

引言 INTRODUCTION

When we hear the word “power,” it may bring up some negative sentiments. We think of the many tyrants in the history and even today who oppress ordinary citizens. There are also politicians in our government who abuse power for their own gain. However, according to the Bible, power is a good thing. If used effectively, power can benefit us. My older son is learning how to drive since summer. He is driving on the streets already. Watch out! But before I allow him to do that, he has to master over the power that the engine can produce. I gave him the first lecture when he sat on the driver’s seat. I told him to always keep in mind three words that begin with the letter S. Yeah, a pastor only knows how to preach a three-point sermon. I said that driving is about safety and smoothness. But it is not about speed. Even though the speedometer on my car says it can reach a maximum velocity of 170 mph, he will be in big trouble if he gets anywhere near that speed. His main task is to keep the power of the machine under control, so that he and his passengers will arrive at their destinations in one piece. Correct use of power can bring us blessings. In our passage today, Paul talks about obeying the authority in the society. The topic ties in to his instruction in chapter 12 that we as Christians should conduct our lives with a transformed mind. Then we can see things from God’s perspective. We will understand that the power of the rulers over us is actually a good thing. It helps maintain the stability of our society. Therefore, it pleases God for us to obey our civic leaders.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 權柄的賦予 Provision of Authority

First, Paul explains the provision of authority. Read **verse 1** again: 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. Our Lord is the ultimate source of all forms of power. A king may inherit his throne in a dynasty, and government leaders can win a seat through election. But God is the only source of all power. He assigns certain people in leadership positions to exercise power. Based on the Bible, God establishes three human institutions. They are government (whether it is a monarchy or democracy), family (God gives parents authority over their kids and husbands over their wives) and church. Paul focuses on the civic authority in this passage. The subordinates are supposed to listen to their supervisors. If everyone is faithful in their respective roles, then an institution will function well and people will be blessed by God. But what about those who misuse their power? Does God put them at the top too? The answer is “yes!” When Paul talked about rulers, he had the Caesars in his mind. Paul told the Roman believers to submit to those dictators who claimed to be gods and had no fear of the Almighty God. Even those Emperors who tortured Christians by putting them in arenas to fight against wild animals were appointed by God. **Proverbs 16:4** has a wise saying: The Lord works out everything for his own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster. It is a great tragedy for a brutal ruler to hurt innocent people. However, we have to trust that God sees everything and He is sovereign over all things. God is the Lord of Romans 8:28. He orchestrates good and bad things to bring about benefits to those who love Him. All rulers will have to give an account to

God as to how they administer the authority God gives them. In the Bible, I can think of two pagan leaders who realized that God had all the authority. The first example is king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He glanced from the roof of his palace and proudly said to himself: “I build this magnificent kingdom by my power for my glory.” The Bible says even before Nebuchadnezzar could finish that statement there was another voice from God: “I will chase you to the wilderness to live like a wild animal until you acknowledge who the real boss is.” After a period of discipline, God restored the mind of Nebuchadnezzar. This king thus praised the only true God. [Daniel 4:35](#) reads – “All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: ‘What have you done?’” Nebuchadnezzar humbly admitted that there was a supreme King above him. God can accomplish anything in His plan by His wisdom. No one can stop Him nor question His intent. Another example I can think of is Pilate. He was the governor assigned by Rome to rule over Judea. Pilate knew clearly that Jesus did nothing that warranted a death penalty. Listen to a conversation between Pilate and Jesus in [John 19:10-11](#): 10 “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” 11 Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” The “above” that Jesus referred to was not Caesar, but the Heavenly Father. The Jewish leaders were guilty of shedding an innocent man’s blood by false accusation. When Pilate realized the severity of the matter, he summoned the Jewish religious leaders to his court. He dodged his responsibility by washing his hands in front of them. However, God will eventually judge Pilate and the religious leader for their sins. In eternity, God will settle justice through His judgment. Ultimately, we put our faith in God rather than the earthly leaders. There are some cruel government leaders, irresponsible parents and husbands, and selfish church leaders. However, those negative examples do not nullify the fact that they are God’s representatives to rule over us. We submit to the persons because we submit to their positions and we submit to God who gives them ruling power.

2. 權柄的威嚇 Apprehension toward Authority

Rulers receive authority from God to govern people. One way for the authority to exercise power is to trigger apprehension. Imagine you are driving. Suddenly, you see a police car in the rearview mirror. I am sure 9 out of 10 people will get anxious. You ask yourself: “Is the car flashing its light? Am I speeding? Do I wear my seatbelt? Do I carry my wallet, in case I need to show my ID card?” You feel a big sense of relief as the police car accelerates and passes over you. What causes a sense of apprehension? The reason is that the police protect the good people by instilling fear on the bad guys. The word “fear” appears five times in the Greek text of this passage. Also, “punishment” or a similar term is repeated three times. Paul says in [verse 3](#): For 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. As long as you obey the traffic laws, there should not be any fear when you see a police car. The notion of getting praise from the authority sounds strange to us. Back in Paul’s days, the Roman government published names of those people who had an outstanding contribution to the society. Nowadays, people receive awards to recognize their good work. Fear of penalty is an effective way to deter people from breaking the law. The police arrest suspects and hand them to the court. A judge will pronounce relevant judgment to the guilty party. There has to be fairness in order

for the justice system to work effectively. The statue on the top of a court house holds a scale in its hand and it is blindfolded to show impartiality. God gave clear instructions to the Israelites to assign noble judges. For example, in **Deuteronomy 16:18-19**: 18 “Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. 19 Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous.” Money will steer a judge’s heart from neutrality. Our Lord hates injustice. Unfortunately, bribery was quite common even to this day. Wealthy people try to use their financial power to manipulate the outcome of court proceedings. They hire crafty attorneys to attack loopholes in the laws. Eventually, the guilty party is acquitted but the victims suffer. But as Paul tells us in chapter 12, God is the ultimate avenger. He will exercise judgment on the evildoers. We see in the news in recent weeks about social unrest in some major cities. As Christians, we need to evaluate things with wisdom from above. We also need to understand the motives and the goals of the protestors. Is there racial inequality in our society? No doubt. You may even be a victim at one time when people treat you with prejudice. However, some people stirred up hatred for their own gain. They argue that since there are some bad cops, the police should be dismantled altogether. Even little kids know that it is a ridiculous idea. If a system does not work effectively, then you should improve the system rather than getting rid of it. Whom do you call for help when someone breaks into your house if there are no police? If there is no one to cause fear, then criminals will do whatever they want. Anyone who has a gun or any weapon will be in charge. Will you live in an area where rioters smash their way into stores to steal things, set fire and randomly beat up pedestrians? Who can endure that kind of fear? Of course, the chaos we see is more than a social problem. It is a political issue where some government officials take advantage of the situation for their agendas. However, social or political problem is ultimately a spiritual issue. It is when people do not want God to stand in their way. They want to remove the law and order system because they do not want God to govern them. Lucifer did not want to submit to God. An archangel thus turned into Satan. Adam and Eve also rebelled against God. Sin then entered the world. We have a choice: whether we fear evil or fear God. The only way to ensure God’s blessings is to preserve and follow the way God ordains.

3. 權柄的順服 Submission to Authority

It is God who bestows authority to earthly leaders. With authority comes apprehension to maintain order and security. Our proper response as citizens is to submit to the authority. Paul gives us two reasons for doing so in **verse 5**: Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. The first reason has been mentioned before. Abide by the laws if you do not want any penalty. The second reason has to do with our conscience. God puts a conscience in us to help us distinguish right from wrong. Say you forget to pay for one item at the grocery store, or the cashier erroneously gives you too much change. You say to yourself: “No big deal. Those greedy executives rob people all the time. I just treat it as a discount I deserve.” But deep down inside your conscience will prick your heart. God is nudging you to do the right thing. Following in **verse 7**, Paul tells us how to show our submission to the authority: Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Paying tax is our obligation. Here “taxes” and “revenue” are two different forms of dues. Everyone works will have to pay income tax and every home owner will be charged property taxes. But

then there are other optional taxes. Only those who acquire an estate will need to pay inheritance tax and those who gamble will be taxed when they win. The government uses the money collected to provide salary for the civil servants, and to build bridges and pave roads, etc. How should we respect the authority besides paying taxes? Your neighbors may erect signs in their front yards to show their support to the police. Last year, our youth group hand-made Christmas cards for military personnel deployed overseas. Another way that does not cost you a penny is to pray for those in authority. Ask the Lord to protect policemen and soldiers from danger. Pray that God will give our government leaders wisdom and sincerity in their work. But is there any circumstance where we should not obey our leaders? In Acts 4, Peter and John were threatened by some religious leaders not to preach about Jesus anymore. But they did not succumb to the warning. Read [verses 19-20](#) of the passage: 19 But Peter and John replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” The two apostles understood that they should obey God rather than men if the earthly laws contradicted with God’s commands. Even to this day, Christians in many parts of the world continue to read their Bibles and meet in secret despite clear prohibition from the government. Some are kicked out from their families. Other are imprisoned and even lose their lives. We are blessed to enjoy the so-called religious freedom in this country. What should we do if our government officials forbid us to worship? Other than planning a revolution, there are civilized ways to fight for our rights. Some churches in California sue the state government for disallowing them to worship indoor because of COVID shutdown. The legal institution is a mechanism to settle disputes. God gives the judges authority to decide what is right and wrong based on the laws. It may not necessarily give Christians a godly outcome. We trust that God is always with us even when we lose in those legal battles. Another way to stand up for righteousness is to sign petitions. I do that all the time. For example, we let legislators know that a substantial number of people feel strongly that abortion is evil and parents should have the right to choose a school option for their kids. It goes without saying that a powerful way to express our opinions is through election. According to statistics, 40 percent of Evangelical Christians did not vote in the 2016 election. Many experts emphasize that the outcomes of the upcoming November election will steer this country to one or the other direction. Let me make this clear: according to the IRS, as a non-profit organization, a church cannot endorse any candidate. But we can discuss in private our concerns and preferences. You may say: “My one vote does not matter much.” In the Tennessee primary election a few weeks ago, some candidates lost merely by a thousand votes or so. Every vote can be very important.

結論 CONCLUSION

It pleases God for us to obey our civic leaders. Why do we have kings and government in the first place? It is because the Israelites did not want God to be their King. Thus, they reaped the consequence of their rebellion. Throughout human history people suffer under wicked rulers to this day. They care more about power, financial gain and votes more than people’s welfare. We will be disappointed if we hope for a noble king or morally-upright politicians. Our hope should be in God. He spoke through the prophet Samuel in [1 Samuel 12:14](#) – “If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God – good!” Blessings will come only when both the rulers and their citizens submit to God.

引言 INTRODUCTION

當我們聽到「權力」這個字時，可能會引起一些負面情緒。在歷史上直到今天都有一些暴君，他們壓迫老百姓。我們政府中也有一些政客為了自己的利益濫用權力。但是，根據聖經，權力是一件好事。如果有效地利用它，權力可以使我們得益處。我的大兒子從夏天開始學習開車。他已經開到大街上了。大家要小心注意他啊！但是在我允許他這樣做之前，他必須掌握引擎可以產生的能力。當他坐在駕駛員座位上時，我給他上了第一堂課。我告訴他要牢記三個以字母 S 開始的字。是的，牧師只知道如何宣講三個重點的信息。我說駕駛是關乎於安全 (safe) 和平穩 (smooth)。最重要的不是速度 (speed)。即使速度計說我的車子可以達到每小時 170 英里的最高速度，但如果他開那麼快的話，他就肯定會遇到很大的麻煩。他的主要任務是控制引擎的能力，使他和乘客安全地到達目的地。正確使用能力可以帶給我們祝福。保羅在今天的經文中談到了順服在位掌權者。這個課題與他在第十二章中的教導有關。我們作為基督徒應該表現出心意更新的生活，然後我們用神的角度看事物。如此我們才會理解，統治者的權柄實際上是一件好事。它有助於維持社會的穩定。因此，神喜悅我們順服社會中的領袖。

1. 權柄的賦予 Provision of Authority

首先，保羅解釋權力的賦予。請再看第一節：**在上有權柄的，人人當順服他，因為沒有權柄不是出於神的。凡掌權的都是神所命的。**我們的主是一切權柄的最終源頭。國王可以在王朝中繼承王位，政府官員可以通過選舉贏得席位。但是神是一切權柄的來源。祂委派一些人擔任領導的角色，讓他們使用權柄。根據聖經，神建立了三個人間的組織。它們是政府（無論是君主制還是民主制），家庭（神賦予父母對子女的權柄和丈夫對妻子的權柄）和教會。保羅在這段經文中著重於社會中的管治權。下屬應該聽從他們主管的話。如果每個人都忠於自己的角色，那麼一個組織將會運作良好，大家就會蒙神賜福。但是我們該怎樣看那些濫用權力的人呢？他們也是神所設立的嗎？答案是「是的！」當保羅談到統治者時，他所想到的是凱撒大帝。保羅告訴羅馬信徒要順服那些自稱是神並且不懼怕全能神的獨裁者。甚至那些把基督徒放在競技場與野獸打鬥，折磨基督徒的王也是神所任命的。箴言 16:4 有一句有智慧的話：**耶和華所造的，各適其用；就是惡人也為禍患的日子所造。**殘暴的統治者傷害無辜的人民無疑是悲劇。但是，我們必須相信神是看到一切的，並且祂對萬事萬物有絕對的主權。神是羅馬書 8:28 的主。祂安排一切的好事和壞事，使愛祂的人得益處。所有統治者都必須向神交代他們如何運用神賦予他們的權柄。在聖經中，我想到兩位不信神的領袖，他們如何意識到神擁有一切的權柄。第一個

例子是巴比倫國王尼布甲尼撒。他從宮殿的屋頂往外看，然後自豪地說：「我靠自己的能力建立了這個偉大的帝國，顯示出我的榮耀。」聖經說，尼布甲尼撒還沒有說完那句話之前，神就發出了另一個聲音：「我會把你趕到野外像野獸一樣生活，直到你承認真正的老闆是誰。」經過一段管教的時期之後，神恢復了尼布甲尼撒的神智。於是，這位君王讚美唯一的真神。但以理書 4:35 說：「**世上所有的居民都算為虛無；在天上的萬軍和世上的居民中，他都憑自己的意旨行事。無人能攔住他的手，或問他說，你做什麼呢？**」尼布甲尼撒謙卑地承認在他之上有一位更超越的王。神憑著祂的智慧能夠完成祂計劃中的任何事情。沒有人可以阻止祂，或是質疑祂的意圖。我想到的另一個例子是彼拉多。他是羅馬任命統治猶大的巡撫。彼拉多清楚地知道，耶穌沒有做任何值得判處死刑的事情。聽聽看約翰福音 19:10-11 中彼拉多和耶穌之間的對話：10 彼拉多說：「**你不對我說話嗎？你豈不知我有權柄釋放你，也有權柄把你釘十字架嗎？**」11 耶穌回答說：「**若不是從上頭賜給你的，你就毫無權柄辦我。所以，把我交給你的那人罪更重了。**」耶穌所說的「上頭」不是指凱撒，而是天父。猶太的宗教領袖用假見證流無辜人的血。當彼拉多意識到這件事的嚴重性時，他將猶太宗教領袖召來。他在他們面前洗手來逃避責任。然而，神最終將審判彼拉多和宗教領袖的罪。在永恆裡，神會藉著審判來主持公義。最終，我們相信神而不是世俗的領袖。有一些殘酷政府官員、不負責任的父母和丈夫以及自私的教會領袖。但是，這些負面的例子並不能消除他們是神所委派統治我們的人。我們順服人是因為我們尊重他們的位置，並且我們是順服賦予他們統治權柄的神。

2. 權柄的威嚇 Apprehension toward Authority

統治者從神那裡得到管治的權柄。運用權力的一種方法是引起恐懼感。想像你在開車。突然，你在後視鏡中看到一輛警車。我敢肯定，十之八九的人會感到恐懼。你會問自己：「車子在閃燈嗎？我有沒有超速？我扣好安全帶嗎？我有帶錢包嗎？萬一需要出示駕駛執照。」當警車加速並超過你時，你就會鬆一口氣。是什麼引起恐懼感？原因是警察通過引起壞人的恐懼來保護好人。「懼怕」這個字在這段經文的希臘文中出現了五次。另外，「刑罰」或類似用語重複了三遍。保羅在第 3 節說：**作官的原不是叫行善的懼怕，乃是叫作惡的懼怕。你願意不懼怕掌權的嗎？你只要行善，就可得他的稱讚。**只要你遵守交通規則，當你看到警車時就不必有任何恐懼。被當權者讚賞對我們來說有點奇怪。在保羅時代，羅馬政府會公佈對社會有傑出貢獻的人的名字。如今，人們獲得獎項以表現他們的貢獻。害怕受到懲罰是阻止人們犯法的有效途徑。警察負責逮捕嫌疑犯，並將其交給法院。法官將對有罪的人宣布相關的判決。為了使司法機關能正常地運作，必須做到公平。法院屋頂的雕像手裡拿著一個天秤，它的眼睛被蒙上以顯示公平的原則。神明確指示以色列人要任命廉潔的法官。例如，在申命記 16:18-19 中說：18 **「你要在耶和華你神所賜的各城裡，按著各支派設立審判官和官長。他們必按公義的審判判斷百姓。**19 **不可屈**

枉正直；不可看人的外貌。也不可受賄賂；因為賄賂能叫智慧人的眼變瞎了，又能顛倒義人的話。」金錢會使法官偏私。我們的主討厭不公義。不幸的是，直到今天，賄賂還是很普遍的。富裕的人們試圖利用金錢來操縱法庭判案的結果。他們也聘請狡猾的律師來鑽法律的漏洞。最終，有罪的人被宣告無罪，但受害者卻受了冤曲。但是正如保羅在第十二章告訴我們，神是最終的伸冤者。祂會審判罪人。我們在最近幾週的新聞中看到一些城市的動盪。作為基督徒，我們需要以屬神的智慧來評估事情。我們還需要了解抗議者的動機和目標。我們的社會中是否存在種族不平等？毫無疑問。你甚至有可能曾經是受害者，因為別人對你有偏見。但是，有些人為自己的利益煽動仇恨。他們爭辯說，既然有一些壞的警察，就應該完全廢除警察。連小孩子都知道那是一個荒謬的想法。如果一個制度出現問題，應該是改善制度而不是廢除它。如果沒有警察，當有人闖入你的家時，你該向誰求助？如果沒有警察引起恐懼，那麼罪犯便會為所欲為。擁有槍支或任何武器的人就能稱霸。你會選擇住在暴徒闖入商店偷東西、縱火並隨意毆打路人的地方嗎？誰能忍受那些恐懼？當然，我們看到的混亂不僅僅是社會問題。那也是一個政治問題，一些官員利用這個局面來達到他們的目的。但是，不論社會或政治問題最終都是屬靈的問題。就是人們不要神阻攔他們的罪行。他們想取消司法系統，因為他們不要神管治他們。路西法不想屈服於神。於是天使長就變成了撒旦。亞當和夏娃也背叛神，然後罪進入了世界。我們有選擇：我們是懼怕罪還是懼怕神。確保神的祝福的唯一方法就是保存和遵循神的旨意。

3. 權柄的順服 Submission to Authority

神將權柄賜給世上的領袖。掌權者使人民產生懼怕以維持秩序和安全。作為公民，我們的適當回應是順服統治者。保羅在第 5 節中給出這樣做的兩個原因：**所以你們必須順服，不但是因為刑罰，也是因為良心。**我們在前面已經提過第一個原因。如果你不希望受到任何處罰，請遵守法律。第二個原因與我們的良心有關。神在我們裡面放了良心，幫助我們分別是非。假設你忘記在超市支付一件商品，或是收銀員錯誤地找給你太多錢。你對自己說：「沒什麼大不了。那些貪婪的商人一直都在騙我的錢。我只是把這小小的好處當作我應得的折扣。」但是你內心的深處會覺得不安。神在催逼你做正確的事。然後在第 7 節，保羅告訴我們如何向當權者表示我們的順服：**凡人所當得的，就給他。當得糧的，給他納糧；當得稅的，給他上稅；當懼怕的，懼怕他；當恭敬的，恭敬他。**納稅是我們的義務。這裡的「糧」和「稅」是兩種不同形式的稅收。每個上班的人都必須繳納所得稅，每個屋主都要繳納物業稅。但是，還有一些不是每一個人都要付的稅。只有獲得遺產的人才需要繳納遺產稅，而那些賭博的人贏錢時才會被徵稅。政府將收集到的錢用於支付公務員的薪水、蓋橋和補路等。除了繳納稅款外，我們還可以用什麼方式表示尊重掌權者？你的鄰居可能會在前院豎起標誌，表示對警察的支持。去年，我們的青年團契為部署在海外的軍事人員製作了手工的聖誕卡。另一種不用花一分錢的方法是為當權者禱

告。求主保護警察和士兵免受危險。祈求神賜給我們政府領袖在工作上有智慧和真誠的心。但是，在什麼情況下，我們不應該順服掌權者？在使徒行傳第 4 章中，一些宗教領袖威脅彼得和約翰不要再傳講耶穌。但是他們沒有屈服於警告。請看這段經文的 19-20 節：19 彼得、約翰說：「聽從你們，不聽從神，這在神面前合理不合理，你們自己酌量吧！20 我們所看見所聽見的，不能不說。」兩位使徒明白，如果世俗的法律與神的命令相抵觸，他們應該順服神而不是順服人。直到今天，儘管政府明確禁止，但世界許多地方的基督徒仍在繼續秘密地閱讀聖經並聚會。有些人因此被趕出家門、被監禁甚至殉道。我們有幸在這個國家享受所謂的宗教自由。如果政府官員禁止我們聚會，我們該怎麼辦？除了興起革命以外，還有一些文明的方法來爭取我們的權利。加州的一些教會控告州政府，因為新冠病毒的原故不允許它們舉行敬拜。法律制度是解決爭議的機制。神給予法官權柄，根據法律裁定對與錯。這個制度不一定能給基督徒一個合神心意的結果。我們相信即使在打官司中敗訴了，神也一直與我們同在。捍衛公義的另一種方式是簽署請願書。我常常都那樣做。例如，我們讓立法者知道，很多人強烈認為墮胎是邪惡的，父母應該有權利為自己的孩子選擇學校。此外，表達我們意見的有力方式是通過選舉。據統計，有 40% 的福音派基督徒在 2016 年大選中沒有投票。許多專家強調，即將到來的 11 月大選的結果將會把這個國家帶兩個截然不同的方向。我必須強調一點：根據稅務局，作為非營利組織，教會不能支持任何候選人。但是我們可以私下討論我們關切的事情和立場。你可能會說：「我的一票並不重要。」在幾週前的田納西州初選中，一些候選人僅以一千多票輸了。因此，每一張票都可能很重要。

結論 CONCLUSION

神喜悅我們順服社會中的領袖。為什麼我們有君王和政府這些制度？這是因為以色列人不希望神做他們的王。因此，他們得到了悖逆的結果。在整個人類歷史上，直到今天，人們在邪惡的統治者中受苦。比起人民的福祉，他們更關心權力、個人利益和當選席位。如果我們希望有一位完全正直的王或是一群道德高尚的政治家，我們將感到失望。我們的盼望應該是在神身上。祂藉著先知撒母耳在撒母耳記上 12:14 說：「你們若敬畏耶和華，事奉他，聽從他的話，不違背他的命令，你們和治理你們的王也都順從耶和華你們的神就好了。」唯有當統治者及被統治的人都順服神時，祝福才會臨到。