

Do Your Duty!

Matthew 22:15-21

some notes from Dr Adrian Rogers' sermon "Christian Citizenship"



Living Together In The Love Of God

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FOCAL Read Responsively Matthew 22:15-21 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. (16) And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. (17) Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? (18) But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? (19) Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. (20) And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? **(21) They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**

A *fugitive* is someone who is running away from home. A *vagabond* is someone who has no home. A *stranger* is someone who is away from his home. But a *pilgrim* is a person who is headed home.

The Bible says that God's people are both “**strangers and pilgrims**” (1 Peter 2:11). Though we make a temporary home on this earth, this world is not our home. Like the song says:

**This world is not my home,
I'm just passing through
My treasures are laid up,
Somewhere beyond the blue.
The angels beckon me,
To Heaven's open door,**

**And I can't feel at home
In this world anymore!**

For the Christian, our home is in Heaven. That makes us *strangers*. And every day we move closer to our eternal home. That makes us *pilgrims*. But being strangers and pilgrims, Heaven bound, do we have any obligations to this earth?

Some people – even some Christians - think that Christians should stay in the Church-house like jailbirds in a stained glass cage.

There are so called “Christian” groups like **Barry Lynn's “Americans for the Separation of Church and State”** who work with the ACLU to lock Churches and Christians away from politics. They say that our Constitution prohibits religion in any form from being in the public forum. They use the phrase "Separation of Church and State" like a weapon - though this phrase is found no where in our Constitution. The First Amendment to our Constitution places absolutely *no restriction* on the Church.

Our Constitution does not remove a Christian's right to free speech. Our Constitution restricts our government from coming into the Church, but does not restrict the Church from participating in the government. In fact, God's people are *commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ* to participate in their government.

In today's text we see two groups of people - the Pharisees and the Herodians - doing what they did best.

These people *despised* the Lord Jesus. They were prideful, self righteous, and pompous. Jesus had let the air out of them several times before, so they were always looking for a way to trip Him up.

They thought they had a way today.

You see, the average Jew at this time *despised* the Romans and the Roman Empire. Rome had conquered Israel many years before, and had put a puppet governor in place to rule over them. So the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Jesus and - buttering Him up - said:

FOCAL Matthew 22:16-17 ... **Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. (17) Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?**

They thought they had Jesus here. If Jesus said "No, you don't need to give tribute (taxes) to Caesar" then the Pharisees would tell the Roman authorities - and Jesus would be locked up as a traitor to the State. If Jesus said "Of course you should pay tribute (taxes) to Caesar" then they thought His followers would turn on Him - for no one liked paying taxes to their captors. But our Lord **perceived their wickedness** and said "**show Me a piece of money**". When they showed Him the money Jesus asked "**Whose image and name is on this coin?**". They answered, "**Why, it's Caesar's, of course**". Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 22:21 **Render** therefore unto

Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Word Study The word translated "**Render**" is the Greek APODIDOMI (Aorist Active Imperative), (**αποδιδωμι** Pronounced ap-od-eed'-o-mee), which means "**to discharge what is due, to give back, to recompense, to do your duty**". Jesus said "**Do your duty to your government, and do your duty to your Savior and Lord**".

Our Lord Jesus said that the Christian has a dual duty: we have a duty, an obligation, a responsibility to "Caesar" or the human government, and we have an equal obligation or responsibility to God. Every believer owes a debt to the Lord Jesus Christ Who saved him. Every believer also owes a debt to the human government that protects our religious freedom.

Can I Be A Christian And Be Involved In My Government?

The question is not "**Can I be a Christian and be involved in my government?**" Based on what Jesus teaches the better question to ask is "**Can I be a Christian and not be involved in my government?**"

The world and the worldly - just like the Pharisees of Jesus' day - feel that Christ and Christians should stay out of the government. We have heard so much about "separation of Church and state" that some have begun to ask "**Can I be a Christian and be involved in my government?**" Based on what Jesus teaches the better

question to ask is "**Can I be a Christian and not be involved in my government?**"

You may have heard the lie that "America is not a Christian nation". This is a lie. It is lie from the father of lies, Satan himself. America was founded by Christians, by people who loved the Lord. You see, Christians believe that no one should be forced to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is a choice that you should freely make - but no Bible believing Christian will compel you to this decision.

Christians stood up for the Lord and founded this country. America needs Christians to be like the *founders*, or else this nation will *flounder*!

Christians initially came to this country and settled it, writing a Constitution and Laws that legislated against immorality while allowing each person the freedom to accept - or reject - the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The various **State Constitutions** recognized both religious liberty as well as Almighty God. The **North Carolina Constitution** states in its *Preamble*

"We, the people of the State of North Carolina, grateful to Almighty God, the Sovereign Ruler of Nations, for the preservation of the American Union and the existence of our civil, political and religious liberties, and acknowledging our dependence upon Him for the continuance of those blessings to us and our posterity, do, for the more certain security thereof and for the better government of this State, ordain and establish this Constitution. "

The **Tennessee Constitution** of 1796 noted:

"Tennessee 1796, Art. XI.III. That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their conscience..."

The **South Carolina Constitution** of 1778 in its *Preamble* said:

"We, the people of the State of South Carolina grateful to God for our liberties, do ordain and establish this Constitution"

The **Virginia Bill of Rights** of 1776 states:

"Bill of Rights, XVI ... Religion, or the Duty which we owe our Creator, can be directed only by Reason ... and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian Forbearance, Love and Charity towards each other."

I could go on and on. Every State Constitution now or has at one time acknowledged both God as well as the liberty which the government is supposed to protect.

Samuel Adams, a signer of the Declaration of Independence wrote:

"II. The Rights of the Colonists as Christians. These may best be understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of The Great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be found

clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament. "¹

America was founded on Christian ideals and Biblical morality. Our national heritage is a free Church existing in a free state.

George Reed, who signed both the Declaration of Independence as well as the United States Constitution was known as **"The Father of Delaware State"**. Judge Reed wrote the first edition of Delaware's Laws and it's state Constitution. In order to hold office in Delaware the 1776 Law stated:

1776, Article XXII. Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust...shall...make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: "I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration."

James Wilson - also a signer of both the Declaration of Independence as well as the United States Constitution - was a Supreme Court Justice appointed by President George Washington. Judge Wilson believed that all law comes from God, and said:

"Far from being rivals or enemies, religion and law are twin sisters, friends, and mutual assistants."

¹ *The Rights of the Colonists* by Samuel Adams, *The Report of the Committee of Correspondence to the Boston Town Meeting*. November 20, 1772

Indeed, these two sciences run into each other. The first and governing maxim in the interpretation of a statute is to discover the meaning of those who made it."

Before the American Revolution Bibles were imported from England. In 1782 Robert Aitken printed the first English language Bible in America. What makes the Aitken Bible remarkable is that *it was* endorsed by Congress.

"Whereupon, RESOLVED, THAT the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion, as well as an instance of the progress of arts in this country, and being satisfied from the above report of his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize him to publish this recommendation in the manner he shall think proper."

John Hancock, the first man to sign the Declaration of Independence gave a speech on March 5, 1774 which was printed in five pamphlet editions and widely circulated. He said:

"... let us play the man for our GOD, and for the cities of our GOD; while we are using the means in our power, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great LORD of the universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth inequity."²

2 Samuel Adams: A Life by Ira Stoll, pg 119

Charles Carroll - one of the first signers of the Declaration of Independence - wrote:

"On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on His merits not on the works I have done in obedience to His precepts."

Our nation was founded by Christian men who believed that the Bible is the Word of God. It was founded by people who - though *strangers and pilgrims* on this earth - stood up for what they believed in.

The scandal of our time is the bad citizenship of good people. When we do not participate in our government, bad people do - and we all pay for it. Our children and our ancestors will pay for it.

If you are a Christian you *must* stand up for the Lord. You **must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.**

Illustrate Inaction is a weapon of mass destruction.

When God's people stand up for their Lord, they become agents of change in their society. Everyone knows the Bible story of Joseph. Despised by his brothers, he was sold into Egyptian slavery, and ended up in an Egyptian jail. But when the time came for Joseph to speak up, he did. Because Joseph loved the Lord he saved God's Israel, and that nation enjoyed several hundred years of prosperity. This went on until ...

Acts 7:18-19 ... another king arose, which knew not Joseph. (19) The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

How could God's people go from the palace to the prison, from princes to paupers? It happened because the Lord's people stopped standing up for what they believed in.

The great Civil Rights activist **Dr. Martin Luther King** once rightly said, "**Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter**". And **Albert Einstein** said "**The world is a dangerous place. Not because of those who do evil. But because of those who look on and do nothing**".

How Do I "Render Unto Caesar"?
What Does Jesus Expect Of Me?

FOCAL Matthew 22:21 **Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.**

When our Lord Jesus said these words, He was ministering in the historical context of an conquered population. Israel - God's people - had no right to vote in Rome. In fact, an Israelite could be compelled to carry a soldier's burden like a pack mule for up to one mile. Israelis were regarded by Roman citizens as slaves, animals, and conveniences. Regardless as to how they were treated the Lord said "You have a duty to your government". Why is that? It is because - regardless as to

how things look - **God is ultimately in control of all things**. The Prophet Daniel was taken into captivity along with all of Southern Israel in 586 BC. Daniel praised his Lord, saying:

Daniel 2:20-21 Blessed be the name of God forever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: (21) And He changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:

Our Lord controls the nations - He controls all things. We often look at what is happening and feel that it is all out of control. Not so! God is in control.

Illustrate I was having a discussion with my mother this week about my little sister Crissy. When momma found out that she was carrying Crissy she was 44 years old. Momma told me, "When I first heard that, I went "Oh no! I'm 44 years old". The doctors recommended that Crissy be aborted because of momma's age. Momma refused - and was glad. Momma told me "What if I had never have had Crissy. She has been the child who has stayed near to me and your dad our whole lives. My other children have been in other states, and far away. But Crissy married a local man and stayed - and has helped us through so many hard times". Dear friends, **Our God knows the end from the beginning:**

Isaiah 46:10 and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Has it ever occurred to you that nothing occurs to

God? Adrian Rogers

God is in control! The Apostle Paul, bound in chains and in a Roman prison, wrote:

Romans 13:1-2 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

God is ultimately in control. **There is no power but of God.** We may not understand what is going on - and since we're not God, how can we? - but God does. God doesn't sit in Heaven and go "My, that never occurred to Me!" or "Oops". He is not a man. He is God.

God has established civil government to protect mankind so that the Gospel of Christ can be freely preached.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God's grand design is to receive as many as will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ into glory. The history of America is proof that **there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.** During our struggle for independence from an increasingly

tyrannical Great Britain word came to **General George Washington in 1778 that France was going to ally itself with the American Revolutionists.** Washington wrote³:

"It having pleased the Almighty Ruler of the universe propitiously to defend the Cause of the United American-States and finally by raising us up a powerful Friend among the Princes of the Earth to establish our liberty and independence upon lasting foundations, it becomes us to set apart a day for gratefully acknowledging the Divine Goodness and celebrating the important Event which we owe to His benign Interposition."

The Church is the conscience of the State, not its master or its slave. The Church and the Bible believing Christian living for his Lord set the tone of government. George Washington rightly said:

"...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

As Christians we are *not* to force others to Christ - but we *must* stand up and promote both Him and His Word. We cannot be silent! Jesus said:

FOCAL Matthew 22:21 Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

³ *The Founders on God and Government* by Daniel L. Dreisbach, Mark David Hall, Jeffrey H. Morrison. Rowman & Littlefield, publishers

We who believe have a double duty: we are to support our government AND support our God. This means when the government goes contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Holy Scripture we are to STAND UP and say NO! Dear friends, if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and are born again into the Family of God by faith, then you *cannot* just identify yourselves as "Republican", "Democrat", or even "Libertarian". Your orders come from Above. His Word is to color your every thought process. Christians are to:

a **PAY for their government. We render unto**

Caesar by paying our taxes. Jesus Christ set the example. One day the Tax Collector came and asked the disciples had they paid their taxes. Jesus told Peter:

Matthew 17:27 ... go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

b If we are going to enjoy the benefits of our government, **we must not only PAY for it - we must PRAY for it.** The Apostle Paul wrote:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For

this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Paul said "**Pray for those in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life**". Why? Because "**God our Savior will have all men to be saved**".

The government is a watchdog to be fed, not a cow to be milked. The government exists according to the will of Almighty God to maintain peace so that people can *freely accept or reject the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We are to pray for our government. I hear an awful lot of murmuring and complaining about our government and our President, but little prayer. Grumbling won't help - prayer will. The Bible says:

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: {God} turneth it whithersoever he will.

God can change the hearts of our leaders. Pray for them. Let this altar be filled with Christians on their knees praying for our leaders, that they might be saved.

C **PRESENT God's Word to our government and the leaders who represent us.** We live under a republic form of government. That means that these people in office REPRESENT US. If you don't speak up - in Church, in Public, and in the Poll (Voting) Booth - then

you have no right to complain when things go wrong.
Preach not your *opinion* but *what your God commands*.
Tell as many as you can that **salvation is by faith alone
in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.**

If you are silent while they kill babies and call it "a medical procedure", they'll never stop killing babies. If you are silent while sexual perversion and excess is promoted as normal, perversion and disease will increase. If you are silent while Christians are denied their freedom of speech, the day will come when the doors of this Church building close forever.

If your representatives - be they Democratic, Republican, or Libertarian - will not heed God's Word VOTE THEM OUT OF OFFICE. You have the power of the vote. Use it for the glory of God, to advance the Kingdom of God.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

