A week has gone by since our national elections. We are all aware, on some level, that there will be changes in our government. Things have been unsettled politically and economically for longer than we would like. It does make me wonder how the early disciples handled all their difficulties, having been conquered by the Roman empire. There were a series of emperors and state governors who went out of their way to persecute the early church. Yet, in the midst of persecution by the Roman government, and at times by the Jewish religious leaders, the apostles' teaching was pretty clear.

Romans 13:1-2 (NIV) Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for <u>there is no</u> <u>authority except that which God has established.</u> The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Paul, writing to the church in Rome, made it clear that they were to submit to the authorities, and the reason he gave was that God had put them in power. He goes on to warn that to rebel against the Roman government was to rebel against God. A strong warning followed for those who thought rebellion was a good idea.

1 Peter 2:13-15 (NIV) Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

Peter, writing to Christians during a time of Roman persecution, still told the Christians to submit to the authorities and that they should do it for the Lord's sake (because that is what He would want). Peter went on to say that it was God's will that we should do good (obey the authorities). The only exception is if governing authorities impose something that is contrary to God's Word. We should remember that Peter and John, when they were told by the Religious leaders in Jerusalem that they could no longer speak in Jesus' name, went out and filled Jerusalem with their teaching. Their answer was, we "...must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29).

I Timothy 2:1-4 (NLT) I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.

The last passage that comes to mind with the elections being over is the instruction which Paul gives Timothy about praying for the government. It is important to remember that this was not a benevolent government which sought only good for its people. There was corruption and violence and politics of the worst sort, from the capital in Rome all the way to the local state officials. Yet, Paul made it clear. Pray for those who are in authority. Pray that we can live quiet and godly lives and that we would be able to honor God. Why should we do this? Paul said, "This is good and pleases God our Savior..." If we want to please God, let's pray for our new president and all those that are in authority. We can thank God for His sovereign control of all things and ask that He would give us the strength to shine out boldly for Him, no matter what the future may bring.

PRAYER: Lord, thank you for Your Word, that speaks to me right here right now with all the turmoil and trouble in this world. Thank you that You offer Your Peace and strength each day. Please Lord God, touch the lives of our new President and all his staff. May they be conscious of You in every decision they make.

Pastor Mark Kieft