

# THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT

**Pastor: Josh McPherson**

## Jesus is Lord over politics

### A. Christians must talk about Jesus and politics

- Jesus is Lord over all of politics
- Politics must be kept in its proper place under Christ
- Hope must not shift toward politics

### B. Politics is one way to obey the greatest commandments

- Love God with all heart, soul, mind, and strength
- Love neighbor as yourself
- Political engagement is one way to collectively love neighbor

## Christians leave a social inheritance

### A. Inheritance includes more than finances

- Financial inheritance
- Relational inheritance
- Spiritual inheritance
- Social inheritance



## **B. Social inheritance is shaped by how we live**

- How we vote
- How we pray
- What we build
- What we allow
- What we resist

## **C. The call to be salt and light**

- Light exposes lies and proclaims truth
- Salt slows decay in a sinful world

## **D. The central question**

- Are we living in a way that produces flourishing or collapse?
- Are we leaving righteousness or burden to our children?

## **Government has a God-given job description**

### **A. Christians must understand government's role**

- Jesus has something to say about government
- Citizens are expected to respond and engage
- Citizens must oppose leaders and policies that violate their role

### **B. The Bible defines government's role clearly**

- Government's job is not invented by culture



- Government's job is revealed by God

## **Three social systems: anarchy, tyranny, and ordered society**

### **A. Anarchy**

- No recognized authority
- Every individual becomes their own authority
- Leads to chaos and instability

### **B. Tyranny**

- Centralized, concentrated power
- Authority abused by elites
- Leads to oppression

### **C. Ordered society (biblical design)**

- Limited authority
- Power exercised under objective truth
- Governed by God's moral law

## **Worldviews behind each system**

### **A. Anarchy — individualism**

- The individual is ultimate authority
- No higher truth outside self

### **B. Tyranny — statism**



- The state is ultimate authority
- Power cannot be questioned

### **C. Ordered society — theism**

- God is the highest authority
- All spheres submit to Him

## **Social structures that flow from these systems**

### **A. Anarchy → tribalism**

- Constant instability
- Incessant conflict
- No flourishing

### **B. Tyranny → globalism**

- Concentrated elite control
- Abuse of authority
- Distance from the people

### **C. Ordered society → nationalism**

- Stability
- Rule of law
- Best opportunity for flourishing



## **Nations are God's design for human flourishing**

### **A. Nations provide structure for large groups**

- Order
- Stability
- Law

### **B. Nations can be righteous or unrighteous**

- Determined by laws and values
- Determined by what is permitted and celebrated

### **C. Christians should not fear the concept of nations**

- Nations are not inherently evil
- Ordered nations are necessary for flourishing

## **Three spheres of authority**

### **A. Family**

- Health
- Welfare
- Education

### **B. Church**

- Word



- Sacraments
- Charity

### **C. Civil magistrate**

- Justice
- Peace
- Restraint of evil

### **D. Each sphere has limits**

- They must not take over each other's roles
- When they do, society weakens

## **Authority and power are good, not evil**

### **A. Authority originates with God**

- God is all-powerful
- Humans reflect His authority in limited ways

### **B. Authority can be abused or abdicated**

- Authority must be stewarded
- Abuse leads to oppression
- Abdication leads to chaos

### **C. Cultural Marxist view of power**

- Power is always oppressive



- Must be overthrown
- Leads to revolution and role reversal

#### **D. Biblical view of power**

- Authority is good when rightly used
- Authority is necessary for order

### **Ordered society requires proper handling of authority**

#### **A. Key question in every system**

- Who has authority?
- What power do they have?

#### **B. Authority in different systems**

- Anarchy: self is authority
- Tyranny: elite is authority
- Ordered society: God is authority

#### **C. Objective truth**

- Anarchy: truth is internal
- Tyranny: truth is defined by elites
- Ordered society: truth comes from God

### **Power must be both exercised and constrained**

#### **A. Power in anarchy**



- Decentralized
- Uncontrolled

#### **B. Power in tyranny**

- Centralized
- Unchecked

#### **C. Power in ordered society**

- Distributed
- Constrained

#### **D. Biblical principle**

- Man is sinful → must be governed
- Government is sinful → must be constrained

### **Constitutional structure reflects this principle**

#### **A. Separation of powers: Three Branches of Government**

- Legislative
- Executive
- Judicial

#### **B. Purpose of separation**

- Prevent concentration of power
- Maintain accountability



### **C. Lawmaking must remain accountable**

- Lawmakers must answer to the people
- Lack of accountability leads to tyranny

## **Expansion of bureaucratic power leads to tyranny**

### **A. Administrative state growth**

- Hundreds of agencies
- Thousands of regulations
- Little accountability

### **B. Regulations carry force of law**

- Fines
- Imprisonment
- No direct electoral accountability

### **C. Increasing control over daily life**

- Housing
- Business
- Property
- Personal decisions

### **D. Result**

- Decreased freedom



- Increased statism

## **Private property is foundational to flourishing**

### **A. Biblical basis for property**

- Ownership assumed in Scripture
- Responsibility tied to ownership

### **B. Property enables stability**

- Necessary for first-world flourishing

### **C. When property control shifts to government**

- Freedom diminishes
- Dependency increases

## **Outcomes of each system**

### **A. Anarchy**

- Chaos

### **B. Tyranny**

- Oppression

### **C. Ordered society**

- Best opportunity for flourishing

## **Government's role according to Romans 13**

**Text: Romans 13:1–4**



### **A. Government is established by God**

- All authority comes from God
- Authority is delegated, not ultimate

### **B. Government is accountable to God**

- Authorities must operate under God's moral law
- Authority outside God's law becomes illegitimate

### **C. Government is God's servant**

- Acts as His representative
- Functions under divine authority

## **Government must have a definition of good and evil**

### **A. Moral categories are essential**

- Government must distinguish right from wrong
- Without this, it cannot function properly

### **B. Government rewards good**

- Encourages righteousness

### **C. Government punishes evil**

- Brings justice to wrongdoing

Ultimately the definitions of what is good and evil come from the Word of God.

## **Government is an agent of God's wrath**



### **A. Government bears the sword**

- Authority to enforce justice
- Authority to punish evil

### **B. Purpose of punishment**

- Protect society
- Restrain evil
- Maintain order

### **C. Without enforcement**

- Vigilantism emerges
- Chaos follows

## **Two primary responsibilities of government**

### **A. Protect and guard borders**

- Maintain national integrity
- Defend against external threats

### **B. Constrain and punish evil**

- Enforce justice within society
- Protect citizens from harm

## **Government's role is not to "do good"**

### **A. Government protects conditions for good**



- It does not produce goodness
- It creates space for people to do good

#### **B. When government tries to do good**

- It expands beyond its role
- It moves toward tyranny

#### **C. True role**

- Protect
- Punish evil
- Encourage righteousness

### **Taxes exist to fund government's limited role**

#### **A. Taxes support government's job**

- Defense
- Justice

#### **B. Taxes beyond this purpose**

- Become illegitimate
- Expand government improperly

#### **C. Citizens owe taxes for proper functions**

- No more than necessary
- No less than required



## **Sphere confusion weakens society**

### **A. Family responsibilities**

- Health
- Welfare
- Education

### **B. Church responsibilities**

- Truth
- Worship
- Care for the poor

### **C. Government responsibilities**

- Justice
- Order

### **D. When government invades other spheres**

- Family weakens
- Church weakens
- Society suffers

## **Government must use clear moral language**

### **A. Good must be called good**

### **B. Evil must be called evil**

### **C. Redefining language leads to confusion**



- Blurring moral lines
- Inability to administer justice

## **Government must punish evil and reward good**

### **A. Failure occurs when**

- Good is punished
- Evil is rewarded

### **B. This leads to**

- Discouragement of righteousness
- Encouragement of lawlessness

## **Law and structure sustain ordered society**

### **A. Constitution restrains government**

### **B. Rule of law restrains citizens**

### **C. When restraints collapse...**

- Government expands unchecked
- Citizens lose accountability
- Tyranny increases

## **Biblical examples of systems**

### **A. Anarchy**

- Judges: everyone did what was right in their own eyes

### **B. Tyranny**



- Egypt
- Babylon
- Persia
- Rome

### **C. Ordered society**

- Israel as a nation under God's law

## **Final call**

### **A. Christians must think biblically about government**

- Understand authority
- Understand power
- Understand justice

### **B. Christians must engage as citizens**

- Vote
- Speak
- Resist evil
- Promote righteousness

### **C. Christians must be salt and light**

- Expose lies
- Slow decay



- Promote flourishing

## Summary statement

Government is a God-ordained institution designed to protect its people, punish evil, and preserve order, and Christians must think and act biblically so that society flourishes and future generations inherit righteousness rather than decay.

