

Render Unto Caesar

By: Daniel Orona

The passage in Matthew 22:15-22 has been used to justify the actions of the church's recent rise into political activism. I've seen numerous ministers say that this means Christians should vote, be politically active and even run for office to further the case for Christ. However this is the exact opposite of what this Scripture mean. The question posed to Christ was a way for the Pharisees to try to trick Jesus as to pushing Him against the Roman government. Recognizing what they were attempting to do, Christ asks, "Whose is this image and superscription?" The Pharisees then respond with Caesar's. Christ then responds to "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.

During that time tribute or taxes had to be paid to the Rome, the government that had control over the land. It was no different than today. All of us must pay taxes to the government according to the law. The teaching here is that, yes, we must pay our taxes or offer our tributes according to the money that has been given to us. Instead of Caesar on our money we have presidents and other founders and must render our taxes using that money to pay. But the balance here is that there must be a separation from the things of Caesar or of this Earth and the things of God. Christ clearly states, give the things to the government that are of the government, but the things that are God's give to God's.

Looking at this we can understand that all things are God's, but more importantly we are God's who have been bought for a price to be presented back to Jesus' Father. The price of our purchase was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Understanding this, we then must offer all of ourselves back to the Father (Romans 12:1-2). Our energy should be to be about the will of our Heavenly Father according to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:49, Luke 12:35-48).

So then why do we continue to entangle ourselves and tie ourselves to a government when Christ very clearly tells us to give ourselves unto God. Why do Christians continue to fight cultural wars and try to have laws passed by the government to further what they believe are Christian values? Paul was very clear with Timothy when he told Timothy to endure hardship as a good soldier in Christ not entangling himself with the affairs of this world (2 Timothy 2:1-5) Entangling yourself in politics and cultural wars depletes your own relationship with Christ as you render your energy not to God, but to Caesar.

Understanding this principle, we must see then that a Christian should not be swayed regardless of what law is passed or things happen in the nation that they live in. It should not matter to the Christian who is in ruling party. Paul told Timothy that we are to pray for the leaders of the nations in which we live that our lives may be peaceable. The American church has blurred this separation that Christ talked and still fail to realize that Christ transcends national borders. Too many of us are rendering our thoughts and our energy which is God's unto politics or unto Caesar.

There will come a time where we will be forced to choose between the government and our relationship with Christ. It is at that time that we much fall back on what the Bible says in Acts 5:29 and Matthew 10:23 where we must follow God over man and when they persecute us in one city to flee unto another.

We have to understand that the Kingdom of Heaven is not of this earth and we

Paul was very clear with Timothy when he told Timothy to pray for leaders that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life (1 Timothy 2:1-4) Regardless of who is in office, we should pray for them for this reason, but I leave you with this challenge. What are you rendering to Caesar and what are you rendering to God? Is all of your energy going to get a certain party elected or showing anger for the direction that the

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country is going? Or are you letting the secular government do what they will and giving all that you are to God and believing that His will will be done regardless of what happens in the nation? We must take stock of ourselves and not be led astray and entangle ourselves with the affairs of this world.