

TOM'S DOG STORY

By Darrell Farkas

While waiting for the last couple boys to be picked up after the pizza party, Tom was standing by. The boys were Pat and Scott. They were enjoying themselves, playing with plastic building blocks. Pat had a little 'man', he had made, and a 'dog'. Scott had his own little 'man'. The two were make-believing as follows:

Pat bounces his little figurine saying, "Is this the dog you lost?"

Scott, "Oh yes, that's my dog. I'm so glad you found him."

Pat, "Our dog catcher picked him up this afternoon running loose. You will have to pay me \$50 to have him back."

Scott, "Oh no, I don't have that much money!"

Pat, "Well, as long as you bring in that much before Wednesday, you can have him back, after that, our dog pound will have to put him down."

At this point Tom interrupts with a, "Boys, I don't think that is a good thing to play at."

Pat asks, "Why is that Mr. Tom? My dad and I went to get our dog this week and that's what the woman at the counter said."

"I see," said Tom. "Boys, There are many things government agencies do that are not right for Christian's to imitate. My hope is that when you two grow up, you might find opportunities to be part of the change for good in this world and use your Christian principals to help steer society into a better path."

We were told by Paul (Romans 13:1-4) that government authorities are the ministers of God for our good. That's a very important statement for it means they are responsible to God to uphold His commands.

In the Old Testament, there were special priests God called to do service for Him in the Temple. They had to do their work exactly as He told them. If they did any alterations, the anger of God might be poured on them. They were God's ministers, responsible to do what He commanded. Likewise, the government has obligations to carry out the duties of God in their governance. They pass what are called 'ordinances' or 'statutes' that are to detail applications of God's laws, such as, 'it is a crime to dump your sewer in the street' for the foundation law is found in the Bible in regards to sanitation (Deuteronomy 23:12-14). Likewise, there are laws regarding finding someone's animals and what to do with them.

Let me read you this from the Bible itself:"

1 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. **2** And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. **3** In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy

brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. Deuteronomy 22:1-3

“Boys, do you see how this applies to the dog catcher you were playing at?”

Scott, who was pretty sharp for a ten-year-old, responded, “I think so, doesn't it mean that if someone finds my dog he isn't supposed to keep it or charge me to get it back?”

Pat then asks, “Well what about my dog, Fido. They said they would kill him if we didn't pay them for him. What were we supposed to do? Dad borrowed the money from Grandma.”

Tom responded, “In your situation, there was really nothing your dad could do. You had to pay to get Fido back. They had the power behind them, but that use of power would be like the priest, we talked about, if he decided to change his outfit to some new fashion. Say white robes didn't appeal to him, so he changed to something like bright orange. What do you think the Lord would say about that?”

Pat looked kind of shocked at that color choice, “Yuck! I think God would tell him to put back on the white robes he told him to wear!”

Tom chuckled, “I expect it would be something along that line. The same applies to any laws we make up. As Christians, we cannot afford to make our own laws, we can only make ‘ordinances’ that follow the principals of law God has already laid out for mankind.

Which reminds me of another passage in James 4:”

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

James 4:11-12

“James said there is one lawgiver, and He is God. We find verses in the Psalms that tell us of lawgivers coming out of Judah, and Jesus certainly fills that, but the passage used a Hebrew word that shows Judah was the ‘ordinance-giver’ (Psalms 60:7).

Looking back at the dog catcher, and Deuteronomy's law, if we keep anything of our neighbor's, offering to return it only if we get money, that is theft. We have no right to keep anything of our neighbor's. Of course, if you found your neighbor's dog lost and didn't know who it belonged to, you would keep it until you found whose it was. When you did find out, it would be sin to keep it from him. How much more wicked would it be to say to your neighbor, ‘you have three days to pay me \$50 to get him back or I will kill him.’ That would be a great sin!

Pat, even if your family really needed the money, it would be wrong to charge for its return. Theft is theft. What belongs to your neighbor is your neighbor's property. Property rights are one of those ‘inalienable’ rights all men have of God. It is like life, no one can kill another unless that person has forfeited his ‘inalienable’ right to life by taking the life of another. If someone does so, even if it is a governmental agency, in God's sight it is still a criminal act.

Some may reason that a dog pound costs money to operate, so they have to charge a fee. That is no different than saying, ‘my family is hungry so it's alright to steal from my neighbor to pay for my family to eat.’ That is what some would call, ‘the ends justifying the means’. That is a worldly view we need to shun as Christians.”

Scott asks, kind of scared looking, “You're not mad at us for what we were playing, are you Mr. Tom?”

“Certainly not boys! In fact I'm kind of glad you reenacted your unfortunate dog episode. It gave me the opportunity to talk with you about the importance of biblical

principals shaping our future. Unless we learn the Bible, and think about it, we will inevitably start to think like the world and justify things from the world's viewpoint.”

Suddenly, there was a car horn sounding outside. “It looks like your ride has shown up. Time to go boys. I’ll see you next week.”

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