

Introduction

1. Begin by inviting the church to face the flag and say *The Pledge of Allegiance*.
 - a. What we have just done is not without controversy.
 - b. I know of a pastor who removed the American flag from his church.
 - c. He said it was sacrilegious to have a flag in the church. Church is for God, he said.
 - d. When we place the American flag on the stage in the church sanctuary...it sends the message that the space is set aside for God *and* something else. Intended or not, we give to others what should be set apart for God alone, and this is anything but "holy".¹
 - e. One group I know of says we should NEVER salute *Old Glory* ANYWHERE.
 - f. They claim nations are institutions of Satan that he rules. Never pledge our allegiance.
 - g. That's why saying pledge in schools was ultimately banned due to these objections?
 2. What is the Christian's relationship to the government? (Show Title & Text.)
 - a. When I stood to say *Pledge of Allegiance* every morning in school, was that wrong?
 - b. Is having a flag in church a sacrilege giving to others what should be only for God?
 - c. That is the issue Jesus addressed when confronted by the Pharisees & Herodians.
 - d. He uttered one of the most famous sayings in the Bible. (Show)²
 - i. *Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*
 - ii. *Render = financial term that means to give back or to pay off.*³
 - iii. Jesus is saying we have two allegiances which we have to pay up.
 - iv. We could put it in the form of two questions. What is Caesar's? God's? (Show)⁴
- I. **We Owe Allegiance to Governing Authorities, vv. 13-17.**
- A. The Issue of Taxes
 1. In Jesus time, Judea ruled directly by Rome. Declared Roman province w/Roman gov.
 - a. Archelaus, son Herod Great, such poor ruler that Rome stepped to rule directly.
 - b. 1st Roman governor of Judea was Cyrenius who ruled when Jesus was born.
 - c. 1st act was to take a census for the purposes of taxing the people.
 - d. Most accepted the tax as an inevitable necessity, but not Judas the Galilean.
 - e. He cried *taxation was no better than slavery*.⁵ Led revolt quickly crushed, Acts 5:37.
 - f. His cry *No tribute to the Romans* became rallying cry of fanatical Jewish patriots.
 2. Not unlike American colonists who became angry when King George III levied tea tax.
 - a. Their cry went up, *No taxation w/o representation*. Boston Tea Party ensued.
 - b. Unfair taxation was last straw & the American Revolution erupted against England.
 - c. By Jesus' day Roman taxation still burning issue.
 - d. Some Zealots refused to pay any taxes that went to the Roman Emperor.
 - B. Pharisees & Herodians Trap

¹ Blogger Benjamin L. Corey. <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/formerlyfundie/is-it-time-to-remove-the-flag-from-the-church-sanctuary/>. Accessed 7/27/17.

² https://tithetruth.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/img_8038.jpg. Accessed 7/27/17.

³ ἀποδίδωμι [apodidomi]. Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship. #591.

⁴ http://www.altarandthrone.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/render_to_caesar.gif. Accessed 7/27/17.

⁵ Barclay, W. (Ed.). (1976). *The Gospel of Mark*. Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster John Knox Press, p. 285.

1. **Seeking to trap Jesus & discredit Him, Pharisees/Herodians raised this issue of taxes.**
 - a. Usually groups were enemies of each other. But know how get enemies cooperate?
 - b. Give them a greater enemy. Two great forces bring people together – love and hate.
 - c. These groups came together because of hatred for Jesus. Who were they?
 - i. Pharisees = nationalists, conservatives, disliked Roman rule. Right-wingers.
 - ii. Herodians = of the Herods (puppet kings of Rome), liberal, accept Rome rule. Left.
 - iii. Both hated Jesus diff. reasons. He threatened religious traditions/political desires.
 2. Two questions bring out two different positions, v. 14:
 - ① **Is lawful pay taxes Caesar?** Pharisees. Objected tax, Dt.17:15. ([Show](#))⁶ Religious side.
 - ② **Should we pay, or not?** Herodians. Favored tax pacify Romans. Practical side.
- C. **Jesus' Dilemma**
1. These two haters of Jesus were smacking their lips. They thought they had Him this time!
 2. **Yes** = antagonize people & undermine His claims. No true Messiah sanction pagan rule.
 3. **No** = reported to Rome & crushed with death like Judas the Galilean 30yrs earlier.
 4. That had Jesus between proverbial rock/hard place – no way out. Jesus trapped.
- D. **Jesus' Brilliant Request, vv. 15-16**
1. Jesus request was brilliant. Denarius only coin acceptable for imperial taxes. ([Show](#))⁷
 - a. **Head = Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus; tails = Chief priest (claim deity).**
 - b. We must understand ancient view of coins to see why this was so brilliant.⁸
 - i. **Coinage is the sign of power.** 1st things rulers did issue coins show control.
 - ii. **Where coin valid, king's power good.** Power measured by area coins accepted.
 - iii. **Because his head & inscription on coin, considered king's personal property.**
 - c. **By using the coinage of Tiberius you in any event recognize his political power in Palestine. [to acknowledge his authority and the benefits of the civil government it represented and consequently the obligation to pay taxes.⁹] Apart altogether from that, the coinage is his own because it has his name on it. By giving it to him you give him what is in any event his own.¹⁰**
 2. Government then is ordained of God & we owe it our allegiance. *Pledge* = God's will.
- E. **Duties of Allegiance**
1. **Respect.** Many yrs ago mayor of Detroit called Pres. Ronald Reagan *prune face*.
 - a. That did 2 things. Revealed lowbrow character of the mayor. Why Detroit in trouble?
 - b. It disobeyed the Bible which clearly says, ***Honor those in authority, 1 Pet. 2:17.***
 2. **Participation.** In some elections large numbers of Christians stayed home, not vote.
 - a. Because of who was elected greater damage was done to our country morally.
 - b. ***Bad politicians are elected by good people who don't vote.***¹¹ Are still good politicians.

⁶ <http://slideplayer.com/slide/7740568/25/images/67/Deuteronomy+17:15.jpg>. Accessed 7/28/17.

⁷ http://media.liveauctiongroup.net/i/5667/8604449_1.jpg?v=8CBEF04AD9A60D0. Accessed 7/27/17.

⁸ Barclay, op. cit., p. 286.

⁹ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). **Mark**. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 162). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁰ Barclay, op. cit., (p. 286).

¹¹ Billy Graham. *Citizens for Traditional Values PAC*. 10/30/2000

- c. Just spoke w/Ed McBroom running for State Rep. Can't find better Christian than Ed.
3. **Prayer.** 1 Tim. 2:1-2. (**Show**)¹² Not only pray, but what pray for. Notice that?
 - a. Pray for officials who will act in a way that keeps the peace.
 - b. When there is law and order, we can go about the ministry of the gospel.
4. **Obedience.** Rom. 13:1-2. I was w/Ellen when got 1st speeding ticket. Married 2 months.
 - a. So upset she cried. Didn't give officer hard time. Doing job to keep us all safe.
 - b. Even when we get stopped, we should be thankful we live in a country of law/order.
5. **Taxes.** Rom. 13:7. Many yrs ago in lower MI we goofed on our taxes and underpaid.¹³
 - a. I told our DEM, Pastor Andy Husmann. I said tongue in cheek, **They'll never know.**
 - b. He said, **You know.** And God knows. To not pay what we owe is a God issue.

II. **We Owe Allegiance to God, v. 17.**

A. **Explanation**

1. Jesus didn't stop w/Caesar, but went on to say, **Render to God the things that are God's.**
 - a. 2 things: Caesar is not God & is subject to God. Jesus put Caesar in his place.
 - b. As coin bore Caesar's image, so we bear God's image. People are God's coinage.
 - c. Read Gen. 1:27. (**Show**)¹⁴ What a brilliant application of Jesus to image on a coin.
 - d. **Gold = Caesar's treasure; people God's. Gold has Caesar's image; you have God's.**
 - e. **Give Caesar what is his, but you belong to God. Give yourself to Him.**¹⁵
2. We are valuable to God. We belong to Him. We owe our allegiance to Him.

B. **Limits of Our Allegiance To Government**

1. **When asked to violate a command of God, Acts 5:29.**
2. **When asked to do an immoral act, Exodus 1-2.**
 - a. When the midwives were told to murder the Hebrew babies, they disobeyed.
 - b. Moses mother hid him until his cries forced her to put him in a basket in river.
 - c. China's forced abortion policy to control population growth is modern day example.
3. **When asked to go against conscience, Romans 14:23.**
 - a. We have in our hands the English Bible because of conscientious objectors.
 - b. It was against their conscience not to translate Bible into English. Defied orders.
 - c. Over yrs in military conscientious objectors have served in other areas & not combat.
 - d. Martin Luther said best when defied state church Germany. Appealed to conscience.
 - e. **My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God.**¹⁶
4. Did notice other flag? **Pledge to Christian Flag.** (**Show**)¹⁷ This 1st. Country's pledge 2nd.

¹² <http://www.jeffrandleman.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/1-Timothy-11.jpg>. Accessed 7/28/17.

¹³ **Very easy for pastors to do because of our self-employed status, which can get very complicated.**

¹⁴ <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/sdeGPcsH968/maxresdefault.jpg>. Accessed 7/28/17.

¹⁵ English poet Francis Quarles. <http://izquotes.com/quotes-pictures/quote-gold-is-caesar-s-treasure-man-is-god-s-ty-gold-hath-caesar-s-image-and-thou-hast-god-s-give-francis-quarles-383164.jpg>. Accessed 7/28/17.

¹⁶ <http://www.azquotes.com/picture-quotes/quote-unless-i-am-convicted-by-scripture-and-plain-reason-i-do-not-accept-the-authority-of-martin-luther-58-17-18.jpg>. Accessed 7/29/17

¹⁷ https://c1.staticflickr.com/9/8477/8194372677_1422dfb079_b.jpg. Accessed 7/29/17.