Taxes & The Gospel

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast. A podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. The very first hymn that we sung together is the heart of God towards His church.

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ. We could have sung that one hymn together, meditated on those words, and had enough today to consider such rich, rich words.
This week is a special week for us as we begin looking toward our unique celebration of the resurrection. I say unique because in one sense, every day is a celebration of the empty tomb. Every Lord's Day as we gather is a celebration of the resurrection. But as we approach next Sunday for Easter Sunday in a very clear and purposeful way, we direct our attention to that wonderful reality that Christ died for us and has been raised back to life.
And so, as a church, there are a few things that we do every year around Easter to try to help each of us to be able to focus our hearts and minds on the Lord.
[1:27] One of those is our annual Good Friday service, which will be this coming Friday night at 7 o'clock in here. We'll have child care for babies through pre-K.

And in here, we'll start at 7. We'll have a full evening of worship. We'll sing together. Our adult choir will be here to lead us. I'll be preaching.
We'll take the Lord's Supper together as we just really focus and hone in on the crucifixion of Jesus. I think it's important for us, before we celebrate the empty tomb, to remember not just that Christ died, but why Christ died.
And that's what Friday night service is geared toward, the sacrifice of Jesus as we sing about it, preach about it, remember the Lord's Supper. And so I just want to, as strongly as I can, encourage you to make Friday night, our Good Friday service, a priority to be here at 7 o'clock.
It will be by itself, I think, an evening that will be very meaningful for you. And I also think will help to enrich your heart and the preparation we put into it for Easter Sunday.
[2:43] Another thing that we do every year on Easter is we have our annual sunrise service. That will be next Sunday morning outside at 645. I realize things can change quickly, but as of today, the forecast for next Sunday is a high of 80 morning temperatures in the mid-50s and dry.

And so we're excited about that. We've had the last couple of years with good weather, we've had 300 plus people show up to our sunrise service.
And so I would love to invite you to come. If you've never been, come and try that out this coming Sunday morning, 645 outside the south entrance. If it does end up raining, we'll still meet.
We'll move it indoors, but we'll meet either way, 645. So just watch the weather, dress warm, but it looks like our weather is going to be wonderful next Sunday morning.
And so that'll be at 645. And just as a reminder, the music and the message for our sunrise service is completely different than what we do in here at 9 and 1030.
[3:52] It's its own complete standalone service. So I encourage you to come and join with hundreds of people in our church as we greet the sunrise with song.

It really is a special hour together. 45 minutes usually for that service, 645 to about 730. So come and join with us if you at all can.
I also want to encourage you to be back tonight. I'm really excited about tonight. Our Passion Student Choir, as Joy mentioned, have been in Memphis singing and serving last week during their spring break.
And tonight we get a chance to be blessed by their ministry. So we'll have 100 teenagers here tonight in the choir loft to lead us in song as they sing and lift up their offerings of praise.

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We'll get to hear how the Lord used them in Memphis and get to hear the songs they sung to many different people. So make sure you're back at 5 o'clock to worship, to support our student ministry. [4:54] We'll also continue our study through Psalm 23 tonight. We're in verse 5 of Psalm 23. And I encourage you to come and join us and be a part of what's going to be, I think, a really wonderful evening tonight.

So lots of special things going on. And I just want your family to be a part and be engaged and get the most you can out of these upcoming days. Well, if you'd open with me to Mark chapter 12. We'll continue our study through the Gospel of Mark. Looking today, verses 13 to 17. This passage contains a very well-known statement of Jesus that you probably are very familiar with.
You may not know all the details surrounding the context, but he says something that's a statement that's quite familiar to us and has so much depth and meaning in it that I think this will be a helpful passage for us today.
Remember the context as we are here in the life of Jesus, these final days leading up to his crucifixion. And we've been studying about this for a number of weeks now. As Mark's Gospel, as all the Gospel writers do, gives us a lot of detail of these last hours, these final days leading up to the cross.
[6:23] You'll recall that the leaders in the land have set some people to go and talk to Jesus. They're trying to trap him, trying to catch him.

What's unique is that the Herodians and the Pharisees have joined together to come against Jesus. Now, when you first read that, that may not sound strange, but if you know who these groups are, it's quite interesting that people who are usually at odds with each other have joined forces.
We read about it in Mark 12, starting in verse 13. And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his talk.
And they came and said to him, Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.
[7:28] Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them or should we not? But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, Why put me to the test?

Bring me a denarius and let me look at it. And they brought one. And he said to them, Join together to come oppose Jesus.
The Pharisees longed for an overthrow of Rome. They were conservative. Today they would be called right-wingers.
They had cautious resistance to Rome. And they hated Jesus because Jesus was upsetting their religious agenda. That's the Pharisees.
The Herodians, on the other hand, have sold themselves out to do Rome's bidding. They were the liberals. Today they'd be called left-wingers.
[9:06] They had wholesale accommodation of Rome. They hated Jesus because he upset their political agenda. The only thing uniting the Pharisees and the Herodians is the common hatred of Jesus.

So putting aside their own differences with each other and instead focusing their attention on their common enemy, they joined together to come and try to catch Jesus, to trap him, to catch him, to get him where he can be caught and captured and soon, they hope, put to death.
They've done this before. Mark 3, verse 6. After Jesus heals the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him how to destroy him.
They don't want to arrest him. They want to destroy him. They've wanted to destroy him since Mark 3.
What unites the Pharisees and the Herodians in Mark 12, 13 is just one thing. It's not politics. It's not religion. It's not their view of the world.
[10:41] It's a shared desire to destroy Jesus. In this brief conversation that we read about, let me show you two things this morning, and then I want to spend some time at the end looking at what it means for us today.

Number one, there's an insincere question. We know it's insincere. Verse 13 begins again. They sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his talk.
This is their motive. It's not to learn. It's not to clear up or clarify. It is to trap him. This is what they have in common.

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A desire to trap and destroy Jesus. The word translated here to trap him, that's there in verse 13, that specific word is used only here in the New Testament.
You don't find that word anywhere else in the New Testament. It's a word that was used to describe an animal that was baited and caught. The word would be used to describe a fisherman who had caught or trapped fish in his net.
[11:57] That's what they're trying to do to Jesus. They have set the trap. They have set the bait. And they're just hoping he walks into the trap, hoping they can swoop over him with their net and capture him to trap him.

Verse 14, they came and said to him, teacher, we know that you are true. Now understand, they don't mean this.
This is all part of their trap. This is all part of their scheme. This isn't a confession of their faith. This is their deceptiveness on display.
We know that you are true. The word is orthos. We get our English words for orthodoxy or orthodontist, straight, true.
We know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinions, for you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God.
[13:02] Now, if you don't understand who's saying this, you might read this and think, well, that's good. But it's not good because this isn't anything that they mean.

This is all about a trap. We're just a couple of days away from the cross, and their mindset is one thing.
Destroy Christ. That's it. They're not here to worship. They're not here to converse. They're not here to be a friend. They're not here to learn.
They're not here to grow. They're here for one thing. Destroy Christ. Now, their words appear syrupy sweet.
We know that you are true, and we know that you're not swayed by opinions, and we know that you teach the way of God. Everything sounds so good.
[14:02] It's all part of the trap. Let's butter him up. Let's get him to engage with us. Let's make him think we're on his side.

Let's see if we can get him to let his guard down. See if he'll take the bait. The trap's been set.
If he walks into the trap, let's close it around him, and let's destroy him. This is just insincere flattery. They don't mean a word of this.
It's just insincere flattery. And by the way, I remember reading one time an author who said this. I thought this was really profound. I remember him saying that flattery is just the reverse mirror of gossip.
Flattery is where you say to someone's face what you would never say to somebody else. Gossip is where you say to somebody else what you would never say to somebody's face.
[15:08] Both are sinful ways of speaking. Here's their question. Here's the insincere question. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?

Should we pay them or should we not? In other words, does God's law compel us to pay taxes or should we not pay them?
Taxes and the gospel. Now, for us, this time of year, this is a little close to home. I'm still kind of reeling from the fact that apparently we are supposed to pay taxes.
And apparently, a lot. Some of my best friends are people who work with finances.
Some of the people I trust the most are people who do taxes. And so, we're looking at you this morning. Are your jobs from God?
[16:18] Here's where he's coming from. If Jesus says, yes, you should pay your taxes, then what they want to do with that is say, see, he is in support of foreign opposition over us, and it will turn the people against him.

If he says, no, you don't have to pay your taxes, then it makes him an enemy of Rome, and he would be seen as encouraging his followers to withhold their taxes.
In other words, if he says, yes, yes, the Pharisees will turn against him and get the people stirred up. If he says, no, the Herodians will run and tattle the pilot to get Rome against him.
That's why the Herodians and the Pharisees are here. Not because they like each other. Because they're asking him a yes or no question. And if he says, yes, this segment will be up in arms and do everything they can to get Jesus put to death.

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And if he answers the other way, this segment over here says, now we're mad at you. I was watching one of the basketball games last night for March Madness, and referee made a call, and it was both coaches were yelling at the official about the same call.
[17:50] The referee called a foul, and the one coach was mad that he called a foul on his team. The other coach was mad because, oh, they called a foul. He said it wasn't a shooting foul.

So this ref calls a foul, and both coaches are yelling at him for the exact same call. And you're just thinking, this guy's in the middle. He can't win. That's what's going on with Jesus and the Herodians and the Pharisees.
They ask a question, and in their mind, there's no way out. If you say, pay your taxes, and the Pharisees say, so you support Rome having control over us, the people won't stand for that.
If he says, no, don't pay your taxes, the Herodians, who have sold themselves out to Rome, say, well, wait till Rome finds out that you're telling your people to not pay taxes.
It's an insincere question. And it leads to a second thing in this short conversation, and that is an instructive answer.
[19:07] Verse 15, an instructive answer. But knowing their hypocrisy, can I just remind you that the Lord knows the heart of people.

knowing their hypocrisy. And can I remind you that even religious people can be so tied to their traditions that they may never give up their religious ceremony, but their hearts may be filled with deceit.
That was true in Jesus' day. That's true in our day. Which is why the idea that you're going to heaven just because you come to church is such a tragic way to think.
There are all kinds of people who go to worship services and go to church and go to different organizations, all kinds of people who have a religion that they go through the motions of.
But if their heart is not right, there is no salvation. And if your hope is, maybe the Lord won't know, let me just take that away from you.
[20:34] He does know. Verse 15, but knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them, why put me to the test?

Now you would think they would learn their lesson. We just had the conversation where they tried to trap Him about the authority that He has and Jesus asked them about John the Baptist and He silences them.
But they've come back for round two and Jesus looks at them and says, why are you putting, why are you doing this? Have you not learned your lesson?
Luke 20 adds, verse 23, that Jesus says, He perceived their craftiness. He knows their hypocrisy and He knows their strategy.
He knows their hearts aren't sincere, so their words aren't sincere and He knows their strategy. He knows their craftiness. He knows what they're doing.
[21:43] He sees right through it. So what's His answer? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.

Now I wonder what the Pharisees and Herodians were thinking right here. They've set the trap. They've laid the bait. They're hoping to catch Him and destroy Him.
Jesus engages them and says, bring me a denarius. Bring me the coin. Somebody eventually flips Him the coin It probably took a few minutes.
The Jews consider this kind of coin to be idolatrous. They would not have carried it with them. They had to search a bit and find someone who had the coin.
Eventually they find it and they hand it to Jesus. And He said to them, whose likeness and inscription is this? It's just a small coin.
[22:51] In fact, one of our church members has one brought it to me to let me see it and hold it last week. It's just a small little coin. Jesus holds it. It was a coin that was required to pay a certain tax.

They paid what was called the poll tax. It was used by adults when they were paying this tax. It was a tax you paid just for the privilege of living under the Roman Empire.
This coin was used to pay this tax that had been around for about 30 years. This specific tax the coin was used to pay was a tax that the Jewish people hated more than all taxes.
It wasn't a tax on their land. It wasn't a tax on their income. It was just a tax on themselves. It was just a tax that you live here under the Roman Empire.

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It gave the idea that they themselves belonged to Caesar. And so the people hated it. So they hated the coin.
[24:01] Somebody gives the coin to Jesus and he says, whose likeness and inscription is this? Well, it had the image of Tiberius on it, the emperor.

The inscription on the coin was Tiberius Caesar, son of divine Augustus. The backside had inscripted on it highest priest. It was a coin that grew out of emperor worship.
So in verse 17, Jesus gives his answer. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God.
It's what one theologian called the most impactful political statement ever made. You would think at some point these people would learn you don't win debates with God.
In fact, the end of verse 17, and they marveled at him. They just sit back and say, he got us again.
[25:21] We thought we had him. We thought he was going to walk right into it. We even flattered him. We told him we thought he was smart. We told him we thought he spoke straight. We told him we thought that he was of God and he got us again.

When Christ says, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, he's acknowledging that we live under the authority of earthly governments, but those earthly governments are not sovereign.
In fact, he says, give me that coin so they can look at whose image is on the coin because their money showed that they were part of the Roman Empire, part of the Roman economy.
And because of that, they were under the authority of Rome. But much to the chagrin of the Jewish people, Jesus did not come to overthrow the empire or to set up an alternative state.
And they marveled. Luke 20, verse 26 adds, they were not able to catch him in the presence of the people, but marveled at the answer as they became silent.
[26:50] Once again, their quest to trap Jesus failed. Now, what does this mean for us?

Let me give you a few things I think are helpful for us. Number one, it means let the government do what it's supposed to do and let the church do what it's called to do.
Let the government do what it's supposed to do and let the church do what it's called to do. Romans 13, you don't have to turn there, I'll read to you briefly here.
Romans 13 says, let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.
For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive approval.
[27:57] For he is God's servant for your good, but if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. Verse 5, therefore one must be subject not only to God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience.

For because of this, you also pay taxes for the authorities or ministers of God attending to this very thing. pay to what is owed to them, taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.
So the government's got a job, and we pay taxes. Let the government do its job, and we ought to be honest when we pay our taxes.
I'm thankful for people who help us with the intricacies and complexities of the tax code. I don't understand them. I didn't study those things. I'm grateful for men and women who do, that can help us do the right thing and be law-abiding citizens.
Government is a gift from God to the people because the role of government biblically is to restrain evil, to punish evil doers. Christians need to be involved in government.
[29:19] Christians need to be involved in all parts of society. We need godly, faithful men and women who are in leadership in all realms of our society. But what we cannot ever have is the church forgetting what we are called to be.

As the church, our focus, is to love Christ, to preach the gospel, and to serve people. Our hope is not in a political party, our hope is not in a political agenda, and our hope is not in any single politician.
Our hope is always in the Lord Jesus Christ. And as a church, we must never forget what we are called to do.
Now the problem for society is what happens when a government flips their God-given mandate.

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In Romans 13, it's clear that the one who does what is right should have nothing to fear. The one who does what is evil ought to live in fear because that government bears the sword for reason.
[30:39] In other words, the purpose of the government is to uphold justice. And those who do what is right should live without any fear, and those who are breaking the law and living wicked lives ought to live in fear because that government has a job to pursue the one who is breaking the law.

when you flip that and you get a government that starts to disregard justice and punish the one who obeys the law and turn a blind eye to the one who breaks the law, that nation cannot exist.
It can't last. government has a role. When the government ceases to do its role, that nation is in trouble.
But even in a nation with a strong, good government, we must remember that you can be law-abiding, model citizens.
and upon your last breath be entirely under the wrath of God. Salvation does not come from government.
[32:13] Salvation does not come from obeying the law of the land. Salvation only comes by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ.

Which is why the church must be the church. We are not a civic organization. There are things we can do and partner with people to try to meet needs, and at time, that's a very helpful thing.
But our role as a church is unique to the church. That is to tell people that God is holy. They are sinful.
Christ has made a way for us. Salvation is there through Him, and judgment awaits those who reject the gospel. Nobody else on planet earth has the role of the church to declare the gospel to the ends of the earth.
So let the government do what they're supposed to do. Let the church do what it's called to do. And I'm not saying by that that Christians shouldn't be involved in the government at all.
[33:23] I think Christians should be involved in every level of our society. I'm grateful for believers that are principals and school teachers and business owners and in city government.

I'm grateful for Christians who are on school boards. I'm grateful for believers who are governors and representatives. I'm grateful for Christians who lead and serve in all kinds of capacities.
I mean by God's grace at least there's some out there trying to restrain evil. But what I am saying is you will not get souls to heaven through ballot boxes.
And sinners will not be converted by politics. it happens as the gospel is proclaimed.
I've got some good friends of mine that are believers that are in politics and I'm thankful for what they do. I'm glad locally at the state level at the national level there are people who love Jesus and love his word and I'm thankful for them that are in places of influence.
[34:51] But there is not a political agenda that will save the sinner. It is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Biblically we should pray for our leaders. we should pray for those who are in elected offices and we should strive to elect people I believe who love the Lord and fear the Lord.
But the hope of a dying world is a message uniquely given to the church and if the church goes silent there's no one to herald the gospel.
Jesus says give to Caesar what Caesar's. Give to God the things that are God's. Let the government do what the government should do. Let the church do what the church is called to do.
Second, we take from this that ultimately all things belong to God. All things belong to God. I want you to just think with me for a moment what Jesus does here.
[36:04] The coin showed the authority of Caesar. Why? Because Caesar's image was on it. Yet, even that man ultimately is subject to God because all people are made in what?

God's image. all of us are made in the image of God. All of us are subject to His authority. So, we pay to the government what they tell us to pay, but our ultimate allegiance is always to God.
Which is why in the book of Acts, when the government sets up a rule that is contrary to God's law, the apostles said, look, you do what you have to do with us. We'll obey the law, but we're not going to obey the law if you tell us to break God's law.
And if we break God's law, and you have to punish us, then you do what you have to do. But as for us, our allegiance belongs to God.
We don't just pay the taxes we like. I'd be curious, that conversation, what taxes you do like. We don't do that.

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[37:30] You don't go to the restaurant and say, you know, you charge me $40 for this steak. It tastes like about a $25 steak. I'll give you $25. The $15 is on you. No, you pay what they told you to pay.

You don't go to the restaurant and eat and then slip out and not pay your bill. You don't buy something, and the bill comes due and you say, I wonder if I can get by without paying this.
I wonder if I can string this out. Be faithful. Be law abiding citizens. Pay what you owe. Christians should be model citizens.
But our allegiance allegiance is always to God. Not to a man, not to a woman, not to a political party.
Ultimately, all things belong to God, and because of that, our allegiance is ultimately always to God.
That is not to say that leaders don't matter.
[38:37] They do. there are consequences to people who are in leadership. There's consequences in your city, there's consequences in the state, there's consequences in the nation.

I mean, as you often hear people say, elections have consequences. That's true. And it's not to minimize the importance of men and women who serve in those ways, and it's certainly not to minimize the effect of ungodly people who are in leadership.
It's true. It has a significant influence, but here's what I am saying, that on the very words of Jesus, there are things that belong to the government, and there are things that belong to God, and if you ever get those mixed up, and you think that government can save you, you've forgotten who brings salvation.
There are things that are from God, and things you owe to God, that belong to nobody else. Thirdly, Jesus is saying that we give to God what is due to God.
We give to God what is due to God. This is why the people in verse 17, this is why they marveled, this is why Luke adds the detail that they were silenced, because what did Jesus just do?
[40:00] He just avoided their entire trap. He refuses to say that you should overthrow the government so the Herodians can't go after him today.

But he also refuses to say that God isn't God. He is the supreme authority. And so they just marveled at him.
And what he was telling them to do is that the way that you live your life is you must give to God what is due to God. You cannot neglect to give him what is due him, and you cannot give to somebody else what is due him.
Give to God what is due to God. I'll just give you a few things. There's all kinds of examples I could give. I'll just give you a few. One, Romans 12, we give our bodies and our mind to God.
How so? Romans 12, 1 and 2. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.
[41:13] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Live your life, your very body, as an act of worship to God.

Having your mind renewed by the Lord, not conformed to the world. And this is where we would do well to pay attention to what Jesus is saying.
If the government affirms and celebrates sin, your allegiance better be to God.
And if people in leadership try to pressure and persuade you to act as a complete fool and pretend you have no reason at all and tell you what is black is white and white is black and that up is down, then you better be able to say, you know what, God gave me a mind and I'm not letting my mind be conformed to the satanic belief of this world system.
Instead, have your mind transformed. by the things of God. Give to God what's due to God.
[42:55] Another example, 2 Corinthians 9, our finances. We should give to God what is due to God. 2 Corinthians 9, verse 7, each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

worship the Lord through your giving. One of the ways you can know if the world has taken a hold of your heart is just honestly ask yourself, do we joyfully worship the Lord through giving?
God and if you say we don't but we come to church regularly, we don't but we teach Sunday school, we don't but we do other things, then that should be a helpful sign to you that maybe the world has a little more of a hold on your heart than you realized or wish were true.
Because the biblical teaching is that we are to choose to decide to give financially to the Lord as a cheerful, joyful act of worship.

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give to God what is due to God. Don't give to God through this local church because you feel guilty, don't give because you feel like someone's putting some guilt trip on you as if you don't give we're going to shut the church down, if you don't give more money we're not going to be able to afford the lights, if you don't give money our children aren't going to have any supplies, if you don't give money our priestlers aren't going to get any goldfish crackers, we can't afford it, that's not the point. [45:08] The Lord will take care of his people. But what happens to the human heart that refuses to give to God what belongs to God?

Don't give because you feel guilty and don't give because you're afraid the church may go under. The church will do just fine by God's grace.
You should give because it's your joyful declaration that every time you give you're saying, God, I trust you. God, I'm thankful. God, I want to worship in this way.
You're worthy of it. Ephesians 4 gives us a third area. We are to give to God what is due to God our daily life. Ephesians 4, 1, as a prisoner of the Lord, walk worthy in a manner of the calling to which you've been called.
The walk of our life is our daily life. Give to God what is due to God. In your daily life, in your normal, routine, regular decisions, how you treat your spouse, God the Lord is worthy of you treating your spouse in a way that glorifies Christ.
[46:33] The way you treat your parents, teenagers, treat your parents in a way worthy of Christ. We make it harder. The way you treat your siblings, treat your siblings in a way worthy of Christ.

The way you talk about your boss, the way that you respond to your neighbor, the daily normal walk of your life, give to God the things that belong to God.
If you wear his name, if you call yourself a Christian, then live in such a way that you give unto God in your daily life the praise his name deserves.
So give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. gas is way too high. Pay it. Why is it way too high? Because at some point in your life, you start noticing the price of gas every time you drive by a gas station. It happened to me around the age of 25. I never pass a gas station.
[47:42] I don't make some comment if someone's in the car, how'd gas go up a nickel overnight? Went to the town, I come back, it's 19 cents higher. Everybody right now is looking at their father saying, you'll all do that.

It's the price of gas. You can walk, get a bicycle, that's fine, but if you're going to put gas in your car, pay it. Don't pay half of it and run off and say, gas is too high anyway.
No, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Pay your debts. But give to God what belongs to God. walk in a manner worthy of your calling. You could sum all this up in Philippians 1.21.
We often focus on the second half of the verse, which is glorious, but don't miss the first half. Philippians 1.21, for to me to live is Christ, to die is gain.
[48:45] That second half is what we often focus on, but the first half is meaningful too. To live is Christ. Every day on this earth is about Christ.

Every day on this earth is to magnify Christ and glorify Christ and worship Christ and live worthy of Christ. So, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.
Be a good citizen. If you don't like the laws of the land, work to change them. If you don't like who's in office, elect better people. Those are good things.
Those are normative things. We're fortunate to live in a society where we can choose our leaders. That's a good thing. Be involved in that. Pray for your people that are in leadership.
Pray for them. Encourage the ones who are good. Vote out the ones who are bad. That's fine. Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. We've got a political process. Educate yourself on the vote.
[49:43] Educate yourself on what's going on. Work within the system. Work within the rules to effect positive change. That's giving to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. There's no problem with that.

But if you give to Caesar what rightly belongs to God, then you've forgotten who is worthy of your worship.
And if you put your hope in Caesar, you've put your hope in something that cannot save. So you give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.
You give to God the things that belong to God. For me to live, Paul said, is Christ.
Family, friends, job, ministry, the church, the government, everything. He says, for the believer, our life is all about Christ.

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[50:56] Jesus said it this way. You have to live in the world, but not be of the world. God, we are to live with eternity in mind.

So while we're passing through this life, we'll pay our taxes. We'll give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.
But we will hope in God. Amen? We will preach the gospel. gospel. And if Caesar ever demands what only belongs to God, then we will say, as the apostle said, you choose what you need to do with me.
But we worship the one true God. Let the church be the church. Lord, we thank you for your word today and pray that it would be helpful and instructive for us.
And pray that it would help us to know better how to navigate some of the difficulties of living as your children in this world. We pray for your help.
[52:22] In Christ's name. Amen. Before you're dismissed, let me very quickly present to you some families who are coming to join our church.

We've got a number of them. If you're in this service, and I call your name, if you would come to the front. We may have others who are coming in from Sunday school hour. We've got about four other families besides these who are going to be joining soon that we are working with, some with salvation, some with baptism.
So we look forward to continuing to see the Lord at work. So here are the ones that are joining. If you're in this service, come on forward. If you're not, then maybe in our next service. Jamie and Tammy Allison, along with Aubrey and Parker, and Will and Caitlin Cagle, and Godwin and Beana George, along with Izzy.
We have Ryan Hanthorn, Mark and Kelly Moberly, with children Emma and Luke, Daniel and Vanessa, with Brooklyn and Molly, James and Laura Sturdivant, along with Jacob and Ezra, Robert and Sandra Walsh, Brian and Lisa Reese.
Did I say the last name right? You did. Okay. And Kent and Michelle Hines. These ten families are joining our church with a few others that we look forward to presenting soon after further conversation.
[54:03] So, church, if you're excited to welcome these who are joining our church, would you please welcome them today? We are thankful the Lord has brought them to us.

As we dismiss, if you would come by and greet them. For those here at the front, if you're able to, please be back here at the end of the next service so that group can meet you and rejoice and welcome you to our church as well.
Tonight, five o'clock, worship with our Passion Student Choir, Psalm 23. Come by and greet these who are joining today, and we'll see you back tonight. You're dismissed. once in 2nd next time.
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