



Jesus For President - Pre-Election - Part II...Render Unto Caesar

(from 11/06/16 sermon by Spencer Teal)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates to begin CG.

PRAY

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

***READ ALOUD Matthew 22:15-22**

II. REFLECT

"Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" At first glance it sounded like a legitimate question, but Jesus knew their hearts and that they were simply trying to trick him. His response would be to either show that he was pro-Rome or anti-Rome, and in doing so the Pharisees would have trapped Him. So, what did He do? He asked for a coin...made reference to the image on the coin, and then proclaimed, "...*render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*" They marveled at His answer and went away.

So, here we see the True King...the King of all creation...the very One who created Caesar himself...and yet Jesus has to actually borrow a coin to make His point because He doesn't have one himself. There's much to unpack in these few verses, but for one let's remember that yes, we are to submit to the laws of the land that do not contradict the clear teachings of Scripture. But ultimately, our goal is to render back to God that which belongs to Him, which is our very lives. And in the same way that He emptied Himself and aligned Himself with the Kingdom, we are to empty ourselves and align ourselves with The Kingdom as well, for that is where our true citizenship lies.

Discussion - In Romans 13:1-2 we read, "*Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed...*" We recognize that our civil government is a temporary institution given by God, by His grace, for the administration of justice and to restrain evil. **Q** - If every authority that exists had been established by God, as this passage suggests, then what are we to make of those who are in authority that are clearly not Christian at best and/or even anti-Christian at worst? What does their being given a place of such authority say about the sovereignty of God? How can/does He use these individuals to bring about His will? What's our response to be as Christians?

It's somewhat comical when you think about it...the image on the denarius was that of Tiberius Caesar...just a man, made in the image of God...completely dependent upon His Creator for his next breath. Yet, as Caesar he could enact laws that would require everyone throughout the Roman empire to

pay a tax to him just because they exist...a head tax. And here we find Christ, the Son of God through which all things that exist were created by (Col 1:16), yet without a coin to His name.

Read Phil 2:3-8 - Using this passage as your foundation, discuss the characteristics of the Kingdom of God vs. the Kingdom of Man. We understand that anyone who wants to be a part of His Kingdom must be like Him. **Q** - What implications does this have on us regarding power, wealth, recognition and comfort?

As a way of trying to trick Him, the Pharisees “*plotted how to entangle him in His words.*” By His response either Jesus would be seen as pro-Rome, which would appease the Herodians or anti-Rome, which would appease the Pharisees. If He answers one way He alienates the religious Jews who saw support to Rome as intolerable. If He answers another way then He satisfies the Jews, but then He’s in trouble with Rome. He must choose, and whichever way He chooses He is trapped...or so it seemed. Jesus did not fall for this trap, and neither should we.

The truth is that Christians vote for all types of people based upon a variety of important Christian principles and platforms. For example, The Green Party (environment), Libertarian (freedom), Republican (abortion and marriage), and Democrat (race relations and universal healthcare).

Q - In what ways do we often idealize certain political parties within government while demonizing others? **Discuss.** We need to be careful when we insinuate that Jesus is for that party but not the other one. Jesus is not a Republican, a Libertarian, a member of the Green Party, nor is He a Democrat. He won’t align Himself with a man-made political party or system, and we need to be careful about doing the same. **Q** - How can we pray and live out “thy Kingdom come, thy will be done” without allowing ourselves to inadvertently look to a person, a candidate, or a party for our salvation? **Q** - How do we as Christians often create conflict with our own Christian brothers and sisters based on the political choices that they make? How can we stand for righteousness and even speak the truth in love without breaking fellowship or causing angst with those with whom we worship and break bread with each week?

III. FURTHER APPLICATION

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2:1-4)

*****Pray** - In this post-election week, community groups are encouraged to spend the remainder of community group time praying for our local, state, and national leaders as well as for our new president.

IV. CLOSE

Final thoughts?

V. BE ON-MISSION

We encourage individuals and families to identify someone, political or otherwise, who has authority in your life and call them or write them a card this week just to let them know they are being prayed for.