

Sunday, November 13, 2016
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Introduction to Mark 12:13-17

The presidential election has sparked severe reactions on the part of those who supported both major candidates. For those who supported the losing party, this election evokes real fear and anger. This has manifested itself in emotion-driven protests across the United States. Among those who supported the winning party, there have been some who lack any kind of compassion towards others. This has manifested itself in mockery of others and arrogance regarding the superiority of their view, which in any other circumstances would be disapproved of. What can bring healing in the midst of this chaos?

During the first century, when Jesus was on earth, there were similar political divisions. Some felt so strongly against Rome that both before and after Christ they attempted to overthrow Roman rule by force. Some believed that they had better stick with Rome at all costs. When posed with a question designed to paint Jesus into one political corner against the other, He responds in a way that demonstrates how all those who follow Him ought to think of political responsibility and government.

Context

At this point, Jesus has firmly positioned Himself in opposition to every faction among the Jewish leaders. His teachings throughout the week between His triumphal entry and the cross would only firmly position Him in their minds as a threat. However, if we take Jesus seriously, we cannot help to be drawn to Him more and more....

Structure

- I. Jesus' opponents flatter and question (13-14)
- II. Jesus turn their test back on them (15-17)

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 12:13-17

“God and Government”

What’s Happening Here?

- People *religious-political leaders*
- Intention *catch*
- Approach *flattery*
- Question *trick*

Human Government Is Legitimate

- Pay what you owe
- Romans 13:1-7
- Participate
- Pray 1 Timothy 2:1

God’s Government Is Supreme!

- Supersedes the first
- Acts 5:28-29
- Whose Image?

“No matter who is president, Jesus is King!”

“And though the wrong seems off so strong, God is the ruler yet!”

Discuss

- 1) What are some reasons people have such strong disagreements in the realm of politics and government? Are there any specific examples from your own life or people you have interacted with? How can we, in the coming days, love those with whom we have disagreements?

- 2) Read Romans 13:1-7. What roles do human governments play in God's design for the world? How does that inform the way we think about our role in submitting to them?

- 3) What are some differences between the way the kingdoms (or governments) of this world operate and the way the kingdom of God operates?

- 4) Read Acts 5:27-32. How should we respond when the laws of the human government conflict with the laws of the kingdom of God? How can we prepare ourselves now for when those days might come?

- 5) When Jesus said, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" it is safe to say He was speaking about taxes. When He said, "render unto God the things that are God's" what was He referring to? How do we go about rendering unto God's the things that are God's?

Go Deeper *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: The gospel of God's redeeming grace teaches that Christians are to live in a way that is consistent with how God intended the world to be before the fall. In this light, Christians are to respond to human authority in recognition of the purpose that God gave it in creation: namely, to keep order in society. Because of the fall, human governments often contradict the laws of God, but as redeemed humanity, we are called to submit because that is in keeping with the good purpose with which God ordained human government. But the gospel also teaches that one day all human authority will come to an end, but of the increase of Christ's government there will be no end, and He will establish it and uphold it with peace and righteousness forever and ever (Is. 9:7).

Whole Bible Connections: Israel was brought out from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, by God's gracious, mighty hand. In doing so, God was setting Himself up to be their righteous king. He would execute justice and mercy among the people through His word (Torah) and through the prophets. Sadly, the people of Israel wanted to be like all the other nations and have a human king who would rule over them. This desire ultimately led to many generations of wicked kings which ultimately ended in their removal from the promised land. God has stated all along that those who follow Him ought not desire to relate to human governments the way the rest of the world does. Because the way the rest of the world relates to human governments is ultimately diminishes God's rightful place and is destructive for mankind.

Theological Connections: In some sense, God has already established His rule and reign over the world. Everywhere that His word is preached and His people obey could be called "territory" of God's kingdom. All those who bow the knee to Jesus are ultimately resting in the citizenship that is found in heaven (Phil. 3:20), but there is often a demand by the kingdoms of this world for total obedience to them. This is the great dilemma that Christians face. But since Jesus has ultimate authority over the earth and everything in it (Matt. 28:18), whenever the will of a human government contradicts the will of God, Jesus must prevail.