

**Render to Caesar
Matt 22:15-22**

1. **Update – pray and fast - Haiti – Safe Harbor**
2. **This week the big news has been the political upset in Mass. Many are saying that the Democratic party should re-examine their agenda...**
 - a. **Perhaps some truth is being presented to them that they should heed.**
 - b. **It's a difficult place for someone in leadership, to be publically rebuked, and be faced with the prospect of having to publically change course.**
 - c. **A very similar situation to what the religious leaders in Jerusalem were facing. – a CRISIS OF BELIEF!**
3. **It was Tuesday of Passover week (early April approx 33AD), and the entire city of Jerusalem is gearing up for Passover that Friday.**
 - a. **The religious leaders, after being publically confronted by Jesus with the truth of the last three parables, ...were not happy.**
 - b. **No one enjoys being humiliated in front of their followers, and that is exactly what had been happening!**
 - c. **The Pharisee's had set out to humiliate Jesus, and He had turned the tables on them.**
 - d. **Thing to remember is that Jesus wasn't engaging in a shouting match or trading insults, but He was simply telling the truth – the cold, hard, blunt truth!**
 - e. **I heard recently "the best disinfectant is sunlight", and I think these guys were feeling the sting!**
4. **But rather than use this as an opportunity to re-examine themselves to see if there was any truth in what Jesus was saying...**
 - a. **The rulers instead 'doubled down' and went to work with another strategy to bring Jesus down.**
 - b. **From here through the end of chapter 22, there are four topics that will be presented – four questions:**
 - i. **Asked of Jesus: Taxes, the Resurrection, the Law**
 - ii. **Asked by Jesus: The Messiah**

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.
16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. 17 Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

5. **First, this is an interesting coalition – Pharisee's and Herodians.**

- a. Pharisees were the legalists, strict followers of the Law, and very much against the Roman government.
 - b. The Herodians were the political party – hence the name “Herodian” or followers of Herod.
 - c. Herod was a member of a powerful Idumean political family that had been granted the governorship of Judea by the Romans.
 - d. The Herodians were sort of the “heretics” of Jewish religion, not only because they were close to Herod, who the Jews hated,
 - e. Some historians also believe that they held Herod as a type of Messiah.
6. In other words – these two groups would not be found having dinner together. A Pharisee would probably have crossed the street rather than greet a Herodian.
- a. But here they are, colluding with one another to try and take down Jesus!
7. It is probable that the Pharisees wanted the Herodians there for a specific reason – they wanted them to hear Jesus response to the question about paying taxes.
- a. See the question of paying taxes to Rome was very sensitive.
 - b. First – Judea was under occupation, and who wants to pay taxes to a government that will only use that money to continue to keep you in their grip – your paying for you’re your own subjugation! (*hey, that sounds familiar!*)
 - i. Every tax they paid was a reminder that they were not free.
 - c. Second, Caesar was considered to be a “god”, it was the state religion to worship Caesar. Paying taxes to him was tantamount to idolatry as far as the Israelites were concerned.
8. But, if a person were to refuse to pay the poll tax, they would be reported and punished...
- a. So – if Jesus said “yes, we should pay the poll tax”, He would be in trouble with the Jews for going along with Rome.
 - b. But if Jesus said “no, we don’t pay tax to Caesar”, then the Herodians would go right to the authorities and report Him.
 - c. So they tried to put him into a pickle...

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

9. OK – on the surface we know – “Great response! Jesus got em!”

- a. But looking further there are a few important things that we learn from this statement:

#1 Christians must honor and obey our rulers

10.What? “Hey, I don’t like that scripture!”

- a. Neither to I ...sometimes. But that doesn’t change the fact that God commands us to do it.

*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. **Rom 13:1***

- b. See, as Christians we have what’s called *duel citizenship*. We are citizens of heaven, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, but we are also citizens of earth, and God calls us to be model citizens.
- c. By doing this we are a witness to all who observe...

*Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men -- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. **1 Peter 2:13-17***

- d. That means that we should be obedient to the government, if they ask for taxes, we should pay them, if they set rules, we should obey them.
- e. In fact, the bible teaches us that it is God Himself that sets kings in place:

*And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; **Dan 2:21***

- f. And the bible tells us why God establishes this model – for the protection of people:

*For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. **Rom 13:3-4***

- g. Of course, not every King has obedience to God in his heart, and some leaders are evil. But we have to remember that God is sovereign in the affairs of men, and that there is plan and purpose for everything that happens.**
- 11. But the same reason, that does not mean that we should withdraw completely from our rights and freedoms as citizens,**
 - a. In our country we have the right to participate in elections, to freely voice our convictions, and to stand for what we believe is good and right.**
 - b. In Acts 24 the apostle Paul used his Roman citizenship to circumvent what would have been a mock trial and punishment at the hands of the Jewish religious leaders, and he appealed his case to be heard by Caesar, which was the right of every Roman citizen.**
 - c. Paul even preached to governor Festus and King Agrippa, trying to convert them to Christianity!**
- 12. But as in any dual citizenship situation, there must be one kingdom that we hold our highest allegiance to...**

#2 Christians must honor and obey the Lord

- 13. When the apostles were told they could no longer preach the gospel, they were placed in a position of disobeying God (the command of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel), and so they declared.**

We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29

- a. In other words there may be times that we are forced to choose between obeying the laws of man, or the law of God – when the two are in conflict. For example:**
 - b. If the government passes a “hate crime” law that makes it illegal for a pastor to teach the biblical truth that homosexuality is against God’s law. I would probably have a new prison ministry!**
 - c. Another example might be if you were a doctor, and you believe abortion is against God’s law. If the government instructs your facility to provide abortions. You would have to decide – “do I obey man, or God?”.**
- 14. The abortion issue is one of the “hot buttons” of the health care debate, with lawmakers trying to figure out how to pay for abortions while at the same time making it seem like your money is not being used.**
 - a. Some feel so strong about this that if passed, they may refuse to participate, or refuse to pay taxes.**

- b. If it comes down to it, we have a free will to make that choice, even knowing that we will suffer persecution as a result – just as the apostles did.
 - c. By the same token the recent events in Mass are a testament to our ability to change the course of our government if we disagree with it. They will listen when their jobs are on the line.
15. The bottom line for the Christian is that the law of God is higher than any other law. Thankfully many of the existing laws in our country are based on God's law, but that may not always be the case.
- a. In Revelation we are given a view of a time when the world leader will demand that everyone receive some type of mark, and worship him as "god".
 - b. Many will refuse, because that is in direct conflict with God's command to "have no other gods before me", and they will pay with their lives. *(of course, as we learned last week, they are being promoted!)*
16. But even more is to be gleaned from the example of the coin...

#3 Christians bear the image of God

17. There is the currency of man – it has symbols, and it has value. It belongs to man.
18. Then there is the currency of God – what is the currency of God? It is us...
- a. We too have symbols,

*We were formed in His image... Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; **Gen 1:26***

*We are being conformed to His image... He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, **Rom 8:29***

*We will bear the image of Christ for all eternity... As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. **1 Cor 15:48-49***

- b. We have value

*In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **1 John 4:9-10***

c. And we belong to God

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:26

...And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Gal 4:6-7

19. So... render to God – give to God what is God's – that would be ME – every part of me...

- a. Not just Sunday morning, not just the parts I don't want.**
- b. I believe that is the reason many Christians do not experience the fullness that God for us – we hold back on God.**
- c. We give him our Sunday morning, maybe a few minutes in the morning, a small spot on the back of my car...**
- d. But have I given Him the music I listen to?**
 - i. The shows I watch?**
 - ii. The things I look at on the internet?**
 - iii. My thought life? The thoughts of other men or women?**
 - iv. My job? My business? My relationships?**

20. We have a free will – we can choose to look at our live and say “well, I am not going to give everything to God...”

- a. But I find that those things I hold back give me the most trouble! They cause me the most pain!**
- b. I challenge you – I challenge me – GIVE IT ALL! Let Him reign in every part of your life – and SEE what God will do. You will be amazed.**
- c. Don't do like the Pharisees, who marveled... but they *walked away*.**

22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

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