

Should Christians Pay Taxes?

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[0 : 00] We're going to jump into the book of Mark. So we're back in Mark chapter 12. And yeah, just to repeat that, Marvis and Susan, if you're listening, thank you for all that you do to teach the kids all the work and effort that you put in.

It's so much appreciated. So Mark chapter 12. Mark chapter 12, and we are in verse 12, I believe, or verse 13.

And today's topic is, it's a famous passage. You know, there's a lot of scriptures that Christians are familiar with. And then there are certain passages that even those who are not believers are very familiar with.

I think this is one of them. The famous render unto Caesar the things that are due to Caesar, and render unto God the things that are due to him. A tremendous story where Jesus is really, you know, there's an attempt to put him between a rock and a hard place.

A question that any answer, it would seem, would get him in trouble. And that was the whole purpose behind it. And we'll look into the details of that. But he really comes up with an answer that the wisdom of his response really shocked those who are questioning him.

[1 : 18] And we'll see that as we read this. They say that there are two certain things in life, right? What are they? Death and taxes, right? The Bible has something to say about both of them, right?

And so we're going to be looking at that second half. We're going to be looking at the taxes part. It's a big question during that day. You know, taxes always seem unfair.

Most of the time they are unfair. That's why they seem that way. But regardless, there are certainty in life almost throughout all of history. And the Bible speaks to them that we'll be talking about that subject today after we will kind of look into the details of this passage in particular and its context, but then we'll step back and look at a broader view of our life as Christians and the taxes that we owe or do we owe them or how should we look at that?

And how should we, what should our attitude be towards any kind of government tyranny in general? So let's read through this passage. We'll read through these five verses. And then we're going to go verse by verse as we usually do.

So Mark chapter 12 and verse 13. Wow, what a response.

[3 : 24] So Jesus, we'll back up, just provide the context over and over and over again. It's always important to look at the context. Jesus is in Jerusalem.

This is his final week. He's just days away from being crucified. And this is all part of that culmination. And he's in Jerusalem.

He's really having, being a lot more confrontational with especially the leaders. There's a group called the Sanhedrin we talked about last week. It's made up of scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, elders, and then the chief priests.

Those are all the groups. And there's kind of an intersection in there. You can be a scribe and a Pharisee. But those are the names that we see that make up these Jewish leaders.

When we read the passage where Jesus' authority was questioned, it actually mentioned that there were the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to question his authority.

[4 : 26] And that question was responded to, or not responded to. He said, I'm not going to answer that question. And so they were rejected.

And their attempts were to catch him in saying something that would get him into trouble or thwarted. But in this case, he actually answers their question.

In this case, they actually sent him a different group of people. It mentions here that they sent. And when it says they, who's they? Well, it's talking again about this same group of people, the Sanhedrin, these 70 or so elders and chief priests and scribes that made up this council called the

Sanhedrin.

And they sent a different group of people, Pharisees, and then it says Herodians. And this is a new group we haven't heard of before. Now, we did talk about Herodians many months ago.

I can't remember what passage it was in. And we talked a little bit about that. It's actually not clear who the Herodians were. There's just a few minor references without much detail given to the Herodians.

[5 : 34] This is one of them. And there's just really one more passage. There's a parallel passage, I think, in Matthew or Luke that tells this same story that also mentions the Herodians. But then there's only one other passage that mentions them.

And there is not really a lot of mention of Herodians in extra-biblical literature either. So we just kind of have to guess. And so obviously, the Herodians were somehow related to who?

To Herod, right? They bear his name. And so some people surmise that the Herodians could be like a political class of people, people who were supporters of Herod.

Maybe they were part of Herod's, what do you call it, like a cabinet or part of his government.

People who were part of the government of Herod. And so it's not clear, but these were probably people who were supporters in some way of Herod.

But it says here that they were trying to catch him in his words. And so they're not asking this question because they're curious, because they want to gain some knowledge from the wisdom that Jesus might have to give them.

[6 : 42] They're looking to either, one, alienate himself from the people. This is a question where you have no good answer, right? And that's the intent here. If you answer one way, the people are going to be upset at you.

Nobody likes to pay taxes, and especially the Jews. In fact, we'll talk in a minute about one of the things that happens because of this taxation issue, especially among the Jews.

So he said they're going to get in trouble with the Jews, the Jewish people, if he promotes this idea of it being okay to pay taxes to Rome. Or if he says, no, you shouldn't pay taxes to Rome.

Who's he going to get in trouble with? He's going to get in trouble with Rome. And so there's kind of really no good way out. You know, back in today's day, like I can, from the pulpit here, and we can record this and we can broadcast this on the Internet, all about how it's unfair to pay taxes, and there's all kinds of problems with our government and things like that.

But that's actually the freedom, the relative freedom we have, right? It's relative. It seems like it's always changing. To do that is somewhat unique in human history, criticizing the government.

[7 : 56] Most of the time when you do that, you get into really big trouble. You spend time in prison. Sometimes your life is on the line. And so really in this day, there was not the kind of freedom that we enjoy to have the freedom to be critical of our rulers.

But despite Jesus' answer here, because ultimately Jesus does say, render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But we read when Jesus is standing, or when he goes to stand before Pilate, he's accused of many things.

We actually read that he's accused of many false things. One of the false things, it says here in Luke 23, verse 1 and 2, Then the whole multitude of them arose, and they led him to Pilate.

And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying he himself is Christ, a king.

So regardless of what he actually said, they still accused him of saying, No, we shouldn't pay taxes to Caesar. But you can see that, obviously, this was ammunition that they were looking for to get him in trouble with the government, so that he could be killed.

[9 : 16] Verse 14, When they had come, they said to him, Teacher, we know that you are true, and you care about no one. For you do not regard the person of men, but you teach the way of God in truth.

Wow, it sounds like these guys just really turned a corner. They're coming around. They're really looking to Jesus as someone who is full of truth and wisdom. He's not somebody who looks to the favor of men.

He wants to just show what God truly says, like a real prophet would. But is this what they really think? You know, if you're not reading the Bible carefully, reading in context, you might think, Well, hey, these guys actually think that Jesus is pretty cool stuff.

But what is this? What do we call this? This is flattery, right? Using flattery. Flattery is a tactic that many people have used for millennia to try to get something, to try to manipulate.

It's a pattern or a tactic of deception. And they are laying it on thick. There's actually some scriptures about flattery that I thought I would bring up.

[10:33] The scriptures warn against those who would use flattery, especially for purposes of deception. Proverbs 20, and we'll look at three Proverbs. Proverbs 29, verse 5 says, A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.

If you've got someone just laying on the praise, you better look out. Look out for that trap that's coming. And, you know, you can praise people, and it's good to praise people and tell them they're doing a good job or you appreciate something about them.

But always have a discerning eye. Proverbs 26, verse 24 says this, He who hates disguises it with his lips and lays up deceit within himself.

When he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart.

Somebody who hates, they'll speak kind words, but it is with a purpose of, or an evil purpose.

And then Proverbs 7, verse 21, especially to, this is one to men, especially young men, about the immoral woman.

[11:48] With her enticing speech, she causes him to yield. With her flattering lips, she seduced him. Flattery can be used for all kinds of evil purposes.

And, you know, as we read this and we see Jesus will, in a second here, he'll, it mentions that he knows their hypocrisy. But these rulers, these Sanhedrin, these leaders of the Jews, they're really putting Jesus on trial.

They're asking him all these questions. But in doing so, is it really Jesus who's on trial? It's really them, isn't it?

And this is the way that it is for all of us. You know, we, lots of people question God and put God on trial. In fact, there's that movie. What's that movie? God's Not Dead.

There's one version of that movie where there's like a courtroom type thing going on. Putting God on trial. Is God real? Sometimes people question, is God just? And so we put God on trial.

[12:55] But when we do that, who's the one who's really on trial? It's us, isn't it? He is the judge of all the earth. And so when these men are coming and asking these questions, and they're using flattery and deceit, all things that their own scriptures speak against, they are, as the scriptures themselves say, storing up judgment for themselves on the day of wrath.

They are really the ones on trial. So they ask this question, and they say, is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? So they ask this question about the legality of it.

Not necessarily the morality, even though that is part of the law. But really, what law are they talking about? They're talking about the Jewish law. Because under Roman law, of course it's legal, right?

The Romans are the ones that are collecting the tax. And we'll talk about the nature of this tax in a second. But they're asking, according to the law of Moses, we are Jews. We are supposed to serve God under his law.

And so is this tax, is it legal according to the law of Moses? It's not really totally clear what specific law they might have in mind.

[14:12] Possibly it could be multiple things. But we'll talk about that in just a second. Looking at verse 15, it says, Shall we pay or shall we not pay? It says this, But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, Why do you test me?

And then he says, Bring to me a denarius that I might see it. So they're asking, Do we pay this or not? It seems like this was probably, for many people, a legitimate question.

Somebody that somebody might genuinely ask, looking for an answer. And so many of the Jews at this time were asking this question. That's why they brought it up. But he, it says, Knowing their hypocrisy, their purpose in asking this question was not genuine.

And not only are they using flattery and deceit here for entrapment, but then there is actually, I think we'll get to this more in detail later on, but there is a fake concern for the things of God.

Well, here's this law of Moses, and we're really concerned about upholding the law of Moses.

Moses. And so there's this tax that we're supposed to pay, and we're concerned that by paying it, we're breaking the law of Moses.

[15:26] And there are some ways, right, in which these Jewish leaders were concerned, really concerned, at least on the surface of breaking the law of Moses, but in other ways could care less.

And so I think that's where the hypocrisy comes in. So they brought this denarius. Jesus said, Bring me a denarius that I might see it.

And they brought it to him. And then he asks, Whose image and inscription is on this? And they said, Well, it's Caesar's. So let's talk about this denarius. What is it? Denarius was a coin that represented about the value of a day's wage.

If you're a laborer, it's about one day's wage. And the denarius was actually specifically used for this tax. And we'll talk about the nature of this tax in a second.

But on the coin is a picture of the Caesars. Now, the denarius was minted like we have our coins, right? And over the years, maybe the names and faces are different parts of it.

[16:34] I think the front has always been the same, or at least for many years, but a lot of times the back changes. So you make coins over the years, and then you have some coins. If you might pull change out of your pocket, you might have a coin that's 10 years old, 20 years old.

Some people collect coins, right? And they find one from like the 1930s. And you add that to your collection because it's almost 100 years old. Many people have coins that are over 100 years old in our currency today.

So in the same way, they had these coins that were minted over the course of generations. I think it was several hundred years in which this denarius coin was minted.

And so each of them usually would put the face of the current Caesar on the coin. Now, the current Caesar this time was a guy named Tiberius Caesar.

His name comes up in the Bible. And he had been Caesar for about 20 years at this point. And so it's very likely that the coin, it could have been an older coin with a different Caesar's name on it, but it's fairly likely that the, you know, mostly in circulation at this time was one with Tiberius Caesar.

[17:44] And you can actually get this coin today. You can go to a museum. Some people have these coins in their personal collection. There are actually so many coins from this time period that it's actually not that expensive.

You might think, oh, you might pay \$10,000 for one of these, but you could actually probably get one for just a few hundred dollars, depending on what era it's from. But on this specific coin, the one with Tiberius Caesar on it, it has an inscription.

It has his face on there, but it has this inscription. It says, Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus. Augustus was the father.

He was adopted, but the father of Tiberius. And so there was this viewpoint, I guess, that when Augustus, Caesar Augustus died, he became a god.

And so that's what this coin itself said. So it's very possible, right, that this nature of this coin that was used to pay the tax was basically proclaiming idolatry.

[18:54] Now in the Old Testament law, one of the worst things that you could do is what? Worship false gods, set up idols, do anything to honor a false god.

And so it's very likely that that was part of the concern here with this coin and the tax that was used to pay it. Let's talk about taxes, this specific tax.

So there's a specific word used for this tax, and it's actually referring to what's called a poll tax or a tribute tax. Now the Romans, they conquered many cities, many regions, and conquered the people, and they would allow them to actually keep their culture and even like their own government as long as they abided within the confines of what the Romans required.

They had some leeway in how they could rule their areas. their areas. But, if you were a conquered people, you were required to pay tribute to Rome.

And that tribute was a single denarius by every family once a year. Now, this caused a lot of resentment among the populace.

[20:09] especially, the Jews resented it, and people spoke of it as things like a badge of slavery.

You know, we are an enslaved people because we have to pay this tribute, this tax to Rome. Now, we look at this today, right, and we think, wow, they had to pay one day's wages to their government as a tax.

That sounds like a deal today, doesn't it? One day's wage. I think some people have calculated, right, that you have to work until, what is it, March or April or something like that before you finally get to keep your own money every year in this country.

And it causes lots of resentment in this country, just like it does in almost every country of the world throughout all of history. This tax provoked actually many uprisings against Rome.

which many of them were swiftly quelled. Actually, about 30 years later, in AD 66, there was a, the Jewish revolt by a group called the Zealots.

[21 : 20] And these were, you know, you might think of them as like activists, right, Zealots. And they revolted against Rome in 1966, 1966, AD 66.

And, and this was actually a precursor to Rome coming in and sacking Jerusalem and destroying the city, tearing down every single brick of the temple.

And then after that, you know what they did? They said, if you're a Jew, you have to pay two denarii every year. And so, the Romans were not having any part of this revolt.

You don't like our taxes? Okay, we're going to destroy your city and we're going to double it. And that's what they did. Just a few other facts about Bible coins.

Did you know that every coin described in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation you can find today? You can find somewhere whether it's in a museum, it's a personal collection.

[22 : 21] Many of them you can go buy on eBay. You can just go search for, you can search for denarius on eBay and find a denarius from, you know, the several hundred year period where they were made and maybe spend two or three hundred dollars and have one for your own personal collection.

I've heard of personal collectors who have every single Bible coin in their collection and I'm sure that costs a lot more than a few hundred dollars but it's actually fairly reasonable to collect old ancient Bible coins.

But one of the things that does, right, is provide some authenticity to the story of the Bible. The Bible is a book of history, true history, not just made up fairy tales. You know, there's the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon, Mormonism is a cult. A false prophet named Joseph Smith in the 1800s came up with this whole thing about he saw an angel and some golden plates or something like that and transcribed it and came up with this book and it had all stories about how the Jewish people came over to America and they had this civilization and society and Americans so the American Indians were actually Jews and all those kind of things.

And when you test all of this, you find out that it's all a bunch of nonsense. you can do DNA testing on Native Americans or, you know, American Indians, whatever you want to call them and see, well, do they have any Jewish ancestry?

[23 : 45] No, none at all. None at all. And there are coins described in the civilization in the Book of Mormon and you know how many of them have been found?

Yeah, zero. None of them. And so, when people tell lies and make things up, you know, you can test for evidence and you can actually test the Bible and see if the things that it says are true.

Not everything in the Bible is testable but many things are and we find out that when we test them we find out that they are true, that the Bible can be trusted. We'll continue on, verse 17, 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.

So his answer, he could have refused to answer like he did before, right? It says that he knew their hearts, he knew that the reason they were asking was a corrupt reason but here, I think he had an opportunity to do something more valuable by answering rather than not answering.

An opportunity to confound them and also really to I think expose them. And their hearts. Render to Caesar, you know, the Caesar, the Rome was, this was an unbelieving pagan nation.

[25 : 09] The Jews were God's people, they were believers, at least they, ostensibly, they on the outward surface were believers. Some, obviously among the Jews, were true believers.

Many were just looking for opportunities for power. But, Jesus is basically saying here, hey, these are Rome's coins.

You can just give back to them what they gave you, that's fine. That's what they're asking for, that's what you can go ahead and give them back. And then he says this, and to God the things which are God's.

Now, if he would have just stopped and said, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, that might have got him into trouble. That might have been an answer that would have really trapped him.

But by adding this other part, you know, when we read last week about the parable of the vine dresser, what was it that God was looking for, the vineyard owner, what was he looking for from

those tenants?

[26 : 13] He was looking for fruit. And what did Isaiah 5 say was the fruit that God was looking for among his people? Justice, mercy, righteousness.

He wanted them to live uprightly, to do what he was asking them to do, to live, whether, you know, keeping the law of Moses. But doing what is right, you know, not just focusing on the sacrifices, not just focusing on the outward things like fasting, not just looking at outward things like what money you use.

God ultimately wants both for the Jewish people and today. He wants our hearts. He wants our affection. And so, they marveled at him because his answer really didn't just answer the question on its surface, but it also was a rebuke to them because they're not rendering to God the things that should belong to God, that justice, righteousness, and mercy.

So, there's going to be many more confrontations as we read and think questions that are asked, but that's the question that they came to and they came away with nothing.

They marveled at his wisdom that he came up with such an answer that really didn't give them the ammunition that they were looking for. But I think how Jesus answered, we can look at us, ourselves today.

[27 : 50] We all pay taxes, don't we? Or most of us anyway. So, how should we live as Christians in the world that we live in today?

So, let's talk about justice and taxes. Are taxes even a legitimate thing at all? You know, there are some people today that teach that taxes are never legitimate. The governments should never levy taxes against their citizens.

That it's fundamentally corrupt. But what does the Bible say? Romans 13. Romans 13 says this. 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. So, the authority, what we call today a civil authority, that's something that God designed.

He intended for rulers to govern over nations. It's going to tell us in a second what that purpose is for. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

[28 : 54] When you resist those authorities, you're actually resisting what God put in place or his intended purpose in having authorities.

for rulers are not a terror to good works or really what he's saying is they should not be even though many times they are. But that's not God's purpose or intention for the rulers.

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.

And remember the word minister just means servant. The rulers are God's servant to you for the purpose of good. It doesn't always mean that they fulfill that obligation but that is what their purpose is.

But if you do evil be afraid for he does not bear the sword in vain for he is God's minister or servant an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

[29 : 59] That is the purpose of rulers of governments. to be an avenger of evil to prevent evil to uphold justice in the land to ward off evil invaders to raise up armies for such things to defend the nation against invaders.

Therefore you must be subject not only because of wrath or judgment but also for conscience sake. don't just subject yourself to the governing authorities because you're afraid of what they might do to you.

Now that's a good reason in and of itself right? If you look at the history of Rome and what we just talked about with the sacking of Jerusalem they're not messing around.

They have the authority and the power and they're going to use it to make sure that you obey. And so fear is a part of that. But what Paul is saying here is don't just do it because you're afraid do it because of your conscience because it's the right thing to do.

Now sometimes you know when you're under authority when that authority is corrupt and the more corrupt it gets it is hard to do something like that to subject yourself.

[31 : 23] But let's continue. Therefore you must be subject not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake for because of this you also pay taxes. Now this word for tax is the exact same one that Jesus talked about.

This is the poll tax or the tribute tax. You pay taxes for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing.

Here's what he's saying. You pay taxes to support their service to you. That's what your taxes are for. They are meant to serve you and be servants of mine to attend to avenging evildoers to upholding justice and so that's why you should pay taxes.

And then verse 7 render therefore to all their due. Taxes to whom taxes are due customs to whom customs fear to whom fear and even honor to whom honor.

And so there's the same principle. These civil rulers that they lived under that we live under now some people might have this perspective that every ruler that is actually ruling, every president, every prime minister, every legislator, every king is intentionally placed there by God.

[32 : 48] Now we have seen that right in parts of biblical history but I don't think that's what this is saying at all. He's just saying that the position, the authority of ruling over a nation that is part of God's design.

And so we have a responsibility to honor and support them. Support them with our honor, with our fear, and even with our money.

You know, when we pay taxes, so the government has an obligation to uphold justice, right? To raise up armies, to defend invaders, or to keep invaders out of our country.

And so we have an, just like they have an obligation to that service, we have an obligation to support them in that. It takes money, right, to have a justice system.

It takes money to raise up an army. And so really, when we pay taxes, and we'll talk about how this is not totally right, but when we pay taxes, we're actually paying money that we owe.

[33 : 57] Money that we owe because of the service that they are providing. If you hire a plumber, right, to fix your toilet, and he does that work, he gives you a bill, right, and you owe him that money that he's billing you for.

He's not taking it, you owe that to him, and if you don't pay him that bill, what do you call that? Stealing, right?

Stealing isn't just taking money out of somebody's pocket. If you owe somebody something and you don't pay them what you owe, that's called stealing. And so when, so the taxes that we pay to the government is something that we actually owe.

Now we'll talk about the exceptions here, I don't, maybe not call it exceptions, but the complexity or difficulty that comes in. because the government has these, you know, what we described, they have a specific set authority, a certain jurisdiction, and so when they use that tax money for upholding justice, for defending the nation against invaders, then they are using that tax money in a legitimate way.

And sometimes taxes have to be increased, right, in order to provide a higher level of service. For example, when you're at war, they have to raise the taxes to raise up more ammunition and tanks and these kinds of things in order to defend against our enemies.

[35 : 36] But what happens when your government spends money not just on justice, but on, what they like to call it, social justice.

And you know what social justice means? Well, injustice, yeah. Injustice, that's what it means. Usually it means stealing, right? We're going to take money from, you know, maybe from everyone or from certain groups and then we're going to give that money usually to people who we think will vote for us.

That's usually how it works. things. But for most of human history, the power to tax, this power that governments have over people has been abused. This is not something new.

And governments have used their power to tax people to do things that are really outside of their jurisdiction, outside of their God-ordained right to do so.

using things unrelated to justice or national defense. You know, there's a book out there by a guy named Frédéric Bastiat, if I'm pronouncing his name right. He's a French guy, and I can't remember if it was the 1800s or something like that.

[36 : 43] He wrote a book called The Law. It's a short book. It's actually a pretty easy read. But it's a book really against this whole concept of socialism. And he, I don't know if he coined this term or if he just used it, but he refers to taxation as legal plunder.

When you use that tax money, not for justice, not to uphold the law, which is what his book is about. His whole book is about how government's obligation is to uphold the law. And when you do, when

the government spends its time doing other things, you know what happens the law gets neglected. And don't we see that happening? When your government is focused on, well, we need to feed everybody and clothe everybody, and well, we need to make sure that everybody's educated, and also we need to make sure that, you know, people are, make sure there's enough diversity and all these different things, right?

And is that the government's job? No, it's not their job. It's not their obligation. It's not their responsibility. And so when you put your focus on all these other things, the law actually ends up getting neglected and injustice increases.

And so that's what his book, is about. And so the government actually, when the government taxes beyond what is their obligation, what is within their authority, that's when they cross the line into stealing.

[37 : 59] When governments take more than what they need for their actual obligations, their actual authority, then that's called stealing. Some people think, well, it's the government. The government can't steal, right?

They can just tax them whatever they want. And that is not true at all. Even governments can steal when they take more than is needed for what they are called to do.

In this country, I looked it up the other day, and if you look at it, you know, most taxes are hidden, right? That's very purposeful. Sometimes I think if it was clear, all the taxes that we paid on a day-to-day basis, there would be just a revolt overnight.

But if you just look at the amount of government spending and the amount of government revenue, or no, the GDP, sorry, the amount of spending, the money that government spends, and then the total GDP, the gross domestic product, how much our country produces, and the amount of money that the government spends, and this is all federal, local, state, compared to everything everybody earns throughout the whole country, it comes to 37%.

So 37% of all revenue that's generated from all the families and businesses in this country is spent by different levels of government.

[39 : 20] And that's a lot. It's a lot more than one day's wage every year, isn't it? And when you look at the kinds of things that are being spent on, how many of those things are for courtrooms and police forces and armies, it's actually very small.

I'm not sure what the percentage of it is, but it's very small. When you look at the Old Testament, it was actually, I think there's somewhere, I can't remember where it's at, maybe I can look it up later, but there's a reference to a 10% tax that is referenced as onerous back in the Old Testament times, 10% tax.

And then, not only that, not only does the government use our tax money for things that are illegitimate, but so many times they're using our tax money to pay for things that are just pure evil.

I think about Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood, who receives in different various government grants about a billion dollars a year from various programs of the government. It's coming from tax money that we are forced to pay. Not only that, not only do they promote abortion violence against the most innocent among us here in this country, but then in so many other countries, our country says, hey, you are a poor country, we'll help you.

[40 : 56] We have what's called foreign aid, and we'll give you a billion dollars, but we have one stipulation. Usually it's many stipulations, but one of the stipulations is, well, you need to have a family planning, they call it, policy that we approve of.

Because, well, there's too many people in the world, and, well, especially there's too many Africans. I mean, there's too many African people out there, so we need to make sure that you guys aren't having too many babies. So you need to have birth control, and you need to have an abortion policy in place.

This is what our government does. And then we'll give you a billion dollars as long as you guys aren't breeding too much. What a wicked, evil thing for our nation to do.

Of course, then you have the prison system paying for prisoners to get sex changes and promoting evolution and deviancy in our schools. All these things happen, and you really feel like this is a real struggle.

I'm supposed to pay my taxes to the government, but they're using my money to do so many corrupt and evil things. Should I just try to avoid paying my taxes?

[42 : 10] Should I, quote, cheat on my taxes? Well, I will say, if there's any opportunity to legally avoid paying taxes, always look for those opportunities.

But there are some people who look at protesting unjust taxation, and I think that's always appropriate.

It's always appropriate to expose injustice and evil. But then when it comes to things like riots and revolts, I think we get into, you know, outside of what's biblically ordained here, there's a guy who I used to watch his videos.

He was called Dr. Dino, and he had this creation science ministry where he would teach people about what the Bible says about young earth creation and dinosaurs, and there's actually references to dinosaurs in the Bible and those kinds of things.

He would travel around all over. Had a tremendous ministry. But he really didn't like the U.S. tax system, and he was forced as an employer to pay taxes for his employees, and he said, that's not right.

[43 : 19] And you know what? It's true. You shouldn't force, it's wrong to enforce anybody to be a tax collector. Now, it's one thing to say you owe your taxes, and that's fine, but to force somebody as an employer to collect taxes for the government is not a righteous thing to do.

So he decided he's not going to do it as a way of protest. Anyway, it didn't take long for IRS agents with their guns to come in and invade his house and get all the information they needed on everything.

And I believe that his employees were actually were paying their taxes. I think they were, for the most part. It's just he wasn't doing it for them on their behalf. He spent 10 years in prison for that. I also talked to a guy once. I found, or I heard of a guy who owned a business, and he, in his business, he only dealt with cash so he wouldn't have to pay any taxes.

And I told that person, I said, you need to tell that guy that he's, that's going to catch up to him eventually. Because, man, the governments, when they don't get their money, they don't mess around.

[44 : 30] And so, not only not a wise thing to do, but I think also you're stepping outside the bounds of what the Bible teaches. I want to look at this in a big picture, and we'll wrap this up.

You know, the Jews were, at this time, living under occupation. They didn't have their own nation. They didn't have control of their own nation. They didn't have their own king. Herod was kind of just a pseudo puppet king. He wasn't even fully Jewish.

I think he might have been partly Jewish. But they were an occupied people. And they were living in a godless system.

Taxes were just really one part of it. You know, it's really easy to get upset about when people steal money from us, right?

That's something that almost anybody's going to get upset about, right? When you take money from me, I'm going to be upset, whether you're righteous or not. But really, I think what God is more concerned is about the corrupting influence of sin on our lives.

[45 : 35] on us. It's one thing to have money taken out of your pocket to be stolen from you.

You know what's worse than that? It's when you take money out of somebody else's pocket. That hurts you more, right? When the government forces you to fund their abortion violence or sexual perversion that they're promoting, you know, that's one thing.

And that's wrong. And we feel victimized because of it. Because we are victimized. But what's worse? When we're the ones who are succumbing to the temptation for sexual morality and things of that nature.

And so I think really God is more concerned with our hearts and what's happening to us and the temptations of the world around us than he is with, you know, whether, you know, how much money we're able to keep from our income.

There's a passage in Jeremiah where God is telling the Jews how they ought to live in captivity. He says this, Jeremiah 29 verse 4, 29 verse 4, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who are carried away captive whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon.

[47 : 01] Is Babylon a righteous nation? Babylon was the wickedest of nations. Some of the things that they did were just vile and filthy, full of perversion and violence.

But he says this, verse 5, Jeremiah 29, 5, build houses and dwell on them, plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands so that they may bear sons and daughters that you may be increased there and not diminished.

And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive. And pray to the Lord for it, for the city.

For in its peace, you will also have peace. God was saying, hey, listen, you're in an evil city and I don't want you to be revolting. I don't want you to be causing uprisings.

I want you to just live as my people in this foreign land. It's wicked, it's corrupt, there's all kinds of things going on around. But I want you to just live a normal life.

[48 : 10] Build, be productive, and also even pray for that city. Pray for it. I'll swear, Paul tells us to pray for our rulers.

Peter, who was the apostle to who? Peter was an apostle to the Gentiles. Not the Gentiles. He was an apostle to the Jewish people. He was an apostle to the believing Jews, the Jewish believers.

And so in his book, 1 Peter 2, verse 11, he's speaking to the Jewish believers, the Jewish Christians, and he's admonishing them on how to live as pilgrims in a foreign land.

He says this, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from the fleshly lusts which war against the soul. What was his concern? Don't let the sin that's out in the world into your hearts.

That's what you need to be concerned with. Having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

[49 : 15] Therefore, submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme or to governors or 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, and honor the king. Listen, I want you to live peacefully in this foreign land as pilgrims.

Just like he told the Jews in Jeremiah, build homes, bear fruit, plant gardens, eat the fruit of those gardens, submit yourself to those rulers.

Here he says, Peter says, to the Jews living at that time right after Christ, that they may see that you are good, that you serve God, that you are not the kind of person who is just going to riot and do all these other things.

[50 : 28] We as believers today, just like the Jewish believers back then, are in a similar situation, aren't we? Even though we are not Jews living in a Gentile land, we are Gentiles living in a Gentile nation, mostly Gentile, right?

But it's the same way in a more spiritual sense, just like really in a spiritual sense it was that way with the Jews during Peter's time. We're in the same situation.

We're pilgrims in a foreign land. We're being plundered through taxation. It's fine, like I said, to point those things out. But we ought to pay that tribute.

It's not always fair, and that's been that way for basically all of human history, but God expects us to pay that tribute. But really, what is the most important thing that we should be focused on?

Is it on protecting our pockets from the hands of the government? Is that what the most important thing is for us Christians to be spending our time on?

[51 : 39] This is what Romans 12.2 says. This, I think, speaks to the important thing that we focus on as we live in pilgrims in a foreign land.

Romans 12.2 says this, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

There's a world out there that we're living in. It's a strange land. It's a foreign land. We're pilgrims. We're just traveling through. Don't be conformed to that world.

We are citizens of a different country where we behave differently, where we act differently. And we need to make sure that that worldly system doesn't creep on and get into our hearts.

And then the other thing is we can focus looking heavenward, right, to our heavenly home.

Philippians 3.20 says this. This is our last passage.

[52 : 38] Philippians 3.20. For our citizenship is in heaven, right? Not America. I mean, we do have a real, actual citizenship here in America, or at least I think most of us here.

But our true citizenship, the one that ultimately matters, is in heaven. It says this. From which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body, that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able, even to subdue all

things to himself.

So we're looking for a heavenly, to our heavenly home, our future home, but we are citizens of that home now, right? We are strangers in a foreign land here on earth, in this worldly system, but ultimately we're travelers, traveling, ultimately going to get to that heavenly home.

And we're waiting for the Savior, who's going to come from heaven, and what's he going to do on earth? He's going to establish justice.

And the justice that all of us, for millennia, have yearned for in our hearts, we see the corruption, and the plundering, and we want to see that justice.

[53 : 58] We want to see it now. And we can have a little bit of success here and there, but ultimately there's a day coming when Jesus Christ will come, he will establish justice on the earth.

And so our vision is heavenly. Our focus is heavenly. And it's not wrong to protest, to bring things up, but ultimately we want to have a good witness, a good testimony to the world around us.

That we're willing actually to suffer and endure through certain things, to be able to uphold our integrity and our trust in the Lord. I was hoping for a few minutes to see if there was any questions. Do we have a, or comments, do we have a mic? I guess we can go over just a few minutes. It's been a while since we've done that, so. Any comments, questions?

On this passage? Right up here. Yeah, right there.

[55 : 16] I, I've pondered on, on, on this whole business of, how they, how the, the Jews who hated Jesus, they're looking to trap him, how they managed to get along so well with such opposition.

The Pharisees were no friends to Herodians. Assuming that the Herodians actually supported Herod, the Pharisees hated him. Yeah. And with good reason.

So, I, I've often wondered that, and how the Pharisees and Sadducees conspired together to, to trap Jesus.

I kind of suspect that the Herodians went with the Pharisees this time because the Pharisees are going to say, if he says, pay taxes, that, then we being strict adherents to the Mosaic Code, not the spirit of the law, but the, you know.

Yeah. We're going to say, look at this wicked man. And the Herodians are definitely going to go after the don't pay taxes business. But I just wondered, how in the world did they get along so well as to even go together to try to trap him?

[56 : 41] When you have a common mission, you know, even enemies will come together, right? And it's certainly not a, a just or a righteous mission. Hey, uh, Isabel, all the way back to Roger.

Another Roger. Oh, I struggle with the Romans passage about obey your government.

Yeah. And they're supposed to take care of evil, but they do evil. And, uh, I've been looking for a preacher that explains that to me the way I like it.

Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Uh, yeah. I can't help but think back to, uh, throwing the tea in the harbor.

Mm, Boston Tea Party. And that's where, that's where our country started. Yeah. So what do you think? Was that, was that a, is that a, is that within biblical parameters, you think?

[57 : 41] Or, or not? Should they have done that? Ha, ha, ha, ha. You know, avoid that question. You know, looking back at that, I don't think that was an appropriate thing to do. I mean, they were destroying somebody else's property.

I think that was, uh, outside of the bounds of what, what God would prescribe. If they would have looked to the Bible. Um, but, you know, people can debate those specific issues.

But, yeah, I would, uh, if, if they would have asked me to join that tea party, I would have said, no, I'm not going to do that. Anybody else? And I know that might be heresy in our, you know, we're, we're in a God and country, you know, kind of, uh, thing.

We, we like to look at everything that our founding fathers or whatever did is, is righteous and good. But not always, right? Anything else? We'll wrap it up.

All right. Let's pray. Father, we love you. Thank you for your word today and the words that we, uh, read, uh, for the wisdom that Jesus gave and, uh, the rest of the scriptures.

[58 : 44] It's, it's difficult. It's, there's so much complexity in living in the world that we have to in this world system. It seems like it's getting harder every day. And we just continue to ask you to give us the wisdom on how to navigate so many difficult things, uh, evil things that we have to try to live in the world, but not be of it.

But, uh, we look to you for that wisdom and how we can keep our families safe in our own self, our, our own hearts and the hearts of our children safe from that worldly corruption, but also to be a light,

a bright and shining light in the world that they would look to us and, and, uh, and really speak that our behavior would, uh, speak to you and cause people to look to you even for salvation. Thank you for all these things in Jesus name. Amen. All right. Thanks everybody. Happy Memorial Day.