



World Christian Fellowship

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Responsibility to God & Government

Matthew 22:15-22

Mark 12:13-17

Luke 20:20-26

Matthew 22:15-22, *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. ¹⁶And 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. ¹⁷Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"*

¹⁸But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show Me the tax money."

So they brought Him a denarius.

²⁰And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

²¹They 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." ²²When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him and went their way.

We love our country, and if we didn't pay our taxes, our country would come to a halt. The services that our country renders to us would no longer be able to be rendered.

No government, No services, no public provisions, and no protection, etc.

The government is dependent on the taxation system to provide us with the social structure in which we can enjoy our freedom in our life.

We do love our country, and we do thank God for the tremendous provision that He has made in placing us in a country that knows the kind of freedom and prosperity that our country knows.

Our government is not a totalitarian government but a compassionate government.

We may not think always what it does is exactly the way we would prefer it to be done, but it is none the less generous rather than oppressively totalitarian.

We prosper, and we should prosper with thankfulness. Taxation is an important element of that.

Despite all these considerations from time to time by some Christians who tell us we ought not to pay our taxes.

Some claim that we are not to pay taxes. Taxes are both unconstitutional and ungodly.

Their argument is that we shouldn't give the things that we have received from God back to those godless and secular governments.

There are some people in the church who are saying that we can't pay that tax and it's not right to pay that tax.

Their argument is that since the money was given to the church, it was given to God. Since it was given to God, who are we to give it to Caesar?

Matthew 22, this day is **Monday**, the last week of our Lord's life. Wednesday He will be crucified.

Sunday He will rise from the dead.

Previous Saturday, He rode into Jerusalem and was hailed as the Messiah.

Sunday, He cleaned the temple out of all the moneychangers and the sellers.

It is Monday. He has cleaned the temple out.

Jesus has been acknowledged as the Messiah, the conquering hero who will overthrow the Roman oppression.

The day after they hailed Him as Messiah, instead of overthrowing the Romans, He overthrew the Jewish religious

system. They don't quite know how to fit that in with their messianic expectation.

Again, Jesus is back in the temple, which He has cleansed, and He is moving around in the temple teaching.

Jesus is teaching on the kingdom.

A large crowd gathers around Him.

This makes the religious leaders irritated.

They resent Jesus Christ.

They resent Him because He opposes them.

He unmasks their pride, self-righteousness.

They not only resent Him because He captures the hearts of the people. Envy and jealousy fill them.

They resent Him because He claims to be the Messiah, the Son of God, and doesn't identify with Him.

They resent Him because He cleaned the temple without getting their permission.

He is everything they are not.

He is genuine but they are hypocrites.

He threatens the system that exists.

So, they stop Him in the process of teaching.

Matthew 21:23, *Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"*

Prove to us that You have the right to do what You have done. Jesus responded to them that I am not going to tell you by what authority I do these things, but this is what I am going to tell You.

You are under the judgment of God.
Jesus gives them in three parables.

Matthew 21:28-32, "The Parable of Two Sons"

Matthew 21:33-46, "The Wicked Vinedressers"

Matthew 22:1-14, "The Wedding Feast"

Three parables of judgment.

They must react to this.

Why?

Because this is public.

This is in the middle of the temple courtyard with masses of people around. Everybody can hear everything that's going on.

The Lord Jesus had just devastated them with three prophecies of their judgment put in parabolic form.

They understood what He was talking about them.

Matthew 21:45, *Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.*

They knew exactly what He was saying.

The day before, Jesus had cleaned up their physical temple. He had devastated their physical situation.

Now Jesus verbally devastates their spiritual situation. He attacks their unbelief. He attacks their rejection and calls down the judgment of God.

The religious leaders in their anger, fury, rage, their desire to eliminate Jesus.

They design a strategy.

Their strategy is very simple.

While the whole world can hear Him, we are going to get Him to say something that will discredit Him.

We will make Him appear as a revolutionary, as an insurrectionist. Then we are going to report Him to Rome. The Roman government doesn't like insurrectionists, and they will come down here, get Him, and kill Him.

This is their plan.

The three parables are followed by Four questions.

Those three questions take us through the rest of chapter 22.

Frist question: Matthew 22:13-22 Paying taxes

Second question: Matthew 22:23-33 About Resurrection

Third question: Matthew 22:34-40 What is the greatest Commandment?

Fourth question: Matthew 22:41-45 David calling his descendant Lord.

1. Motive.

V 15, Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.

After having heard these three confrontive, judgmental parables and took counsel how they might entangle Him.

They want to trap Him.

They want to ensnare Him.

This is their aim.

They pull back, and they decide they had better discuss what they are going to do.

They have just been publicly discredited again by Him. It happened on Sunday when Jesus cleaned the place.

Here again on Monday He has done it again to them.

The fury is mounting because unrighteousness that masquerades as righteousness always hates true righteousness.

The Pharisees who are the religious legalists, the proud self-righteous, envious, intimidated leaders take “counsel.”

The word has the idea of mutual consultation.

They have got their heads together. They went off in the corner somewhere in the temple, and they began to talk and figure out what to do. They wanted to trap Him in a statement.

So sad, because instead of hearing the message of judgment, saying that we don't want that to happen. We don't want to be kept out of the kingdom forgive us.

Instead of crying out for mercy, all they want to do is kill the one who brought them the warning and offers to save them.

Unbelievable!

Like the person who is drowning, who tries to kill the one who is saving him. Like trying to do away with your rescuer.

But it's their aim, and they are so completely consumed with this.

In spite of the reality of what He has just told them, they pursue their goal to trap Him in a statement.

2. Method.

V 16, *And they sent to Him their disciples*

Why do you think the Pharisees sent their disciples?

Why didn't they go themselves?

Because they long ago had been revealed to be fake.

There was no way they could go up to Jesus and pretend to really believe in Him.

There was no way they could go up to Jesus and pretend to ask an honest question.

Jesus would have recognized them because He knew who they were. He had seen their faces.

It would have been just another appearance of the people who had already been identified as hypocrites.

So, they don't dare go themselves. They find a group that Jesus doesn't know of their followers. They brief them thoroughly and send them in their place to masquerade as very honest questioners.

They are going to fool Jesus.

They are going to bait Him with those that He doesn't know.

He won't know that they are Pharisees' disciples.

They thought Jesus won't recognize them as the ones that He's already given the parables to.

They pick some other ones because it's a sneaky approach they have in mind.

"With the Herodians"

This is fascinating.

Luke doesn't mention the Pharisees or the Herodians but just calls all of them spies.

Luke 20:20, *So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.*

They were masquerading as being on the Lord's side and asking honest questions as if they were truly religious people and really wanted answers.

All they want to get Him to do is make an anti-Rome statement. Someone with His power and His influence, making anti-Roman statements, would really be a threat to the Roman system.

So that they would run and report Him, and the Romans would kill Him.

They were spies masquerading as religious people interested in what He believed.

So, the Herodians went along.

Why the Herodians?

Who are the Herodians?

They were identified with Herod.

They were the ones belonging to Herod, like Christians belonged to Christ, Herodians belonged to Herod.

They were not religious by that identification but political.

The Herod's were a dynasty of Edomites who ruled the land of Palestine. **Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herod Archelaus** and so forth.

When we study New Testament background, we study a lot about the Herodian family.

The Herod's had ruled that land.

In **A.D. 6**, just a few years after the birth of Christ, **Archelaus**, who was **the son of Herod the Great**, was deposed.

Herod had split up His empire. One of the sons was in the north in Galilee and Perea, another son in the south in Samaria and Judea.

It was sort of split between them.

But in **A.D. 6**, **Archelaus**, who was the son ruling in the south, was deposed, and in his place the Romans put a governor.

Pilate as the Roman governor occupying the seat of rule in the southern part of that country of Palestine.

Herod Antipas still ruled in the north, and he was the one responsible for beheading **John the Baptist**.

But they were not Jews but Edomites.

They were political rulers.

They were kings of a dynasty.

The Romans left them, at least in part, in power in the north because it served their purposes.

In the south it didn't, and they occupied the leadership with a governor.

Perhaps the Herodians, therefore, would be those Jews who identified with the political viewpoint and the political power of the Herod's.

They wanted a Herod in the south, that they would have much preferred a Herod ruling in Judea than a Roman.

They were pro Herod.

We don't know in particular what they had to gain by that, but that is how they are identified. They were of the political party of Herod.

The Pharisees were vocally anti-Rome. They despised the Roman oppression. They hated the Roman tyranny. Many of them belonged to a group which later became known as the Zealots, and they were insurrectionists.

They went around doing acts of terrorism.

They would start little fires here, and there, and things like that to bang away at the Romans.

Some of them flamed into rather large insurrections. It may well be that Simon the Zealot, one of the disciples of the Lord, belonged to that nationalistic, almost terroristic group of people.

The Pharisees were very anti-Rome. Rome coming into their land was a great intrusion. Rome, with all its paganism invaded the theocracy, and it offended them greatly.

So, the Pharisees were anti-Rome, and many of them no doubt were Zealots.

The Herodians were pro-Rome.

They were pro-Rome in the sense that Rome had allowed Herod Antipas to stay in as ruler. If there was to be another Herod moved into the southern part, it would have to be because the Romans appointed him.

So, they sought the favor of Rome.

They played to Rome because they knew their only hope of getting their Herod in power, or getting one Herod to rule the whole land would be by Roman appointment.

The Herod's themselves seemed to have played Rome as well. So, here are the anti-Roman Pharisees and the pro-Roman Herodians getting together against Jesus Christ.

Why?

The Pharisees recruited the Herodians.

They recruited the Herodians because when Jesus said His anti-Roman things, they needed to have some pro-Roman witnesses who then having access to the governor and his people could run in there and say to them. It could be accepted in saying, because they were known as pro-Roman.

This man is leading an anti-Roman rebellion.

If the Pharisees said that, they had sort of look at them funny and wonder what they were plotting, because they knew they wouldn't come to warn Rome about an insurrection.

So, they had to have the Herodians.

Why did the Herodians cooperate?

Because the Herodians didn't like Jesus either.

Herod Antipas cut off the head of His forerunner, John the Baptist, because John the Baptist confronted Herod about His vile, wicked, wretched, life.

They didn't like Jesus who was the heir to the prophetic office of John any better than they would have liked John.

The last part of the Lord's ministry, we find that He judiciously avoided the territory of Herod because of hostility toward Him there.

So, they agree that they are against Jesus, even though they can't agree maybe on religion or politics, and that sort of sets the stage.

V 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."*

"Master" **Didaskale**, Teacher, the highest honour one could pay a man.

A great dignity went with that admirable office.

The Talmud says, "The one who teaches the law shall gain a seat in the academy on high."

To be revered above all others, a teacher of the law. Great respect.

V 16, *we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth;*

Alēthēs.

You have integrity.

You really are a man of great integrity.

If You believe it, then You say it that is the implication.

- ✓ You really believe what You believe.
- ✓ You really live what You believe.
- ✓ You are a truthful person.

Not only are You a truthful person, and You teach the way of God in truth.

- ✓ You have truthful information to give.
- ✓ You have truthful content.
- ✓ You have a truthful message.
- ✓ You are a man of great integrity.
- ✓ You are a man who speaks truly the way of God.

What is the way of God?

Proverbs 14:12, *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

Opposite of man who walks with God.

Psalms 1:2-3, *But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.*

You are a man with integrity who teaches truth.

Every teacher that ever lived would love to hear that.

A group come and say that to you would be the epitome of building up your ego.

V 16, *You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.*

They mean You are not swayed by other opinions. It doesn't matter to you what anybody else believes.

They are saying that He is a person of great conviction.

What a commendation?

- ✓ You are a teacher.
- ✓ You are a teacher who has integrity.
- ✓ You speak the truth.
- ✓ You not only have integrity, but You speak truth.
- ✓ You speak the truth no matter what anybody else thinks.
- ✓ You have such tremendous conviction.

V 16, for You do not regard the person of men.

You are not intimidated by anybody's face.

You will stand face-to-face with anybody, anytime, no matter if they have the power of life and death over You.

You will say what You believe without equivocating.

Everything they said was true!

Do you think they said it because it was true?

They didn't mean it.

It was that wretched, vile, evil, condemned in the Old Testament flattery.

Flattery has one thing in mind.

Bait, set you up for the kill.

Build your ego up so high that you are stuck trying to live out your reputation.

They must have thought they got Him in the corner.

They think that He now knows that they think so highly of Him.

He is going to have to live up to His reputation now.

Just lying flattery. What an ugly sin.

Proverbs and Psalms condemn that sin. So, that was their approach.

Motive:

Trap Him in a statement.

Method:

Flatter Him. Get his ego so built up that He's stuck with having to say exactly what he believes.

3. Assault.

V 17, *Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"*

Mark 12:15, *Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"* *But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it."*

The word "tribute," the word *kēnsos* borrowed from the Latin census from which we get the census, or the counting of every individual.

Should we pay for the census?

It refers to a specific tax.

The Romans counted all the people, and the Syriac Peshitta calls this head money. They attached an individual tax to everybody. Each year, every individual had to pay this census tax, like a poll tax. It was a personal tax on an individual.

The Romans had a lot of taxes.

There were certain things the Jews had to give to the temple.

There were certain Jewish taxes.

But the Romans imposed some of theirs, too. After all, they were providing services to that group of people.

We find one of the remaining great masterpieces in the Caesarea area is a great Roman aqueduct which brought water to the people in that area. We will find Roman roads, streets, and many marks of Roman society.

They offered protection.

They offered the benefits of the massive power of the Roman peace.

They provided certain services to the people, and for those services rendered to them by official's government and soldiers and so forth. They had to have compensation.

They had various taxes.

They had a land tax which required one-tenth of the grain, and one-fifth of the wine and oil, and it could be given in kind in substance or in money.

They also had customs taxes.

There were set a harbour, piers, crossroads and city gates tax collectors. As goods were transported there was a certain taxation factor involved. Matthew was engaged in collecting.

They also had identified an income tax on all wage earners. There was a one percent income tax.

There was the property tax, there was the sort of business tax, and there was the one percent income tax. Not an unrealistic tax system at all. Not as high as we have today in those terms.

There was one other tax that we know about, and it was this census tax, or a head tax. Everyone paid a set amount once a year. The amount was one denarius.

One denarius. A denarius was one day's wage.

One day's wage for a Roman soldier, a fair wage for any worker. That's what was required.

This didn't sit well with the Jewish people.

This Roman taxation system they felt was an abuse, because they saw themselves as a people of God.

They saw themselves as a theocracy ruled by God.

When pagan Rome moves in, imposes itself on them, starts taxing, they have the feeling that they are giving what belongs to God to Rome.

In A.D. 6, the same year **Archelaus** was deposed, and a Roman governor was put in, a rebellion began. That rebellion was led by a man named **Judas of Galilee**.

Judas collected an insurrectionist minded group and brought about this fervor and furor.

His theme was, *“God is our only God. God is our Lord, and God is our Ruler, and we will not pay this tax to Rome.”*

It was a census for taxation purposes that spawned their revolution led by Judas of Galilee. It was the very census situation that angered him.

Acts 5:37, *After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed.*

Gamaliel talks about what happened to Judas.

What happened to Judas?

His followers were scattered, and he was dead.

But he had fomented an attitude that remained. Though his revolution had ended in failure, the attitude of not liking the census and not having to pay that tax to Rome stuck with the people.

They felt that that head tax was the most offensive of all because it may have been that they could see the property tax and the income tax and the business tax as going to Rome, since they rendered services.

But as individuals, they belonged to God, not Rome.

The most provoking of all these taxes may well have been this particular census tax. No doubt it was a real issue with the people.

That is why they use it as the point of question here.

The sentiment, therefore, remained.

Josephus, who writes about the revolution of Judas of Galilee, who lived through the destruction of the temple in 66 A.D., it was this same attitude toward this taxation problem that started the revolution of **66 A.D.** that ended in the destruction of **Jerusalem in 70 A.D.**

So, this is a big issue!

They didn't just pull this one out of the hat.

If Jesus says, "Pay the tax," He is going to have the whole lot of Jewish people angry at Him. He is going to be seen as anti-Jewish.

So, they don't believe He will say that.

They also believe that He does speak for God.

Despite the fact, they don't like Him, they think that He really believes He speaks for God. He wants to be true to God. He wants to be true to God's revelation.

They think there is no way He can possibly say, "Pay the tax," because they think if they know that that would be an offense to God, He must know that.

They are sure that the only thing He can say to them is, "Don't pay it. It is an offense to God. Don't pay for it. We don't belong to God."

This is what they are hoping.

As soon as He says that, and the roar goes up and looks like He could be counted as an insurrectionist, the Herodians split and report Him to the Romans.

Then the riot is on, and He loses His life. So, the question is a very important question.

There were many Zealots, no doubt, in the crowd who eagerly wanted a revolution, but would rather have Jesus dead and postpone the revolution.

4. Accusation.

V 18, *But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"*

Jesus knew because He knew everything.

You can't sneak up on His blindside because there is no blindside.

Jesus is omniscient. He knew everything.

John 2:25, *and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.*

He knew the questions before they were asked, and when they were asked, He knew their intention.

"Why do test Me, you hypocrites?"

He was pretty direct.

They were right in saying that Jesus speaks the truth he doesn't look at the face.

He was not intimidated by the face of anybody.

He really didn't care what anybody's opinion was.

He was very truthful with them.

He called them exactly what they were.

"You hypocrites."

He had never seen those people before.

That is the whole point of the plot.
These were people He had not encountered.

He isn't calling them hypocrites, because He had some prior experience with them. These guys walk up brand new, flatter Him to the hilt, and He says, "You hypocrites."

How does Jesus know that?

You wouldn't know it by the words they said, because flattery may even speak the truth.

The motive is rotten.

He knew it because He was God.

He is omniscient.

Their flattering tongues were tipped with deadly poison, and He knew it. It was a Judas kiss they were offering Him.

Why are you test Me?

Why are you putting Me to a test you think I will fail?

Why do you want me to fail?

Your flattery was fake and it was hypocritical.

Jesus' accusation was very serious. Again, He turns the tables on them and unmasks them.

V 19, *Show Me the tax money.*" So they brought Him a *denarius*.

They had to pay a denarius.

There were Greek coins in the land.

There were Roman coins of various kinds, including many copper coins, some silver coins, some gold coins.

There were Hebrew shekels.

So, they had a kind of a mixed currency.

But the tax was one denarius.

It would be paid in the Roman coinage of one denarius.

They thought they had Him.

Here it is!

5. Analogy:

A Master Teacher uses an illustration.

He takes the coin in His hand.

It was a silver coin, minted by the emperor, because only the emperor could mint silver and gold.

The Roman Senate could mint copper, but only the emperor could mint silver and gold.

Any silver coin would reflect the image of Caesar.

It would not only have his image, but it would have some kind of writing identifying him. This was the common practice among kings to hail their sovereignty.

They would mint coins with their pictures on it. We do it in only after people are long dead. They did it because they were in control of minting them to proclaim themselves and their sovereignty.

Every time a Jew reached in his little pouch and pulled out a denarius, it offended him.

It offended him for two reasons.

- It was a reminder of Roman oppression and the fact that they were under Gentile authority.
- It was an image, and they knew well that the Old Testament had said that they were to have no graven imagery.

They were offended by that.

A certain type of Orthodox Jew, they will stone you if you try to take a picture of them because they still are offended at any kind of image.

These legalistic Pharisees were and these Jews.

The very coinage of Rome was a gross affront to them, a blasphemous intrusion into their life.

V 20, *And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?”*

Eikōn and the Epigraphē

Eikōn, is the image.

Graphē is the writing.

V 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.”*

Caesar’s!

Probably came in one voice!

Because they are just moving Him along the plot.

They eagerly answered a harmless question, “Caesar’s.”

A true statement.

Those coins were stamped with Caesar’s image, whether from the reign of **Augustus** or **Tiberius**, we wouldn’t know.

They stamped coins from both those Caesar’s.

But a denarius from the time of **Tiberius**.

They had on one side the image of Tiberius’ face.

On the other side, it had him sitting up on his throne in high priestly robes.

They had a crown on his head.

There was an inscription in the coins of Tiberius that identified him as the highest priest.

The coinage was more than secular but it was religious.

The emperors not only believed they were high priests, but they also actually believed they were gods.

Christians were killed in the Roman persecution of the Church because they failed to worship the emperor.

Emperor worship was a part of the Roman Empire.

So, every time a Jew had in his hand one of those denarii with the image of Tiberius on it, it was the recognition that he held in his hand a little idol.

A little idol of a god who was a false god.

We can imagine with what hatred they identified coinage.

The Roman emperor was always called the high priest.

The Roman senators were seen sort of as priests because religion was all mixed up with their secular society.

So, the Jew would say to himself that paying taxes, having to take my Hebrew money and convert it into that thing and give it to Rome is an offense to me. That is not right.

I will not give to some false god what belongs to the true God.

They were offended by the thought of rendering that which they believe was for God to anyone other than God, particularly some pagan priest and self-styled deity.

The United Kingdom government asks us to pay our taxes. The United Kingdom government has a rather clearly defined separation of Church and State. There may be some places where it's not as clear as it once was, but it's still clearly enough defined for us to realize that the king or Prime minister does not claim to be God, nor does the ministers and Lords claim to be high priests of any order.

So we pay our taxes, we are paying strictly to a secular society which has very clearly defined objectives to provide a certain life for us.

If it is difficult for us to imagine paying tax to that, how difficult must it have been to imagine taking a little idol to give to a false god?

So, they were in an even deeper dilemma!

The appearance of a strange star in **17 B.C.** had caused **Augustus Caesar** to inaugurate a **12-day Advent Celebration**. The Roman College of Priests was called together in 17 B.C., and he was the chief of that.

The Roman College of Priests voted to grant mass absolution from sins for all the people in the empire. Coins were made in **17 B.C.** rather, same period of time, hailing **Augustus Caesar as the son of god.**

The State then offered salvation in addition to prosperity.

So, when the Jews looked at that, they saw not strictly a secular government, but a secular religious conglomeration. It offended them to think about giving their money to that, because it's like paying false deities homage.

When the Lord picks up the coin, the plot thickens, because it becomes very vividly obvious as to what the issues are.

Whose image?

They say it is Caesar's.

V 21, *And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

The word "render"

The Greek word ***Apodidōmi***, meaning to pay back, to give back. It speaks of debt.

It speaks of an obligation.

It speaks of a responsibility.

It is not something you have a choice about. "Give back,"

Jesus says. “Give it back. He made it. He minted it. It belongs to his economy. Give it back to him.”

It refers to the payment of a debt, the payment of an obligation, a rightful duty, something that doesn't even belong to you to give it back.

When they posed the question back in **verse 17**, they didn't use that word but a different word.

They said, *“Is it lawful to give as a gift? Is it lawful to give as a gift?”*

Their perspective was that they owned all that and that they could do what they wanted with it.

If they didn't want to give it, they wouldn't give it. It was a gift if they did give it.

When Jesus answering their question, He says, “Give it back. You are not giving him a gift. You are giving him what belongs to him. It is a debt, and it must be paid.

Do you know what the Lord says here?

Pay your taxes.

The payment of a tax is a debt.

It's a debt set by a government.

Even a pagan, idolatrous government, even a blasphemous government, even a government about to be the executioner of the Son of God.

Even a government which will hammer nails into His hands, ram a spear into His side, and watch Him die, even that kind of government that executes the Christ, pay your taxes.

It is not a gift.

it is not a choice.

it is a debt for the benefits received and enjoyed.

Caesar has his rights.

For the provision of physical, social, economic benefits, protection, etcetera, he has done a debt and pay it.

So, Jesus affirms that the State can demand what belongs to it within its sphere.

Romans 13:1-7, *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.²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.³For 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.⁴For 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. ⁵Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

Government's ordained by God.

Government is an institution of God just like marriage and the family is, just like the Church is. Just like Israel was a special institution of God.

If you don't pay your taxes and resist the government then you are resisting God who ordained the government for the preservation of society.

It is a sin not to pay your taxes.

It is a sin to resist.

Just do what's right.

Even some government that's poor government is better than none.

Government is there for the protection of the good, the punishment of the evil. Do what's right and you will be all right.

God has given government the right of punishment.

A policeman, soldiers, those in authority stand in the place of God, as it were, for the preservation of society.

So, you do resist the government, you do resist God.

God has given to the government the right to deal with those who resist.

So, you must be subject.

Straightforward command.

1 Peter 2:13-17, *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

God wants Christians to be models of virtue, models of integrity in the world.

1 Timothy 2:2, *for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

We should live in the world in a godly and an honest and a peaceable way, and you should render to those who are in authority exactly what that authority calls for.

Someone might say it belongs to God.
Everything belongs to God.

God says that some of the stuff that belongs to Me, please give to them.
That's all.

The money was given to the church. It was given in an act of worship in the church.

How can the church give it to the government?
Isn't that rendering to Caesar what is given to God?
We give our money to the church.

Do you know what the church does with our money?
They give it to God.
Not all of it.
But they give me some.
All our pastors and staff give some.
God give some of it to the government.

You might say that giving to Caesar what was given to God.

No, I am giving to Caesar what God told me to give Caesar out of all His stuff.

Everything you have you received from God.
It is God that gives you power to get wealth.

The Lord just says, "Some of that I want you to give to society because I have ordained government so that it can be leading you to peaceable and happy and quiet life.

You don't honour God when you refuse to pay your taxes then you disobey Him.

and to God the things that are God's."

What was Caesar asking?

Money.

What was that only God deserved?

Worship.

You can pay your tax to Caesar, but don't you dare render to him your worship.

Don't you dare give to him your adoration and your praise.

Don't you swear to him your allegiance as your god and master.

Jesus makes a beautiful hair-splitting statement.

You give the system what the system can demand out of you.

What it can demand is social and economic.

What it cannot demand is spiritual and religious.

Where this really becomes a problem would be if all of a sudden, the king of United Kingdom announced that he was god, and all the parliament and the Lords were high priests.

Everything we gave to them would be given to a religious system, and not only did we have to give it to them, but we must worship them.

That is where we say No.

They say, "If you don't then we will kill you."

We respond happily that we will die.

Peter had been asked by the Sanhedrin not to preach.

Acts 4:19-20, *But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."*

When it comes to that nexus, you obey God.

You obey God.

Caesar has limits.

When Caesar oversteps those limits and starts demanding worship, then you have got a problem.

While we are living today in a society that became totalitarian, where the head of that society or some element of that headship in that society declared that it was God, and not only

was it to be pay taxes, but it was to be worship, that is where we would draw the line.

The **Russian Church** is persecuted singly and only because of its religious conviction. We obey every law of the totalitarian state of Russia as Christians. But when they rule in our religious conscience, we do not obey, because now Caesar is claiming what belongs to God.

If we are to be persecuted, imprisoned, and to lose our lives, it will be because of our faith in God, not because of our violating some government order.

See the clear distinction.

Because what belongs to Caesar isn't God's.

What belongs to God is not Caesar's.

Very clear.

Those people who came and asked the question to Jesus they are babes. They haven't got a clue with their mumbling, bumbling stupidity they think to capture the Son of the living God in their trap.

Jesus gives them an answer that's absolutely devastating.

Conclusion:

V 22, *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left Him and went their way.*

They just left.

So sad.

Why do people do that?

There are people here this morning you have lived this event with those people today.

You just leave.

Who is this profound man with such infinite wisdom?

This is as much a revelation of the deity of Jesus Christ and the incredible genius of God as it is anything about taxation.