

**“Trusting God for the Little Things”**

**Matt 17:22-27**

**Scripture Ref: Ex 30:12-16; Matt 20:28; Matt 22:21; Rom 13:1-2, 7**

1. **Have you ever felt that some things were not big enough to bring to God?**
  - a. **Maybe your tax bill came, or a car payment is due, and you think to yourself: *“this is not a spiritual matter, I don’t need to bother God with this.”***
  - b. **But this small event, tucked away in the gospel of Matthew, reveals to us that God does care about the little things.**
  - c. **He cares about our tax bill, the car payment, getting our lawnmower fixed... just as much as in some of the bigger problems that we have.**

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, 23 and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

2. **Sometimes the first time you tell something, they just don’t get it...**
  - a. **And you have to tell them again – and they start getting the picture**
  - b. **Just a little while ago, in Matt 16, Jesus had told his disciples the same thing, and Peter confronted Him.**
  - c. **This time, I think it began to dawn on them that what He said was going to happen – and this time it had a different affect on them.**
  - d. **I remember the first time that I learned my father had passed away, it was strange – like it wasn’t real.**
  - e. **But then a little while later it began to set in... and the grief came.**
3. **Funny, if I were heading to my death, I wouldn’t be thinking about much else.**
  - a. **Yet Jesus, we’ll see, is still very much in tune with the needs of those around Him.**

24 When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the **temple** tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the **temple** tax?" 25 He said, "Yes."

4. **(some note that it may or may not be the ‘temple tax’, you might note that *“temple”* is in italics. Most scholars have come to rest that it is indeed the temple tax)**
5. **This was not the Roman’s coming to tax the Jews, this was a “ransom” that was outlined in Exodus 30:**

**Ex 30:12-16**

*Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12 "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a **ransom** for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. 13 This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary. The half-shekel shall be an offering to the LORD. 14 Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. 15 The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. 16 And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."*

- a. See the Israelites were required to give this “temple tax” once each year, and it was used to fund the operation of the temple.
- b. It was to be a “memorial” to Israel to remind them that they were ‘ransomed’ from slavery and death in Egypt
- c. And it also had an ‘atonement’ aspect to it. Not that they could buy their atonement, but it was a picture of the atonement that was to come through Jesus Christ:

**Matt 20:28** *...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

6. Now when Peter was asked whether his teacher, Jesus, would pay the tax, he *answered “of course!”*, probably thinking to himself *“man we don’t have two drachmas to our name”*.
  - a. What does he do? He goes back to the house they were staying in, perhaps thinking...
  - b. *“well, Jesus has turned water into wine, walked on water, calmed the seas, made a bunch of fish and bread from nothing, and was just talking to Moses and Elijah... what have I got to lose?”*
  - c. In other words – he has a problem, and it’s a small problem... not a disease, or demon possession, or some disfiguration...
  - d. But I small bill that needed to be paid, and they just didn’t have the money to pay it!
7. Which I find to be noteworthy – Here is Jesus, the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and yet he and his crew are destitute!
  - a. We can see this two different ways...

- b. #1 - Jesus is just not tapped into the “God wants you to be rich” theology – maybe he needs a seminar... OR
- c. #2 - Jesus understands that this world is only fleeting and temporary, compared to heaven...
- d. And He understands that His Heavenly Father cares about each and every aspect of our lives – even paying the temple tax!

### A Teaching Moment

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" 26 Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.

- 8. In other words, when a king goes to tax the kingdom, does he go through the castle, knocking on his kids doors, telling them “hey, get your checkbook, time to pay the taxes!”
  - a. Of course not! The king doesn’t tax his kids... he only taxes his subjects, the people that are not in his family
  - b. *(this king sounds a lot like our politicians! Taxes and rules apparently don’t apply to them either!)*
  - c. A few things to learn here...
- 9. #1 - Jesus is not teaching that we are exempt from taxation. Later on, Jesus is confronted by the Pharisee’s about paying tax to Caesar, and His response is:

*Matt 22:21 "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

- a. Paul affirms that the church held to this as well:

### **Rom 13:1-2, 7**

*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*

- b. So... unfortunately, while we *can* claim citizenship in heaven, we *can’t* claim exemption from taxes!
- 10.#2 - Jesus is not teaching Peter about tax law, but is teaching about *Son-ship*.
  - a. See the Temple Tax was not voluntary, it was *mandatory*.

- b. And being approached the Temple Tax collectors was not random, they were looking for a way to bring an accusation against Jesus.**
- c. But by using the illustration of a King and his sons, Jesus is saying “I am not just exempt from the Temple Tax, that would assume I own it but am getting a pass.**
- d. I am FREE – it does not apply to me – because I am the son of God!”**
- e. *Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free.”***

**11. Jesus didn’t have to pay the tax, but He did...**

27 Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

**12. Strange way for Jesus to tell Peter to fish. Peter was a professional fisherman. Professional fishermen don’t use a hook, they use nets.**

- a. So here is Peter – walking up to the beach, tossing out a line and hook.**
- b. And there is Jesus – knowing that the very fish Peter would catch would be one that just scooped up a coin in it’s mouth.**

**13. But here is what I really like about this – After all of the big miracles, people healed, turning water into wine, walking on water, calming the seas, feeding 5000**

- a. After all of those “big miracles” Peter is faced with a small problem – they needed to pay the temple tax.**
- b. And Peter might have handled the situation many different ways:**
  - i. Could have not told Jesus – hoped that it went away**
  - ii. Could have gone and held a fund-raiser, or tried to raise the money some way.**
  - iii. Could have sold something – he still had a boat.**

**14. But what he did instead is he brought the problem to Jesus.**

- a. And before he could even tell Jesus... Jesus responded!**
- b. This tells me something - God cares about the small things!**

**15. Why? Think about it: There are many people who will come to your aid when you have a big crisis, but ask them for a small favor and they may say “I don’t have time” or “you could do that yourself.”**

- a. But if someone takes the time to help you in a small matter, it reveals that they really care about you – ALL THE TIME, not just when you are in a big crisis.**
- b. And that is how God is – He cares about everything going on in your life - and He cares about them all the time!**

- c. **And He will often be dealing with the situation BEFORE we have even gotten started worrying about it!**
  - d. **Think: When did the coin get into the fishes mouth? Before they needed it? Ya think?**
- 16. So next time you have a small thing going on in your life – before you start worrying about it, think about this:**
- a. **God already knows about it!**
  - b. **And He has probably already put the coin in the fishes mouth!**
  - c. **So... don't worry! Just wait on the Lord for the solution!**
  - d. **And here is the key: When He gives it to you – GO AND DO IT!**
  - e. **What if Peter had thought “yea right, fish a coin out of a fish” and just skipped the whole thing?**
  - f. **Exactly – no coin – no paying the taxes.**
- 17. Look – I have found that in so many things, I have to be careful to not jump at my first ‘solution’ to a small problem.**
- a. **When I do, I usually miss what God has for the situation – hey it's God's permissive will, right?**
  - b. **Sure, but when you have experienced God's perfect will – the permissive thing is just not worth it!**
  - c. **When we wait for it – when we trust God with the small things... God will deliver!**
- 18. So what small thing do you need to trust God for?**

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