

## Ordinary 29A - 2023

### What Is Caesar's and What Is God's?

A young lady was soaking up the sun's rays on a Florida beach when a little boy in his swimming trunks, carrying a towel, came up to her and asked her, "Do you believe in God?" She was surprised by the question but she replied, "Why, yes, I do." Then he asked her: "Do you go to church every Sunday?" Again, her answer was "Yes!" He then asked: "Do you read your Bible and pray everyday?" Again she said, "Yes!" By now her curiosity was very much aroused. The little lad sighed with relief and said, "Will you hold my quarter while I go in swimming?"

The little boy was straightforward and honest in his questions because he wanted to entrust to the lady something valuable. The Pharisees are not being honest. They have no intent in entrusting Jesus with anything. They are not looking for the answer to a question. They don't want someone to hold their quarter. They are looking for a way to get rid of this trouble making Nazarene named Jesus.

The Pharisees were so angry it blinded them. Think for a moment about the ironies here:

We know, because we live on this side of the resurrection, that Jesus was God.

1. They thought he was demonic, **an agent of Satan**. We know that Jesus is the **King of kings**.
2. They thought he wanted to be the **King of Israel**. We know that he was the **Son of God**.
3. They thought he was simply **Joseph and Mary's son**. We know that Jesus has influenced the world for 2000 years. They thought his influence would end at the cross.

It's a fascinating story. We look at the Pharisees and we shake our heads.

How could they have been so wrong when the truth was standing right in front of them? I believe they were upset because Jesus held them accountable and exposed their hypocrisy. "Teacher, we know that you are sincere," they say to him, "and teach the way of God."

Not for a moment did they believe in Jesus' sincerity. It was a set up. It was a way of putting him at ease before they stabbed him in the back. Tell us then, they continue, what do you think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?

I suppose we ought to be grateful to the Pharisees. In their question, which Jesus says was motivated by malice, they prompt one of the greatest of Jesus' teachings.

It may not seem like much on the face of it, but the implications of this teaching have echoed through the centuries and they have shaped western societies. Jesus said, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." Let us ask three questions this morning and find out why this little teaching has had such a great influence.

1. What Is Caesar's?
2. What Is God's?
3. Which Will You Choose?

**Rockefeller started giving to God His due and lived:**

That was a lesson learned by John D. Rockefeller, Sr. He drove himself hard to be a success. He became a millionaire by this age of twenty-three and by the age of fifty was the richest man on earth. Then at fifty-three years of age, Rockefeller developed a serious illness which caused the hair on his head, his eyebrows, and eyelashes to drop off. Even though he was the world's only billionaire and could have almost anything on earth he wanted, he could only digest milk and crackers. He became shrunken like a mummy. He could not sleep, would not smile, and nothing in life meant much to him at all. Doctors predicted that within a year he would be dead.

— One night, however, as Rockefeller struggled to fall asleep, he came to grips with his life. He realized that he could take nothing with him into the next world. The next day he embarked on a new way of living. Rather than hoarding his money and possessions, he began to give them away to persons in need. Establishing the Rockefeller Foundation, he channeled his fortune into hospitals, research, and mission work. His contributions eventually led to the discovery of penicillin as well as cures for malaria, tuberculosis, and diphtheria. At age 53, Rockefeller was given a year to live. By learning to live by the principle of giving rather than getting, he altered his life so dramatically that he eventually lived to the ripe old age of ninety-eight. (Rev. Edward F. Markquart) (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>)