

SERMON - THE 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - 1 FEBRUARY 2009  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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***Romans 13:1 (KJV)***

*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.*

This morning, let us turn to a more modern translation of this passage and read it.

***Romans 13:1 (ESV)*** *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.

And Paul goes on to tell us ***Romans 13:2-3 (ESV)*** *Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.*

*<sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,*

These are times as one once said, “to try men’s souls.” These are times that most of our citizens have never experienced, times where now, as I read this week, where two and a half million of the people here in the United States are unemployed. Everyday we read of more and more layoffs, more and more peoples losing their jobs.

The international banking system is in shambles.

The stock market is slumping.

People are facing the worst economic downturn since the great depression.

We, my brothers and sisters, are in a world that is in trouble.

Instead of looking to God at this time most of the world is still worshipping the almighty dollar, or Euro or Pound Sterling. Instead of cleaning up our act, most of the world still continues on like there is no God, no God to answer to for our individual and corporate actions.

I hate to seem to be always picking on television, but I still feel that the low, immoral content of that medium contributed to and still contributes to the moral decline of this world. But look at television, where is anyone on the screen promoting a return to God. Instead, you have programs that promote immorality and violence or mindless escapism. I'm really waiting for someone to produce Dancing with the Biggest Loser.

Even television news is suspect. Those that watch the conservative channel claim the others distort the news. Those that watch the network news channels say the other distorts the news. Those of us that watch PBS think you both are wrong.

Seriously, then where does the truth lie.

The truth lies in God and in God alone. God is in control. God is in control, has been in control and will remain in control.

This morning we prayed in the Collect for God to grant us strength and protection in the midst of our many and great dangers.

God gives us the strength and gives us the protection we need to weather whatever comes our way, the good as well as the bad. Right now we are facing the bad.

We, you and I, have to face the fact that we, you and I, cannot do it alone anymore. When I say do it alone, I mean anything that we do. We cannot get through life without the help of God, without God himself being in control.

We elect men to lead us and we expect them to be God. When they fail to meet our

expectations, then we are disappointed. Somewhere I read that God will raise up the right man for the time. So what happens when those that God has raised up fail? Is it them or is it us that have failed? Have we failed to ask for demand accountability from those we elect? Do we look at the big picture or do we listen to our own narrow opinions? Do we look at the world wearing the blinders of our own prejudices?

Do we listen to God?

These are questions that we have to answer. These are questions that indicate symptoms of a society that has gone wrong; morally, politically and economically.

It is time that we return to God, individually and collectively; as a person and as a nation.

In spite of the fact that we as Anglicans really believe that WWJD means “We want Jack Daniels,” it is time for us to seriously ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” “What does God want us to do?”

I don't have the answers this morning to all of the economic woes that confront us. But I do know one thing. God is in control and it is time that we realized it and go back to Him.

Amen,