

## Honor The King

Respecting Our Nation's Leaders

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Yesterday, Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America, flew into Charlotte, North Carolina. He came for the dual purposes of signing an executive order that allows small businesses to offer 401(k)s to their employees, and to attend a fundraiser for a couple of local Republican candidates for Congress. (The Republicans are trying their best to shore up those elections.) Of course, it also gave him the opportunity to have a few photo ops and wade into a crowd and shake some hands and kiss some babies and sign autographs. You know, politicians are always politicking; it's always on their mind. They're always on the campaign trail.

Beth and I and many others found out that the fundraiser for the congressional candidates was going to take place at Carmel Country Club. Levi worked there; Lacey worked there; Robert worked there. So, we have quite a few connections with the Carmel Country Club. I have played golf there with Ronny and Levi once, so I have actually been on the property. It's just about a mile and a half or so from our house, up Carmel Road.

So, the presidential motorcade would pass by the entrance to our subdivision, and since this kind of thing doesn't happen all that often around here (I guess maybe with the 2020 Republican National Convention coming to Charlotte, maybe we will get a little more of this kind of stuff), we decided we would go out and walk up to Carmel Road and wave as the President's limousine passed by.

As Beth and I and Jarod and Aric walked down our driveway at about 3:40 PM yesterday, we felt a couple of big raindrops on our heads, but the threatening rainclouds did not seem like they were all that close, so we continued our walk to Carmel Road from our house. It's a little less than a quarter mile, so we made it there quite quickly. A car passed us. We saw this lady trying to get out of the neighborhood before the police blocked off Carmel Road, but as we rounded the corner to go out to Carmel Road, we saw her sitting there, cooling her heels, because the police had already halted all the traffic on Carmel Road.

In fact, the policeman that was stationed there in the entrance to our subdivision told us to stand about a hundred feet back from Carmel Road, so we could not even go out to the curb and say, "Hello, Mr. President," as he came by, so we had to stand that far back. It was kind of disappointing, but we had maybe a stretch of about a hundred yards

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of Carmel Road that we could look out at. It was not completely clear; we could see things move by, and so we just hoped the motorcade was not going to go past at about 70 miles an hour. It would have been a blink and that's about it.

As we took our places to get as good a view as possible, the raindrops multiplied suddenly, and within a few seconds we were under a typical, Carolina, summertime, afternoon pop-up thunderstorm. Beth is the hero of this: She had the foresight to bring an umbrella. Well, she's not a hero to Jarod and Aric, because I got the other half of the umbrella and they had to find a cedar tree, and that's what they stood under. It was about a good ten minutes of rain coming down. We had to wait before the motorcade passed by. And, of course, the rain cut visibility to just a few hundred feet. And so we were just standing there, hoping we could see.

But as the rain was slackening, the motorcade rolled by, and I was able to take a few snapshots. I posted one on Facebook yesterday. I am sure the President never saw us—the drowned rats over there. We certainly did not see him because the limousine went past fairly fast. I think they were going pretty much the speed limit up Carmel Road, which is 45 miles an hour. (Remember that, those of you who drive Carmel Road—it's not 35, it's 45. Please go the speed limit.) But just like that, it was over. It was just like "VROOM," and he was gone. So we walked back home and the clouds moved away. The sun came out and that was that.

Thinking about the experience brought to mind what the apostle Peter writes in I Peter 2:17:

**I Peter 2:17** Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

Such a simple statement, but it should make us ponder our posture and our attitude toward the leadership of the nation. Let me read that again: "Honor all people. [Honor, respect them, give them esteem.] Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." We in the church tend to lean toward a more conservative stance on governmental policies and people who support those policies, so it's not illogical that we also tend to respect conservative Republicans rather than liberal Democrats when in office.

So, when somebody like Obama is in office, we tend to listen very critically to everything he says and all the things he does, and we boo and hiss when we do not like it. Yet, when somebody like Trump is in office, who seems to be doing more conservative things, we tend to say, "Hey! He's doing pretty well. I kind of like him, or at least I like

what he's doing." But you notice—let me repeat the verse again. It says, "Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

Notice any distinctions there? He simply writes there, "Honor the king." It's a very flat, unambiguous command to respect the person in the office. He does not say, "Honor the king if you like the guy," or "Honor the king if you agree with his policies," or "Honor the king if he's been nice to you and has done things that it will benefit you"—none of that. It just simply says, "Honor the king." And he says that with the authority of God behind him. It's in Scripture. It's in the Word of God. So no matter who lives in the White House, occupies the Oval Office, we are under God's directive to honor him or—in these days—her. It may happen, who knows when. But we have to honor the person in the office.

It's even more binding on us to do this if we think about the proximity of this command to the other two right in front of it—"Love the brotherhood. Fear God." It almost has a spiritual connotation to it. It's part of the character-building process if we can honor the king as well as love our brethren and fear God. This is not just something that we can choose to do or not. We must honor the king, honor the leader over us.

This is sometimes difficult. I know that it may become more difficult for us specifically. I know of Christians who will not honor Donald Trump at all, who basically spit every time his name is said, because of the deficiencies of his moral character. And I agree, he's not somebody whose moral character I want my sons or even myself, especially, because I can control that—to emulate him. I do not want anybody to emulate him, not that way.

Or, let's put the shoe on the other foot. If Hillary Clinton had been elected, many of us right now would probably be in a quandary regarding her character, because it's no better than his—maybe bad in a different direction, but that's how it is. But again, there are no conditions in Peter's command there. It's just, "Honor the king."

We need to remember when he wrote this epistle in the early AD 60s, the king at the time was the Roman Emperor Nero, who had both serious moral failings and a specific animosity toward Christians. Many were martyred during his reign. He also blamed the Christians when fire gutted Rome. Is that somebody whom Christians should honor? Peter says, "Yes. Honor the king."

We are not of this world, but we do live in this world. God, through Peter, tells us it is best to honor and respect those in authority over us, whether they are Republican or Democrat, whether they are conservative or liberal, whether they are innocent or guilty,

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whether they have high moral character or are the scum of the earth. It doesn't matter—honor the king. This is echoed elsewhere by Solomon and others as solid biblical principle. Especially, the reward for us is that our lives will go better if we honor the king—honor the king that God has put over us. Our true King bids us do this.