

God and Government: Study Notes

Sermon Notes:

Passage: Mark 12:13-17

-We live in a time where political lines are drawn and people are choosing sides. During the time of Jesus this was the case as well. We see this play out most clearly with the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Sadducees: (supporters of herod) were a religious faction that wielded societal power in nearly every aspect. Jewish aristocrats of their day, known as much for their wealth and corruption as for their religious devotion. They controlled the Temple.

Pharisees: were caught up in their idea of separation from the world and what made them spiritually clean. They wanted nothing to do with the current government. They felt as though it was an illegitimate government that restricted their God given freedom.

On the denarius they showed to Jesus, It said Augustus Tiberius, son of the divine Augustus. On the back was the title "Pontifex Maximus," declaring that Caesar was the high priest of the Roman Empire.

The coin they handed Jesus literally said that Caesar was God. Augustus was God and Tiberius who was ruler at the time was the Son of God. The other side saying that he was the High Priest of the Roman Empire

In reality it is all God's, but Caesar, he is the one whose image is stamped on the coin. Give it back to him.

Give to God what belongs to him. What is that? Well we are all stamped with the image of God on our selves. We are made in the image of God. What does God really want? Let the government have their money. What I want is your heart!

Passage: Romans 12:1-2

I think that Paul in Romans is touching on the very same idea as Jesus. So when Jesus says give to God what is God's I don't think it is just a conceptual idea. If we are giving our lives to God it is played out in how we think and how we live.

I think this can also represent the temptation there is to want political control. They were trying to get Jesus to dive into the politics of the day.

Our temptation in 2020 is to fall into the same trap where we are scratching and clawing for that worldly control. Getting too caught up in the kingdoms of this world and acting in a way that is not the way of the kingdom of God.

Passage: John 18:36

Historically when the church has fought for political influence and control it has gone horribly wrong.

Passage: Phillipians 3:20

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The temptation is to try and establish God's kingdom within the systems and ways of this world.

Power Over vs. Power Under mentality

Life Group Discussion

(feel free to use any or all of these questions)

Start Up Questions:

1. 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s: Which decade do you love the most and why?
2. Have you or your family ever got involved in politics? What did that look like?

Study & Discussion:

Read together: Luke 20:20-26

1. *In what ways could Jesus have gotten in trouble by answering the questions of the religious leaders in this story?*
2. They were amazed at Jesus answer to their question. Why is that? What are some of the implications to His answer? What was His main point?
3. How is it that authoritarian or totalitarian type governments would find Jesus statements threatening?
4. How did Jesus view government? How did he interact with it? How does this inform us how we as believers should interact with government?

Read together: Romans 13:1-7

1. Paul's writings were informed by the teachings of Jesus. What does he tell the Romans are the main purpose of government? How should we as followers of Jesus see and act towards government?

Prayer: (this can be done before or after the study)

1. Pick someone or a situation in government today that you can pray for.
2. What would you like to receive prayer for today?