

Slide 1

Give To God What Is God's

LUKE 20:19-26

Introduction

1. Have you ever borrowed anything from someone?
2. Perhaps a car, a tool, a book, a phone, or any of a host of things.
3. You knew when that person, whoever it might have been, loaned it to you that you were going to utilize it for a while and then return it.
4. You also knew that it was not yours, but theirs.
5. This morning I would like for you to consider the question, "What do I have that belongs to God?"
6. The longer you think about it, the more you realize how extensive your answer will be.
7. This morning, Luke shares with us an encounter which Jesus has during the last few days prior to His crucifixion which addresses this issue.
8. As we work through these events, it is important that each of us think about how Jesus' answer applies to ourselves.

Slide 2

I. Trying To Get Jesus, By Hook or Crook

A. AN ATTEMPT TO ARREST HIM

"The scribes and the chief priests tried to lay hands on Him that very hour, and they feared the people; for they understood that He spoke this parable against them." (Luke 20:19, NASB95)

1. The religious leaders were growing desperate.

2. They knew the parable Jesus had just told was directed at them.
3. They were determined to kill Him, and wanted to do it right then and there, but He had become so popular that He was beyond their power to silence.
4. They knew that if they took action against Jesus, a riot would ensue.
5. At the beginning of the week, when He had entered Jerusalem with the crowd shouting "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:38), the apostle John records the Pharisees saying to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him" (John 12:19).
6. Now, they must double down on their efforts to rid themselves of Jesus.

Slide 3

B. SENDING SPIES TO DO THE DIRTY WORK

"So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, in order that they might catch Him in some statement, so that they could deliver Him to the rule and the authority of the governor." (Luke 20:20, NASB95)

1. The religious leaders knew that if they were to entrap Jesus, it would have to be done in a way which did not undermine them or their position.
2. So, they chose to use spies who "pretended to be righteous".
 - a. The word translated "pretended" comes from the verb form of a word with which we are familiar — *hypocrite*.
 - b. It literally means "to play the hypocrite."
3. "The problem with hypocrisy is not that it does not tell the truth, but that it tells the truth without sincerity."¹
4. The goal was to take something He said and twist it in such a way that the Roman officials would see Him as a threat to Rome.
5. They believed that in this way Jesus would be sentenced to death and their

¹ Edwards, James R. *The Gospel according to Luke*. Edited by D. A. Carson. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015.

problem would be solved.

Slide 4

II. A Question About The Paying of Taxes

A. AN ATTEMPT AT FLATTERY

“They questioned Him, saying, “Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth.” (Luke 20:21, NASB95)

1. These spies tried to set Jesus up through flattery.
2. Their praise of Him was extravagant and insincere, besides, He already knew what they were thinking.
 - a. Earlier, in chapter six of his gospel, Luke tells of a time when the scribes and Pharisees were closely watching Jesus to see if He would heal a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day.
 - b. Luke tells us that “He knew what they were thinking” (Luke 6:8).
 - c. Later, in chapter eleven, there were some Pharisees who were demanding that He show them a sign from heaven in order to test Him (Luke 11:16).
 - d. Again, Luke tells us that “He knew their thoughts” (Luke 11:17).
3. The same is true here; Jesus already knew what they were thinking and what their intentions were.
4. They made three points concerning His teaching — “We know that . . .
 - a. “You speak and teach correctly”
 - 1) “You speak and teach what is right” (NIV84).
 - 2) You are accurate in your presentation.
 - b. “You are not partial to any”
 - 1) “You defer to no one” (Matthew 22:16).

- 2) Jesus ate with Pharisees and sinners — it didn't matter who they were.
- c. "You . . . teach the way of God in truth"
 - 1) "You teach the way of God in accordance with the way of truth" (Matthew 22:16).
 - 2) You show people how to walk in God's will.

Slide 5

B. AN ATTEMPT AT TRICKERY

"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (Luke 20:22, NASB95)

1. Now that they have "set Jesus up," they ask Him an "innocent" question: "Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"
2. To put it another way, "Is it legal for a Jewish citizen to pay taxes to a pagan Roman government?"
3. In their minds they had set Jesus up with a question which required an either/or, yes/no answer.
4. They thought they had done to Him as He had done to them earlier when He asked them to tell Him whether John's baptism was from heaven or from men (Luke 20:3).
5. We can just imagine them thinking to themselves, "Jesus, let's see you get yourself out of this one!"
6. If Jesus said that the Law of Moses permitted the payment of taxes to Rome then He would alienate those who saw themselves as already suffering under a heavy tax burden and who saw the Romans as an intrusive enemy.
7. On the other hand, if Jesus said that the Law of Moses forbade the payment of taxes to the Romans then He would be committing treason in the eyes of the Roman government and would ultimately face the death penalty.

Slide 6

III. Jesus' Response To Their Ploy

A. TURNING THE QUESTION BACK ON THE QUESTIONERS

“Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar’s.” (Luke 20:24, NASB95)

1. Jesus picked up on His questioners’ deceit and turned the question back on them — “Show Me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?”
2. In Jesus’ day, the amount required to satisfy the imperial poll tax was a denarius which was the average daily wage paid to a laborer.
3. A denarius was a Roman silver coin imprinted with the bust of Tiberius Caesar (ruled, 14-37 A. D.) and an abbreviated Latin inscription, which translated into English states “Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus.”
4. On the reverse side was the image of Tiberius’s mother, Livia, with the inscription “Pontifex Maximus” (“High Priest”).
5. What is most interesting is that these men possess the very coin which symbolizes their subjection to Rome.
6. The Judean & Tyrian shekel were available, and were even required to pay the temple tax.
7. It is because they were involved on a daily basis in Roman commerce and business that they carried Roman coinage.
8. When Jesus asked them “Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” they responded, “Caesar’s.” (v. 24).

Slide 7

B. A SIMPLE YET PROFOUND ANSWER

“And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”” (Luke 20:25, NASB95)

1. Jesus’ questioners could not contest the first part of His answer — “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s.”
 - a. Coins in Jesus’ day were actually understood to be the property of the person whose image and inscription were upon them.

- b. They couldn't object to giving to Caesar what was his already.
- 2. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Christians in Rome expanded upon Jesus' words when, in Romans 13:1, he said, "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God."
- 3. The second part of Jesus' answer is even more profound, because when He said that we are to give "to God the things that are God's," He declared God's total ownership.

Slide 8

- 4. You and I belong to God because we bear His image!
- 5. If you go back to the beginning of our Bibles, Genesis 1:27, you will find this statement, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27, NASB95)
- 6. The question which each of us must consider this morning is this: "How do I bear God's image?"

Slide 9

- 7. We do so in at least two ways:
 - a. First, by our own existence.
 - 1) When God appeared to Moses as he was tending his father's sheep and told him to go back to Egypt and lead His people out of their bondage, Moses said, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (Exodus 3:13).
 - 2) God responded to Moses with these words, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:14).
 - 3) The fact that you and I exist, that we are, is an indication of any all powerful, all knowing, ever present God.

Slide 10

- 4) As the psalmist declared in Psalm 100, "It is He [God] who has made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3).
- 5) Nothing else on this earth has the same eternal spirit and is able to commune with God as mankind.

Slide 11

b. Secondly, by the way we live our lives.

- 1) In his first letter, the apostle John wrote, "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
- 2) The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, said to them, "you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8-10).
 - ❑ So it is that we bear God's image when we strive to live in such a way that we bear fruit in keeping with the One who is Himself Light — "goodness, righteousness and truth."

Slide 12

- 3) In 1 John 4:16, John also wrote, "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."
- 4) Nine verses earlier, John said, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7-8, NASB95).

Slide 13

- 5) In the upper room, on the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another"

(John 13:34-35, NASB95).

- Again, we bear the image of our Maker as we demonstrate His love to our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as to a world that is lost and dying in sin.

Conclusion

1. Luke concludes this encounter with a simple assessment of the situation:

“And they were unable to catch Him in a saying in the presence of the people; and being amazed at His answer, they became silent.” (Luke 20:26, NASB95)

2. These men “became silent” because they were “amazed at His answer,” not because they recognized Him as the One and only Son of God.
3. This morning, as we conclude our study, I would like for each of us to ask ourselves this question, “Have I given to God what is God’s?”
4. God doesn’t just want our money. Nor is it our time and talents He is seeking.
5. God wants us, all of us: all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength.
6. He will not settle for anything less.
7. Will you give Him your all today?