

## **Public Morality in the Letters of St. Paul**

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Paul does not give a systematic presentation of public morality. Nor does he give a systematic presentation of any subject. He was basically a pastor. He was involved in the lives of his people. He advised them, guided them and taught them the principles of Christian life, especially when problems arose. He wrote letters to them explaining to them the salvific events that have taken place in Christ Jesus and their demands in Christian life. Hence we cannot expect a complete exposition of public morality, or any subject for that reason, in the Letters of St. Paul. Nor can we expect concrete solutions to the problems of today, in the Letters of St. Paul, which were written some twenty centuries ago.

Let us put together what Paul said concerning public morality on various occasions, to various communities, when he was tackling their problems. We should not expect, as said above, Paul to speak on all the issues of public morality which are actual and relevant today. Yet some of the public morality issues, which Paul speaks about, are relevant and important also today. We would touch upon the following Pauline public morality issues in this brief article: 1. the love command, 2. equality among human beings, 3. marriage, 4. household codes 5. Hard work, and 6. political obligations

### **1. The Love command**

This love command is the most fundamental of all the commands given to the followers of Christ. This identifies the Christians as such. As

St. Paul says, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). To be full of love is to be full of Christ. Though faith, hope and love are cardinal virtues, love is the most fundamental among them. "And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor 13:13). Paul lists its special features in 1 Corinthians 11. "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth" (vv4-6). "Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end" (1 Cor 13:8).

### *Love is the fulfillment of the Law*

Love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom 13:10). The commandments "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Rom 13:9). The same thing is more emphatically expressed in Gal 5:14: "For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

### *Focus on the Love of the neighbor*

In both the citations above the love of God is not mentioned: only the love of the neighbor is stressed! The love of the neighbor is spoken of as the fulfillment of the whole law! This does not mean that Paul thought that the love of God is unnecessary! In his view the love of God is included in the love of the neighbor! We love God when we love our neighbor. If Paul had focused on the love of God only, some might think that it consists in observing some commandments and liturgical services. They may not think of the love of the neighbor as part of the love of God! Some may even deceive themselves by thinking that they can love God without loving their neighbor. Thus Paul's emphasis on the love of the neighbor was necessary for those who were fully committed to the observing of the commandments and participating in

the cultic services, but without bothering about caring, accepting and forgiving of the neighbor.

### *Love beyond all borders*

The love that Paul speaks of is a love that knows no boundaries. When Lev. 19:18 spoke of "Love your neighbor as your self", the word neighbor indicated the people of their own clan. According to Jesus neighbor is no more the people of one's own clan. He broadens the meaning of word neighbor and makes it to mean 'any one in need'. Hence neighbors are not people close to us by distance, clan, creed or colour but 'those who are in need'. Like Jesus, St. Paul too speaks of the neighbor in a broad sense. He speaks of 'love for one another and for all' (1 Thes. 3:12). He exhorts the Thessalonians to 'seek to do good to one another and to all'. Here the word 'to all' indicates the non - Christians. In the same way when Paul said, "Do not repay any one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all" (Rom. 12:17), the word 'all' points out, once again, to the non-Christians.

Love for the non - Christians is very much stressed in the Pastoral Letters. God wishes every one to be saved (cfr. 1 Tim.2:4, 4:10). Hence Jesus 'gave himself a ransom for all' (1 Tim. 2:6). Thus 'the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all' (Tit. 2:11). Therefore the Christians are exhorted 'to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show every courtesy to every one' (Tit. 3:2). They are also exhorted to offer 'supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanks givings for every one' (1 Tim. 2:1). Thus the love that Paul's speaks of is very broad and beyond all borders.

## **2.Equality among Human Beings**

Paul viewed the church as an ideal society, where discriminations based on clan, creed, colour and sex are done away with. Hence he could

say, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". The same idea is also found in the Letter to the Colossians, "In that renewal, there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Col. 3:11). 1 Cor. 12:13 also reflects the same view, "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free— and we were all made to drink of one Spirit". In Romans 10:12 this notion of an ideal society is expressed in the following way: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him". An ideal society of equality was also the goal of the Jubilee celebration (Lev. 25) and the Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus.

### *No longer Jew or Greek*

The Sinaitic covenant aimed at creating a just society of human beings without any social or ethnic discrimination. The same was also the aim of the ministry of Jesus. He gathered the poor, the marginalized, the tax collectors, the prostitutes and the sinners around him. He talked to them with concern, related to them with compassion and had table fellowship with them. He accepted them wholeheartedly and loved them. He formed them into a new community, i.e. the kingdom community. He taught them about the kingdom of God. He healed the sick, gave a sense of dignity to the downtrodden and brought the marginalized to the center. He healed the mentally ill (who were regarded as possessed by the devil) and made them heralds of the Good News. He also told those who had inferiority complex that they were loved by God and that they were His children. It is such as these who formed the new society of equality, justice and love, which is the kingdom of God.

In the time of Paul only those who had learned the Greek language, literature, philosophy and culture were regarded as important and respectable. Those who had not learned the above were looked down upon as uncultured

and barbarians. There was a big gap between the Greeks and the non-Greeks. Paul dreamed the church as an egalitarian society without social and ethnic discriminations. Jesus has already broken down the dividing wall that is the hostility between the Jews and the Greeks (Eph. 2:14) and brought about equality. This equality was reflected in the actions of Paul too. As he himself says, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:20-22).

*No longer slave or free:*

Liberating the Hebrew slaves from the tyranny of the Egyptians masters was the first action of God in human history. God liberated the Hebrew people with mighty hands and outstretched arms. Human beings who were created in God's image cannot be slaves to one another.

The gap between the slaves and the free human beings was much bigger than that between the Jews and the Greeks. The slaves were disrespected and ill-treated. They were regarded more as things than persons. They were considered as possessions of their masters.

In the kingdom society dreamed by Paul there could not be any place for slavery; there could not be any discrimination between slaves and free human beings. The discriminations which existed earlier should be done away with so that they could become one body in Christ.

Thus in Paul's view there should be equality in the church. This means, as said above, that there is absolutely no place for slavery. Paul was very clear in this position. Yet there are some sayings and actions of Paul which don't seem to go along with the above ideal statements. The statement

‘Everyone should remain in the states were he or she was called’ (1 Cor. 20-24), the request to Philemon to treat Onesimus kindly as a slave rather than ordering Philemon to release him (Phl. 16) and the exhortation to slaves to obey their masters as they would obey Christ (Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-8) seem to go against the ideal statement of Paul that there is ‘no longer slave or free’.

Here is clearly a contradiction between the theory and the practice. Of course there were reasons for such contradiction between the theory and the practice. In the time of Paul any attempt to liberate the slaves were put down with mighty hand. For having attempted to escape from slavery people had been often crucified and killed. It is true that there was way in which people could pay money and escape from slavery but any attempt to escape from slavery by creating a revolution was put down with an iron hand. In this context, Paul had to be very careful while speaking about liberation from slavery.

Besides, quite often the slaves themselves did not show much interest in being liberated. For, once they were liberated they could hardly get any work. When there was so much slave labour available, who would employ a freed slave and pay him money? Because of this, several slaves preferred to remain slaves, especially when their masters were good people.

### *Neither male nor female*

God created human beings male and female. He created them as equals. Creating Eve from the rib of Adam is a symbol of their equality. He did not just create women as a helper to the man, rather he created the women as an equal and co-responsible partner. Thus the view that the women is subordinate to man is not biblically correct. Women had a special place also in the ministry of Jesus. They were his disciples and provided for him out of their resources (Lk. 8:3). They travelled with him. They were with him till Calvary. Even when the male disciples ran away from him, they remained with him.

The society at the time of the Paul was male dominated. Women did not take much part in public life. They were regarded as secondary citizens and often as objects of pleasure. The Jewish men thanked God every day for not having created them as women.

It is in this context of women's subordination in human society that Paul speaks of equality between man and women. His categorical affirmation that there is neither male nor female surprised many. The people of Paul's days were not at all ready to accept the equality of man and women, even if they would accept the equality between the Jews and the Greek and that between the slaves and free human beings.

Paul respected women according to his principle of equality between man and women. In an age when women were regarded subordinate to men in marriage, St. Paul asserted that they have equal rights (1 Cor. 7:3-11). He insisted that the husband must love his wife as a person (1 Thes. 4:3-8; Col. 3:19). Marriage for him was a means of sanctity. It is a sacrament. Paul involved women in his ministry. In a period when women were not expected to speak with men in public places, St. Paul included them in his missionary group and traveled with them to several cities of the Roman empire. He gave them important responsibilities. Euodia and Syntache seemed to have presiding roles in the church of Philippi (Phil. 4:2-3). Priscilla and Lydia discharged important responsibilities in their churches. Phoebe functioned as a deacon in the church of Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1). Junia was accepted and respected as an Apostle (Rom. 16:7).

At the same time Paul has been criticized for his attitude towards women. He has been described as a misogynist. Some of his statements, such as 1 Cor. 11:3-10; 14: 34-35 have been used against him. In 1 Cor. 11:3-10 Paul says that women should cover their heads when they pray and prophesy. This was a tradition in the eastern Christian communities. This tradition was introduced also in the western Christian communities (1 Cor. 11:16). Some women in Corinth, induced by the sense of freedom, rejected

this new tradition of covering the heads. As confusion prevailed in the church St. Paul should have given the above advice. This was part of the tradition of the eastern churches and not part of Christian teaching. Hence the above advice of Paul should be seen as an advice given to one particular church, at a particular situation, especially when some women of that particular church rejected his advice.

There is also another way of understanding this passage. In this passage we have the opinions of two sets of people juxtaposed. Vv 4-10 contain the position of the people who were against any freedom for women in the church: "Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head— it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels" (1 Cor 11:4-10). The opponents of women's freedom tried to bring theological arguments to strengthen their position. But Paul, who is the Apostle of freedom rejects their arguments. He says, " Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God" (1 Cor 11-12). Paul who did not care for non-essentials, asks the Corinthians to judge for themselves! He tells them that women have a natural, **God-given covering of their head, that is their hair** (v 15)! It is their glory (v 15). Hence why should one insist on covering the head again? Finally he seems to conclude, "We do not have such tradition (of covering the head) nor do the churches of God (v 16). Thus in this passage, Paul could be seen as undoing the custom of women covering their heads: he is rather speaking in favour of it!

In 1 Cor. 14:34-35 Paul says 'women should be silent in the churches. They are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate as the law also says'. It is only here the Paul says that women should not speak in the Christian assembly. In chapter 11 of this very Epistle, Paul says that women can pray and prophesy, but only they should cover their heads, the explanation of which we saw just above. Hence the instruction that women should not speak in the Christian assembly is not instruction applicable to all the churches. This must be understood as special instruction given to the Corinthian women who spoke too much and caused confusion in the Christian assembly and not a general instruction to be followed by all women in all the churches.

This text also could be understood entirely in a different way! As mentioned while explaining 1 Cor 11:4-10, here too we have the opinions of two sets of people juxtaposed. Vv 34-35 contain the position of people who were against any freedom for women in the church: "Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church". Those who were opposed to the freedom of women in the church quoted the law to strengthen their position. They concluded by saying that it is improper for women to speak in the churches. Paul replies in vv 36-40. He challenges those who forbade women to speak in the assembly by asking "Did the Word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached? (v 36). Has it not been given to me? Has it not come to women too? Therefore why do you assume such a position as though you are the only recipients of God's word? He says, "What I am writing is a commandment of the Lord" (v 37). Namely, no one has the right to prohibit women from speaking in the assembly (v 39). Thus Paul who had several women in his missionary tours as companions and who had made many women leaders of the churches, would not have forbidden women to pray and prophesy, rather he opposed vehemently those who prohibited women from praying and speaking in the Christian assembly!

### Regarding Immorality

Paul vehemently condemns immoral behavior, such as 'a man is living with his father's wife' (1Cor 5:1). He considers it as an abomination, and removal of such man from the community, according to him, should be the punishment placed on him. Paul does not accept such horrible behavior in a community, much more in a Christian community.

He commands them not to associate with him. It is his strong wish that such person should be alienated from the society completely. "Drive out the wicked person among you" (1Cor 5:13): such statement of Paul pronounces his uncompromising judgment on the person. He wants his community to be exemplary regarding their relationship with women in public life.

Person guilty of greed, or idolatry, or drunkardness or robbery is also subjected to this punishment (1 Cor 5:11). The reason is that a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Cor 5:6). Immorality is contagious and it has the extraordinary power to spread fast and contaminate the entire community. Hence Paul wants this to be nibbed in the bud.

### 3. Marriage

Marriage and sexual relationship are dealt with in the letters of Paul. There was a lot of sexual immorality in the Greek cities at the time of Paul. Many thought that there need not be any rule or law to regulate and control sexual activities. Even some Christians began to be influenced by these views. It is in this context that Paul gives his views on marriage and sexual relationship.

#### *Paul's view on marriage is not negative*

Some of the statements of Paul tend to show his view on marriage as negative. In 1 Cor 7:2, Paul says, "Because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband".

Similarly in 1 Cor. 7:9 he continues, "If they are not practicing self control, they should marry. For 'it is better to be married than to be aflame with passion'"(1 Cor 7:9).

Such statements tend to show Paul's view on marriage as negative. They seem to suggest that Paul did not appreciate sufficiently the richness of marriage. Some see him as an enemy of marriage. But the above statements are not, in all probability, Pauline. They are citations of people of his time who were against marriage. They were mostly statements from Stoic philosophers.

***Marriage is positive and holy:***

In Paul's view marriage is positive and holy. According to Paul who comes from the Jewish tradition, through marriage one participates in the creative activity of God.

According to him those who do not marry disregard God's plan. Because of this perception, every Jew thought that it was his sacred obligation to marry. Even Paul as a good Jew should have been married at eighteen years of age. His wife should have died before his conversion or could have rejected him after he became a follower of Christ.

In Paul's view marriage is a charism (1 Cor. 7:7). The married should live together (1 Cor. 7:5). They live one for the other; they dedicate themselves to each other (1 Cor. 7:4). Marriage, for Paul, is holy; it is sanctifying the partners (1 Cor. 7:14). It is the sign of the love between Christ on the church (Eph. 5:25-33). It is a sacrament (Eph. 5:32).

***Marriage is not much stressed because of the Second Coming of Christ***

Hence marriage, in Paul's view, is positive, sacred and enriching. Yet because he thought that the second coming of Christ was very near (1 Thes. 4:15, 17: 1Cor. 7:29-31), he did not stress sufficiently the social structures such as marriage. He did not also speak much about them. His whole attention

was on the preparation for the second coming of Christ. As he himself writes in 1 Cor. 7:26-27, "I think that in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife do not seek to be free. Are you free from your wife do not seek a wife". However those who are unable to remain unmarried, may get married (1 Cor. 7:2,9,36). Thus marriage which is itself positive and holy becomes less focused because of the crisis in Paul's mind of the impending Second Coming of Christ.

#### **4. Household codes**

##### ***Borrowed regulations***

In the early days, Paul did not bother much about the obligations to each other in the family. Since all Christians will enter into glory at the Second Coming of Christ, which is to come very soon, Paul was fully involved in preparing for the Second Coming and did not bother much about these mutual household obligations. Slowly it dawned on Paul and the earlier Christians that they would have to live long time in this world with other human beings. Hence they borrowed from non Christians rules and regulations which are necessary for social life.

Rules were needed to regulate the relationship in the family setup, between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and slaves etc. When such rules based on the teachings and spirit of Jesus have not yet appeared, the early Christians borrowed such rules from other people. These rules were in vogue among the Greeks, especially the Stoics. The Greek speaking Jews had already borrowed them from the Stoics. The early Christians took them over from the Greek speaking Jews.

Paul and his Christians borrowed them and adapted them. They chose from among them what they thought were necessary for them, expanded some, dropped some others and gave them Christian motivations such as 'in

the Lord', 'on account the Lord', 'with the Lord' etc. Such borrowed and adapted household codes are found in Col. 3:18-4; 1 Eph. 5:22-6:9; 1 Them. 2:8-15; 6:1-2; Tit. 2:1-10; 1Pet. 2:13-3; 7.

### ***Basic rules of the household codes***

The following are the basic rules of the household codes: Husbands should love their wives; wives should obey their husbands. They should be united intimately. Children should obey their parents. Parents should not irritate their children. They should correct them and instruct them in the proper way. The masters should not threaten their slaves; the slaves on the other hand should obey their masters whole heartedly.

### ***Elements difficult to understand in the household codes***

Some of the elements in the household code are difficult for us today to understand and accept. For example the statement: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ" (Eph. 6:5) reflects a master – slave social setup. Such a statement is repugnant to the Christian social thinking and is difficult to accept. Similarly the statement, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22) is also difficult to be accepted as such. Man and women are equal and they together make up the complete human being. This being so, it should have been better to insist on both thinking, discerning and acting together rather than the wife being subject to her husband. "Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent" (1 Tim. 2:11-12) is also quite difficult to understand and to accept in an age when equality of women and men is accepted and the leadership of women is promoted everywhere. That such statements have found their place in the Sacred Scriptures its

itself a matter of concern. Therefore the above statements need to be explained properly.

### *Elements that have to imbibe Christian spirit*

Therefore it is a very important to understand the above statements in the proper way. These were not statements which arose from the Christian teaching. As said above, they were in vogue among the Greek speaking communities. The early church had accepted them as temporary regulations, in a time when church itself did not have official rules which regulated Christian life. The above statements are not imbibed in the Christian spirit. The Spirit of Christ has not yet transformed them. Only when they are transformed by the Spirit and reflect the genuine Christian view, they can become real Christian regulations.

### **5. Hard work**

Hard work was one of major areas of Pauline morality. Paul insists on hard work in his Letters, especially in his Letters to the Thessalonians. The Thessalonians who thought that the second coming was very near refrained from work. Since Christ would take them to heaven in a short while they regarded planting and building up as useless.

### *Exhortation to earn one's livelihood*

The attitude of the Thessalonians towards work was not acceptable to Paul. He chides them and instructs them "to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we directed you" (1 Thes. 4:11). It is in his second Letter to them that he is much more emphatic: "Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us, For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night

and day, so that we might not burden any of you. This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. Or even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living" (1 Thes. 3:6-12).

### ***Paul an example of hard work***

Paul shows himself as a credible example of hard work. He says several times that he himself provides for his needs with the work of his own hands: "You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God" (1 Thes. 2:9). He wrote the Corinthians also that he worked with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:12). In the list of sufferings for the Gospel, Paul says that he 'work hard' (2 Cor. 11:12). In the Acts of the Apostles (18:3) we read that Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla in tent-making.

### ***Reason for Paul to work with his own hands***

Paul was fully involved in his ministry. He encountered very many problems. He traveled on foot thousands of miles. He wrote many Letters to his communities. Each Letter took many days to be completed. He was imprisoned very many times. One could say that Paul spent one third of his time in travels, one third of his time in writing Letters and one third of his time in Prisons. In spite of all these Paul found time to work with his own hands. It was very important for him. Working with his own hands lent credibility to his Gospel. Otherwise people could accuse him of preaching the Gospel for his own livelihood. Besides he could be accused that the money he had collected for the poor people of Jerusalem was misused for his own personal needs. Therefore Paul was very keen to work with his own hands for his livelihood.

## 6. Political Obligations

Christians were regarded as redeemed and reborn. They were possessed by the Spirit. Their citizenship is in heaven (Phl. 3:20). Such statements made the Christians regard themselves as 'very special group of people'. A distinction was made between 'those who belong this world' and 'those who belong to Gods Kingdom'. Yet as time went on, they realized that they have to live in this world with all other human beings. Hence they developed a concept of living in the world. They realized that they have to obey the political leaders. Suitable instructions were given in this regard to the Christians. Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Tit. 3:1 etc speak of the relationship between the Christians and the political authorities. The most important among the above text is Rom. 13:1-7.

### *Obeying political authorities and paying taxes*

Rom. 13:1-7 advises Christians to obey the political authorities. Since the authority of the political leaders comes from God, those who oppose political authorities oppose God Himself (vv. 1-2). Three reasons are cited as to why people should obey political authorities. They are 1. punishment, 2. public good and 3. conscience (vv. 2-5).

It is not just enough that the Christians obey the political masters; they should also fulfill their duties towards the state. They should pay all the taxes (Rom. 13:6-7). If taxes are not paid, public good and administration cannot be maintained. Christians also should pay due respect to the political leaders (Rom. 13:7).

### *Why did Paul speak high of the political authorities?*

People have often wondered why Paul speaks so high of the political authorities! Paul could have spoken in this way to reject the idea of some Christians that they could live independently of the political system. Moreover it was a time when a section of the Jews had involved in a revolution against

the Romans and thereby incurred their wrath which resulted in the expulsion of the Jews from Rome. In this context Christians who were linked to the Jews should be shown as good citizens who accept and obey the Roman authority and carry out their civic duties faithfully. Thus by writing about Roman authority in a positive way and by insisting on the Christians' duties towards Roman State and its leaders, Paul would have won the good will of the Romans toward the Christians. Whatever be the motive of Paul speaking high of the political authority, one thing is clear that Paul, the Roman citizen, respected the lawful authority and taught his Christians that they too should obey every lawful authority.

#### *Praying for the leaders:*

In 1 Tim. 2:1-4 Christians are asked to pray for "Kings and all who are in high positions". Praying thus is acceptable to God. This will help for the salvation of all. Tit 3:1 insists on obedience to the political leaders. Thus the political order is not alien to the Christians; rather the Christians must accept and obey their political authorities and fulfill their political obligations. This was the clear position of St. Paul and the early church.

#### **Conclusion**

Paul's primary aim was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and instill faith in his audience. He was perceived by the people as a great missionary and not as a proclaimer of public morality. Again in his time Christianity has not invented any mature moral teachings. Paul is the man of his times. He did not intend to give any highly sophisticated moral teaching.

Paul made use of the teachings of his time and wherever he can, he introduced his newly found insights concerning equality, gender discrimination, work, obedience etc. However Paul does not propose any synthetic or thematic thoughts about public morality; that was also not his intention. All the same his contribution cannot be minimized.