

“Fulfilling Our Sacred Duty” based on Matthew 22: 15-22

No problem finding bitter rivalries these days – Sanders vs. Kruse, Pro-life vs. Abortionist, Red Sox vs. Yankees.

In Jesus’ time, the Pharisees(keeper of the Law) and the Herodians(sympathized with Romans) were bitter enemies, but cooperated to trap Jesus.

- Tricky question- Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?
- Jesus turned the question into an acknowledgement to obey the state, who had been given power by God
- Recognized that the state is not perfect, but needed to preserve order, provide relief, and defend the population.
- Continues to be needed today, even if state is not fair or equitable. We Americans have ability to ‘fix’ tax structure through legislation, elections, or protests.

Brilliant trailer of Jesus to the challenge – “Give to God the things that are God’s!”

- Told in Genesis that we are created in the ‘image of God’
- We hold dual citizenship, live in 2 kingdoms – the government of our country and the reign of our God. Each is a gift.
- Luther said that God rules with his right hand in the kingdom of grace, and with his left hand through the civil government. Each kingdom is necessary although one is the rule of the law and the other is the rule of grace.
- The earthly kingdom is subject to error and injustice, while the other is perfect, but every Christian has responsibilities in both.
- God does not approve of all that Caesar does, or modern governments do, but we must do our best to obey their authority, understanding that God will not allow injustice to prevail.
- Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s, but our life, God’s creation, is to be rendered to God.
- We are called on the one hand to “Hail Caesar”, but on the other to “Praise God”

So, pay your taxes, but offer yourselves in a ministry of service and sacrifice, as God calls all Christians to do!