

Developing A Life of Prayer

EDGEMONT BIBLE CHURCH

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“About Taxes”

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

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" 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." When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

Mr 12:13-17 Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? "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." So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him.

Lu 20:20-26 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. Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Why do you test Me? "Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?" They answered and said, "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." But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

I. Asking the Question – Mt 22:15-17

A. Context

1. It is Wednesday of the week of Passover
2. Jesus had cleansed the Temple the day before – Mt 21:12-13
3. After that He told 3 parables of judgment against unbelieving Israel
4. The Jews confronted Jesus with 3 questions seeking to catch Him either religiously or politically in His words – (a Democrat special council)
 - a. The first asked by their disciples – 22:15-22
 - b. The second asked by the Sadducees – 22:23-33

- c. The Third asked by the Pharisees – 22:34-40
- 5. *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, – vs 15-16a*
 - a. The Pharisees were Jesus' harshest critics and He theirs
 - b. The Pharisees and the Herodians didn't like each other,
 - i. The pharisees thought the Herodians were irreligious traitors
 - ii. but in Jesus, they have a common enemy
 - c. Sending their disciples would make it look like admirers and possibly catch Jesus with His guard down

B. The Compliment - vs 16b

- 1. The Address – *Teacher* – a high form of honor reserved for Rabbis
- 2. *we know that* - Personal and Doctrinal integrity
 - a. Truthful - *You are true,*
 - b. Faithful - *and teach the way of God in truth;*
 - c. Impartial - *nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.*

C. The Content – vs 17

- 1. *"Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"*
 - a. **kensos** - an enrollment ("census"), a tax, tribute.
 - b. An annual tax on occupied territories
 - i. head tax
 - ii. included
 - 10% on grain produced,
 - 20% on wine and oil produced
 - 1% income tax
 - Customs on all imports and exports
 - c. Paid for the support of occupying forces and for all that the government did for them
- 2. The most resented by the Jews
 - a. A positive answer would put Jesus in trouble with Rome
 - b. A negative answer would put Him in trouble with Israel

II. The Answer – vs 18-21

A. A question for the questioners – vs 18

- 1. *But Jesus perceived their **wickedness**, and said,*
 - a. **pomeria** - depravity, malice; plots, sins, iniquity, wickedness.
 - b. Ps 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue.
 - c. Ro 3:13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"
- 2. *"Why do you test Me?"* - He let them know that their wicked scheme was transparent
- 3. *you hypocrites* – the OT and rabbinical teachings strongly condemned flattery and hypocrisy

B. An Opportunity to teach – vs 19-21

- 1. *"Show Me the tax money."* So they brought Him a denarius.
 - a. In spite of His harsh accusations, they readily brought Him a coin

- b. The specific coin for the tax was the denarius – it was equal to a soldier’s daily wage
- c. Hated by the Jews
 - i. It had an image of the emperor on one side and him sitting on a throne in high priestly garments on the other
 - ii. A constant reminder of the occupation
- 2. The Second Question - *And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"*
- 3. The Answer and Conclusion
 - a. *They said to Him, "Caesar's."*
 - b. *And He said to them,*
 - i. *"Render therefore*
 - **apodidomi** - to give away, up, over, back, deliver (again), give (again), (re-)pay(-ment be made), perform, recompense, render, requite, restore, reward, sell, yield.
 - Carries the idea of an obligation or debt, something that is not optional
 - ii. *to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,* - the things of his domain
 - iii. *and to God the things that are God's."*
 - He is not dividing the secular from the sacred, scripture doesn’t teach this idea
 - He is saying that the things that are God’s don’t belong to Caesar and should never be offered to him – Worship - Jo 4:24

III. The Amazement – vs 22

- A. *When they had heard these words, they marveled,*
 - 1. **thaumazo** - to wonder; to admire, have in admiration, marvel, wonder.
 - 2. Though they feigned admiration when they came, they definitely admired Him when they left
- B. *and left Him and went their way.*
- C. Interesting note: *Lu 23:2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King."*

IV. Lessons for Prayer

- A. Taxes are the Biblical and Constitutional right of the Government – Mt 22:21; Ro 13:6-7
- B. Paying those taxes is our Biblical Duty – Mt 22:21; Ro 13:6-7
- C. Praying for the government is also our Biblical Duty and privilege – 1 Ti 2:1-4
 - 1. It is easy to complain about taxes
 - 2. It is real easy to complain about how those taxes are used, especially by a representative government
 - 3. Have we been devoted to praying to God . . .
 - a. to raise up godly men and women for leadership in our government
 - b. for wisdom for them to know how to honor God in their bill writing, budgeting, etc.
 - c. for a renewed vision of what God wants from our government