God under the bus and rejected the objective standard, a statist hell has been pillared in its place.

Evil is now called good, and good is now called evil.

In fact, did you notice that we're living in an insane asylum at this point? What if government officials pervert their God given role and begin to punish those who do good and reward those who do evil as they are doing in our day? Are the lesser civil authorities just to blithely comply with the evil edicts of their superior authority?

*You can listen to the whole sermon preached to the sheriffs at:
<https://rumble.com/v4cbfch-the-most-sacred-duty-of-a-civil-magistrate.html>*

And this comes to your most sacred duty men – that when the civil authority perverts their God-given function and begins to reward evil and punish the good – *your duty, sir, is interposition.*

Interposition is where you stand in the gap between the lawless oppressor and the people in your jurisdiction. You can interpose verbally or physically – or both.

Interposition is an historic Christian doctrine. And when it comes to the interposition of the lesser magistrates, they employ their lawful office to stand in defiance of the evil and interpose.

And this is your most sacred duty – to *interpose* against the evil of superior magistrates who are making evil through law, policy, or court opinion.

Why do we call it sacred? Because it is given to you of God.

Currently, America is languishing under the blithe compliance of the lesser magistrates - the preborn are murdered; the genital mutilation of children is practiced and promoted; the filth of Sodom is paraded down the streets.

America and all the West is languishing under the blithe compliance of the lesser magistrates. Your most sacred duty is needed. Your duty is God-given. Your duty is sacred. The duty of interposition.

Matthew Trehwella is the pastor of Mercy Seat Christian Church. He and his wife, Clara, have eleven children and 35 grandchildren, and reside in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area. He is the founder of the organization MissionariesToThePreborn and of the think-tank DefyTyrants.

MissionariesToThePreborn.com/MercySeat.net/DefyTyrants.com

