

Text: Matt. 22:15-22 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

INTRODUCTION

1. Teaching in the temple, Jesus was approached by the Pharisees and the Herodians.
 - a. They came with the intention of entangling Him in His teaching - **Mt 22:15-16** plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk
 - b. They questioned Him whether one should pay taxes to Caesar - **Mt 22:17** Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?
2. Ever the Master Teacher, Jesus easily dealt with their question...
 - a. Seeing through their hypocrisy, He called for a coin - **Mt 22:18-19**
 - b. He asked whose inscription was on it, and they answered "Caesar's" - **Mt 22:20-21**
 - c. His reply cause them to marvel, and to go away - **Mt 22:21-22**
3. The reply of Jesus:
 - a. **"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" And to God the things that are God's"**
 - b. This not only silenced His critics, but provided important teaching for His disciples
4. His reply reveals that we have responsibilities to both God and country
 - a. There are things that we must render to Caesar (country)
 - b. There are things that we must render to God

What is our duty to God and country? In this study we shall review what the Scriptures tell us about our responsibilities as citizens and as disciples.

I. OUR DUTY TO COUNTRY

A. PAY TAXES...

1. This was the point of Jesus in our text - **Mt 22:17-21**
2. Paul also taught us to pay taxes – **Rom. 13:6-7a** **For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.**

B. OBEY LAWS...

1. We are to submit to the ordinances (laws) of the land –

a. **Ro 13:1-5 13:1** 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. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. **3** 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. **4** For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. **5** Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake.

b. **Titus 3:1** Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

2. This we do for the Lord's sake, that we might silence foolish men - **1 Pet. 2:13-16** Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as 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.

C. FEAR AND HONOR...

1. We are to respect and honor those in positions of authority – **Rom. 13:7** Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

a. We are to fear the king - cf. **Pro 24:21** My son, fear the Lord and the king; Do not associate with those given to change;

b. We are not to speak evil of our rulers.

Exo 22:28 You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

Acts 23:5 Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, `You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.' "

Titus 3:1-2 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, **2** to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.

2 Pe 2:10 -11 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, **11** whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Jude 8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

2. Even as we are to honor all and love the brethren - **1 Pe 2:17** Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. -- Do you notice that Paul or Peter never had unkind words about Nero?

D. DO GOOD...

1. We are to be ready for every good work - **Titus 3:1** Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work,

2. We are to have conduct that is honorable before all - **1 Pe 2:11-12** Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers,

15-16 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.

E. PRAY.

1. To make supplications, offer prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks - **1 Tim 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,**

2. To pray for kings and all who are in authority - **1 Tim 2:2-3 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,**

Christians are but sojourners and pilgrims in this world (**1 Pe 2:11**) Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,

While our true citizenship is in heaven (**Ph 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,**), we are to be a blessing to those earthly countries in which we sojourn. Fulfill our God-given obligations, and we will be an asset to any country in which we live! Now let's review...

II. OUR DUTY TO GOD

A. LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR BEING...

1. Jesus considered this the greatest commandment of the Law - **Mt 22:34-38 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, " `You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment.**

2. Being the greatest command, I would suggest this is our greatest duty!

B. OBEY GOD FROM THE HEART...

1. If we love God, we will keep His commandments - **1 Jn 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

2. Jesus taught that keeping His commandments is evidence of true love - **Jn 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments. 21, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." 23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.**

C. MAKE GOD OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY...

1. His will, His rule, His righteousness, should be our first priority - **Mt 6:33 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

2. Not only over our personal concerns, but even over our duty to country

a. Whenever there is a conflict between duty to God and duty to country, God must come first

b. As stated by Peter: **"We ought to obey God rather than men"- Ac 5:27-29**

3. This helps to answer questions that often arise concerning the Christian's duty to government

a. Can a Christian vote?

b. Can one serve in political office?

4. If such duties and privileges come at too high a price (i.e., placing country before God), then a Christian must obey God rather than men

a. In some countries, the price may be too high, and a Christian could not serve in political office or exercise certain rights as a citizen

b. Other countries may allow for God to take precedence in one's conduct, permitting the Christian to participate in such things

CONCLUSION

1. Christians ought to be a blessing for any country in which they reside.

a. A source of revenue, with respect for laws, and reverence for those in authority

b. Contributing to the general welfare, through good deeds and fervent prayers

2. Christians can be such a blessing when.

a. They render first to God what is His due, and then what is due the country

b. The country respects the priority that must be given God by its citizens

While those in authority might not always understand their proper place, and expect more of their citizens than what is right, may we who are disciples of Christ never fail to "**Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**"

Ecc. 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.