THE BIG IDEA: If we want God's <u>protection</u>, we have to <u>trust</u> God's <u>correction</u>.

The Take-Off

We've got a lot to cover today and so we need to get through a quick recap and a few disclaimers so that we can jump right in.

First, a recap from last week's series opener:

God has always had a plan to cover us, and Jesus was always the plan. We can think of Jesus as our umbrella, and it doesn't just take trust to step under the umbrella, but trust to stay under the umbrella.

The way we said it last week was like this: If we want God's protection, we have to trust God's direction.

Isaiah 55:9 is clear that God thinks and acts in ways that are different than us - He zigs when we want to zag

While we might want to try to convince Him to follow us, trusting His direction means following the umbrella, not the umbrella following us

That happens through submission to God's direct authority in our lives, but as we'll see today, it also happens through submission to God's delegated authority in our lives.

That's where it gets hard.

Now, some disclaimers:

- Some in the room have had to work for some really bad bosses
- Some have sat in churches under some really bad pastors
- There are power-hungry leaders who abuse
- All of these make us get squirmy when anyone teaches on spiritual authority and covering
- FIRST: We're in good company because most of the Scriptures we'll read today were written under leaders far worse than any you or I have ever encountered
- SECOND: I'm a journeyer with you today. I know I'm on the platform, but I just want to give a platform for God's word. I wrestle with the truths we'll read just like you do. This is not an easy teaching.
- That means we won't answer every question - it's not possible. But that's okay if the questions drive us into the secret place to seek answers from the Father.

1. There are umbrellas under the umbrella

   a. In the Kingdom, there is direct authority and there is delegated authority
   b. Last week, we looked at direct authority, and in case you missed the obvious, Jesus is THE direct authority
   c. Colossians 2:10 / Jesus is the head over ALL authority
   d. But there are delegated authorities in all of our lives
   e. Let's think of these as umbrellas under the umbrella
   f. Civic government, workplace, church, family.
   g. What we need to see - and this can be difficult - is that those umbrellas are placed there by God
      • Psalm 75:7
      • Daniel 2:21
      • Romans 13:1
   h. An important question is why God would place those authorities, esp if they're not godly
   i. We'll get to that next, but we can't deal with that if we don't see the truth that they were put there
   j. The Greek word for "placed" in Rom. 13:1 is intentional: "to assign, to appoint, to ordain, order"
   k. Recognizing this "God flow" actually opens us up for blessings
   l. Matthew 8:9-10 / Jesus marveled at the man's faith / the man's faith was revealed in his understanding of authority / See the flow? "I'm under people and people are under me" - he recognized Jesus' authority
   m. First we need to RECOGNIZE the delegated authorities and then we need to understand how to RESPOND

2. Our response reveals our heart

   a. We've reached the hard part of the message, because how we respond actually reveals our heart.
   b. Let's read Romans 13:4-7 and then make some observations:
      • v. 4 / Paul calls them "God's servants" (he says it again in v. 6)
      • v. 4 / They are sent for our good and are sent to correct us
      • v. 5 / Paul tells us that our response is to submit to them (also honor and respect in v. 7)

c. You history buffs will know this, but for the rest of us, the highest authority when Paul wrote this was Nero
d. Nero murdered his step-brother and his wife, Octavia.
e. The lover he left Octavia for most likely persuaded Nero to kill his own mother and then he eventually killed that loved by kicking her to death while she was pregnant with his child.
f. History records that Nero tortured and killed Christians in such horrific ways that the Roman people themselves felt compassion for the Christians.
g. He was known to light their bodies on fire at night to light evening festivities.
h. The point here is that we don't get to take these words lightly because Paul didn't have to have Trump as a president (or Obama, or Clinton, or….)
i. In case we think it was just Paul, look at 1 Peter 2:17 / "honor the king"
j. That king? Domitian - he demanded to be treated like a God (what would he have tweeted?!)
k. What did honor look like? 1 Peter 2:13 - submission to ALL human authority
l. Let's make a really important distinction here: submission isn't obedience.
m. Submission is an attitude; obedience is an action.
n. There are times when delegated authority leads us into clear, direct violation of God's commands
   - Daniel 3:16-18 / "Your Majesty" / respect and yet refusal
   - Acts 5:29 / Jesus had clearly sent them as witnesses and they could not obey

3. Some practical takeaways

a. <u>We can't bypass human authority and still bow to God's authority</u>
   - Again, Romans 13 and 1 Peters 2 are clear that authority is put in place by God
   - Often, God uses leaders to correct what is in our hearts (more on that next week)
   - Our submission to authority is actually submission through authority to God!
b. <u>Don't confront leaders you have't prayed for</u>
   - Prayer gets our hearts ready to receive and ready to be used by God
   - Acts 23:1-5 / we need God's heart for leaders before we can speak God's truth to leaders
c. <u>God will deal with leaders. Let Him.</u>
   - 2 Samuel 12:7 / God used Nathan to correct David
   - Our Big Idea says that **if we want God's protection, we have to trust His correction**.
   - That correction often comes through difficult leaders, bad bosses, and godless government.

<u>The Landing</u>

Proverbs 21:1 / Water in His hands and Wendy's dad

God used my future father-in-law to teach me how to wait, how to trust, and how to honor

Today, he is in heaven, and if our response to what we considered to be unfair treatment played any part in his salvation, it was worth it.

Let's pray.