

Sermon Notes on Mt. 22:15-22, Trinity XXIII

1. Read the parallel accounts at Mk. 12:13-17 and Lk. 20:20-26 for a better understanding of the whole situation. The Synoptics supplement each other. The time is Tuesday of holy week.
2. A NT scholar wrote: "The Pharisees send a group of their keenest students to go with the Herodians to catch Jesus with the dilemma about paying tribute to Caesar, a live question in current politics and theology. They offered Jesus the alternative of popular disfavor or of disloyalty to the Roman government." At Mt. 21:25 Jesus had asked them an "either-or" question for their own good. Then He said: "What do you think?" They had to answer but refused. Now they come to Him saying: "What do you think?" and then asked an "either-or" question solely to trap Him. But He did not refuse to answer.
3. Jesus' enemies state three things (which they do not believe): "You are true. No falsehood in You"; "You teach the way of God truly"; "You are not swayed by prejudice or partiality." Though they are now denying that He is working with Satan (as they once said) notice that they did not admit that He was the Son of God. Satan and his agents never admit that Jesus is the Son of God.
4. Jesus' enemies are trying to impale Jesus on the horns of a dilemma. One scholar has written: "To answer it in Rome's favor would cost Him popular favor, and to answer it in favor of the people would get Him into serious trouble with Roman authorities, which would charge Him with disloyalty to Rome."
5. Now Jesus calls His enemies hypocrites because they do not seriously mean the words of flattery with which they addressed Him. Because of His divinity, Jesus sensed their wickedness.
6. Jesus virtually asked two questions which they were forced to answer: "Whose likeness is this?" "Whose name is this?"
7. The coin belonged to Caesar and represented his government. God Himself established that civil government. Rom. 13:1-6 and I Pet. 2:17. Therefore Jesus supported that institution of God. Here He means: "You must pay your taxes. You must obey your government. You must be loyal to your government because God established it."
8. But the Christian has another loyalty. He must pay the things of God to God. How much is that? Everything. When Job (1:21) said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" he was acknowledging that he owned nothing, but that all belonged to the Lord. I am merely a steward of what God has loaned to me. I owe it all to Him. When a person realizes this he also begins to realize that he must support both State and Church.
9. The Christian lives in two kingdoms: the kingdom of earthly power, the government, and the kingdom of God, the church. The two must always be distinguished sharply but the two do not contradict each other. They must work harmoniously together, each in the other's interest. The state must have just laws and deal justly with all citizens. It must not invade the religious rights of its citizens. The church must use the Word of God and apply it rightly to its members, never invading the legal rights of anyone. Before the Lutheran Reformation the Papacy exercised two powers, one over the state and one over the church. But the Lutheran Reformation broke this power of the Papacy. On the basis of the Bible Luther and his colleagues clearly stated that there are two kingdoms, the state and the church. The Papacy still claims that it has two powers but the Gospel has broken this claim of the Papacy. In fact, the Papacy has no power except that of the Gospel. All Christians are servants. None of them are masters.
10. Read the conversation of Pilate and Jesus at Jn. 18:36-37 and 19:10.11
11. Jesus' answer to His enemies left them speechless. They still hated Him but they could not answer Him. Jesus is your model. Speak only from the Word of God. The Lord will stand by you and protect you.

## Sermon Outline on Mt. 22:15-22, Trinity XXIII

Theme: ALL OBLIGATIONS ARE TO GOD, EXPRESSED IN TWO KINGDOMS

Introduction: The Pharisees were fiercely loyal to the Jews who hated the Romans. The Herodians were fiercely loyal to Rome which ruled the Jews with great difficulty. They came to Jesus with a question to trap Him. But He refused to be trapped. And His answer gives mankind direction in living for all ages of the world.

### I-THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD IS OF GOD AND DEMANDS MY OBLIGATIONS

- A-The kingdom of this world is of God. Jesus uses the word "Caesar" to symbolize the power of the government. In the history of the world there have been many different forms of government but all are of God. Jesus said to Pilate: "You would have no authority over Me if it had not been given to you from above." Jn. 19:11. The God-man, Jesus, was subject to the earthly authority which He had given to Pilate. St. Paul says at Rom. 13:1: "Let every person be subject to higher authorities because there is no authority which is not of God and the authorities which exist have been ordained of God." See also I Pet. 2:13-17 and Tit. 3:1. God Himself has given us an earthly government. Daniel acknowledged the Babylonians as his government. Jesus and Paul recognized Rome as their God-given government.
- B-The kingdom of this world demands my obligations. Jesus told the Pharisees and Herodians: "Pay to Caesar what you owe to Caesar." What did they owe to Caesar? Taxes, obedience to all laws, and loyalty to the government. That is what Jesus Himself, Paul and Peter did. At Mt. 17:24-27 Jesus gives us the correct attitude toward earthly power. He directed Peter to catch a fish which would yield a coin with which Peter would pay their tax. And Jesus obeyed all laws whether of the Jews or Romans. He submitted both to Pilate and Herod at His trial even though it was an unjust trial. And the apostles at Rom. 13:1-6 and I Pet. 2:13-17 direct us to willing obedience toward our government.

### II-THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS OF GOD AND DEMANDS MY OBLIGATIONS

- A-The kingdom of God is of God. Jesus said to the Pharisees and Herodians: "Pay to God the things of God." Jesus said at Mt. 16:18: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." In this passage the word "rock" means Peter's confession of Christ. Christ builds His church on the confession of the church. And even Satan and his hosts cannot destroy this church. To this church Christ gives the power to forgive sins to penitent sinners and to withhold forgiveness from sinners who refuse to repent. Furthermore, God requires His pastors to be able to shepherd His flock. I Tim. 3:2.3. And He requires the members of the church to obey their pastors and to pay their salaries. Heb. 13:17; I Cor. 9:14.
- B-The kingdom of God demands my obligations. We have already mentioned above what is demanded of pastors and what is demanded of members of the church. Christ is our Shepherd. His pastors are also called shepherds. They are to take good care of the flock. Acts 20:28. And when the Pharisees and Herodians came to Jesus, Jesus asked for a denarius, a common coin in that day. We use our money to support the government and the church. We pay our taxes and we pay our church dues. Both are commanded by God. Rom. 13:6.7 and I Cor. 16:2. Paul told the people to pay their taxes and also their church dues. All of this belongs to God. We are only stewards of His gifts.

Conclusion: I am a citizen in two kingdoms, the kingdom of earthly power, my government, and the kingdom of God, my church.

I owe each everything I have. It all is a gift of God and belongs to Him anyway.