

Jesus Speaks of Taxes & Offerings

Mark 12:13-17, 41-44

One of your classmates tells you, "That church stuff is OK for Sunday morning, but I don't want to be bothered with it Monday through Saturday!" Is there a problem with this kind of attitude? How might you respond to this person?

Prayer

Dear Lord, help us to realize that our relationship with You is more than just a two hour commitment on Sunday morning. Help us to realize that You committed Your whole life to us to bring about our salvation. Please move our hearts to want to serve You at all times with our time, talents, material blessings and abilities. Amen



The Story - Mark 12:13-17, 41-44

Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. {14} When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and care about no one; for You do not regard the person of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? {15} "Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see it." {16} So they brought it. And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

They said to Him, "Caesar's."

{17} And Jesus answered and said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that

are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at Him.

{41} Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. {42} Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans.

{43} So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; {44} "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."



Outer Aim - We should fear, love and trust in God above all things. (Fear – stand in awe of, give glory to, respect, hate evil for God’s sake)

What the Story Tells Us - Discuss the following questions and their answers.

1. How did the Pharisees and Herodians think they had trapped Jesus with their question?
2. Who is “Caesar?” What do we owe to “Caesar?” (Rom. 13:7 will give you more clues.)
3. What should we render to God? (The 1st Commandment with Luther’s explanation can answer this.)
4. If we fear (stand in awe of, give glory to, respect, hate evil for God’s sake), love and trust in God above all things, what will that move our hearts to render unto God?
5. Jesus was reading the hearts of the hypocrites. Were they showing fear, love, and trust to Jesus? How were they showing a lack of fear? Lack of love? Lack of trust?
6. The rich people gave much money to the temple treasury. Were they showing God they were putting Him first in their lives?
7. Were widows able to get jobs in Jesus’ day, or did they have life insurance policies? How were widows taken care of in Jesus’ day?
8. In spite of her poverty, what did the widow in the lesson give the Lord?
9. The action of giving all her money showed that she gave herself completely to the Lord. How did the widow show fear for God? How did she show love for God? How did she show trust in God?
10. The widow showed that God was the most important one in her life. Who had worked this faith in her heart?
11. Do you think she ever broke the 1st Commandment by worrying? Who had forgiven her sins?
12. In what way had Jesus made the widow rich? What could she look forward to some day?

What God’s Word Tells Us - Look at the following verses and explain how Jesus gave completely of His whole life for you.

1. In His life - Romans 5:19, Hebrews 4:15
2. In His ministry - Matthew 4:23, John 8:31-32, John 6:68
3. In His death - Isaiah 53:5-6, 1 John 1:7
4. In His resurrection - Romans 4:25, John 14:19
5. In His ascension - 2 Timothy 4:18, Luke 17:21, 1 John 2:1-2

What have we done to deserve Christ’s committing His entire life to us?

Then why did He do it?

How can we thank Jesus for giving Himself completely for us?

Inner Aim - Because Jesus gave Himself completely for me, I want to give myself completely to the Lord and serve Him.

Your Turn - The Jews in the land of Israel were experiencing famine. Other churches in other parts of the world were collecting money to send to Jerusalem to help their Christian brothers in their time of need. St. Paul was writing to the Corinthians to encourage them in their gift giving. He cited the Macedonian Church as an example for the Corinthians to follow in their gift giving.

Read 2 Corinthians and then answer the following questions together.

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

1. What had God first bestowed on the churches in Macedonia? (v. 1)
2. How did God show His grace to His Church?
3. In spite of trials of affliction and poverty, how did the Macedonians give? (v. 2)
4. How much did they give? (v. 3)
5. With what kind of attitude did they give? (v. 4)
6. To whom did they give themselves before they gave their gift? (v. 5)
7. What does it mean to give yourself to the Lord?
8. What did the Corinthians already have that was necessary to have before they could give a gift? (v. 7)
9. In the Old Testament tithing, giving 10% of your income, was a commandment for the people of Israel. If a farmer got 100 new lambs in the spring he was required to give 10 of them to the Lord as an offering. The Lord does not command His New Testament believers to tithe. In verse 8 St. Paul made it clear that it was not a commandment that they collect money for the Jews. Rather it was a test. What was it a test of? Their love for whom?
10. How did Christ prove the sincerity of His love for us? (v. 9) How did Christ become poor? How do we become rich?

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

1. It makes sense that if we put only a few seeds in the ground we will get a small crop. If we sow lots of seeds we will reap a big harvest. How does this apply to our giving of offerings? (Mal. 3:8-12 may help to explain this.)
2. So giving our offerings to the Lord, especially if we have little to begin with, is not only a test of our love for God, but of what else?
3. What not be the attitude of our heart as we give our gifts? (9:7)
4. What should be the attitude of our heart as we give our gifts? (9:7)
5. There are other ways to give our lives to the Lord aside from money. Can you think of any?

Your Turn Again - Look at the examples below and think of what gift is being given to the Lord.

_____ Mr. Brown is very poor and has little money to give for an offering. He decides he wants to mow the church lawn each week and help fix things on the church property.

_____ Mr. Jones is a certified public accountant. He volunteers to be the church treasurer.

_____ Even though it takes time each Saturday to prepare her Sunday School lesson, Mrs. Smith eagerly does so because she loves her students and wants them to have faith in Jesus as their Savior.

_____ Roy's co-worker is very distressed over the death of his brother. Roy gives him some Scripture passages to consider.

_____ Many of the players on Sam's baseball team are poor sports. He decides he'll set a good example and encourage his teammates to improve their behavior.

_____ Nancy doesn't understand why God allowed her to go blind from her accident, but she is willing to trust that God will work out this blindness for her good. She keeps a cheerful attitude.

_____ Stan is a talented musician. He enjoys playing the organ for church and directing the church choir.

_____ Jan feels sorry for the family next door. The mother has just had surgery and can't get out of bed to care for her family. Jan decides to help them by babysitting and fixing meals for them.

_____ Since their congregation was small and still didn't have a church building, the Johnsons offered to have the church services in their home.

_____ Pastor Smith has the call to be a missionary to Africa. After much prayer he is convinced that this is what the Lord wants him to do. Even though he knows he'll miss his family and friends, he's still excited about sharing the Gospel.

What are your special talents?

What are your special interests?

How could you use these to serve the Lord?

Passages

2 Corinthians 8:9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 9:7 - So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Colossians 3:23-24 - And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Hymn - TLH #442 v. 1-4 (also WS#788)

Lord of Glory, who hast bo't us
With Thy life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones
That tremendous sacrifice;
And with that hast freely given
Blessings countless as the sand
To th' unthankful and the evil
With Thine own unsparing hand;

Wondrous honor has Thou given
To our humblest charity
In Thine own mysterious sentence,
"Ye have done it unto Me."
Can it be, O gracious Master,
Thou dost deign for alms to sue,
Saying by Thy poor and needy,
"Give as I have giv'n to you"?

Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to yield Thee
Gladly, freely, of Thine own;
With the sunshine of Thy goodness
Melt our thankless hearts of stone
Till our cold and selfish natures,
Warmed by Thee, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed
'Tis to give than to receive.

Yes, the sorrow and the sufferings
Which on every hand we see
Channels are for gifts and offerings
Due by solemn right to Thee;
Right of which we may not rob Thee;
Debt we may not choose but pay,
Lest that face of love and pity
Turn from us another day.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, We thank and praise You that in Your love You perfectly lived, died and rose again for us. Please forgive us for the times when we don't put You first in our lives. By Your Holy Spirit, stir up our hearts through Your Word to be hearts filled with gratitude and love for You. Help us by Your Spirit to live each day to glorify and serve You. Amen.