

## 10.18.15 Mark 12:13-17

### O. Intro:

#### Blackout 1977

In New York City, in one night in July of 1977:

- \*1,616 stores were looted
- \*1,037 fires were responded to
- \*50 cars were stolen from one dealership
- \*550 police officers were injured
- \*What caused this terrible night? Any guesses?
- \*A power failure....the lights went out in the city.
- \*A series of lightening strikes and human error turned off power for most of the city.
- \*The lights went out and the city burned.

**Mark 12:13** Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. **14** They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? **15** Should we pay or shouldn't we?" But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." **16** They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. **17** Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him.

\*Pharisees and Herodians were 1st century religious/political groups, they didn't like each other...but they disliked Jesus more than they disliked each other.

\*Here they offer Jesus some obvious and obnoxious flattery...void of any sincerity.

\*Jesus knew it was pure hypocrisy...imagine trying to "flatter" the Son of God.

\*However even **though** their motive for the comments was wrong...the content of their words was correct.

\*Jesus was a man of integrity, he was not a people pleaser...he was unimpressed with titles and positions, and he did teach the truth.

\*The irony is that these men believed they could flatter a man who was unconcerned with what people thought of him.

\*They were made dull by their own pride.

\*This pride continually blinded them to the fact that Jesus was always the smartest person in any room.

\*Out of the folly of their pride they just kept reloading and firing "blanks" at the Son of God.

\*Once again here they are trying to trap Jesus.

\*Their plan was to "flatter him"... "You don't care what anyone thinks of you."

\*Then "flank him"...like an army sweeping around an enemy in a surprise maneuver.

-"So, since you are unafraid to speak your mind...tell us what you think about the Roman issue..."

\*Jesus recognized the trap and asked for a coin...one was readily available...

\*Then he answered their question with a question...which is a really good way to respond to a verbal trap.

**"Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him.**

\*For 500 years, since the Babylonian captivity, the Jewish people had been ruled by others.

\*For a period of time they were semi-independent but for almost 100 years Rome ruled and where Rome ruled, Rome taxed.

\*In addition Jews were forbidden from making carved images...yet they were forced to deal with coins that had the face of Tiberius and the words around his head in Latin "Augustus Tiberius, son of the divine Augustus."

\*On the other side, "High Priest"

\*So...son of a God and high priest...the Romans could hardly make these coins more offensive if they had tried.

\*So, now the two co-belligerents...Pharisees and Herodians believed they had Jesus on the horns of a dilemma.

1. Either force Jesus to support paying taxes to Rome, and therefore alienating the crowds

OR

2. Denounce the tax in which case they could tell the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that Jesus was guilty of sedition...inciting revolt.

**\*Prov. 28:10 He who leads the upright along an evil path will fall into his own trap,**

\*They set a trap for Jesus and fell into it themselves.

\*200 years earlier there was an event called the Maccabean revolt (Hammer)

\*A Syrian King who ruled over the Jewish people issued a decree outlawing Jewish religious practice...bad idea...many would rather die (or kill).

\*In response a rural priest started an insurrection that led to guerrilla warfare...thus the "hammer" they brought down the wrath of the oppressed on the Syrians.

\*The end result was a political compromise that restored religious freedom.

\*Very memorable event: Out of it came the Jewish festival of Hanukkah

\*A war slogan of the revolt was "pay back the Gentiles what they deserve--and obey the command of the law!"

\*So in other words..."pay the Gentiles what they deserve...vengeance" and God what he deserves "obedience."

\*Now Jesus is speaking into a toxic mix of political, cultural, religious differences...one that people with bad hearts and motives are trying to drown him in.

\*He rises above the mix and gives transcendent perspective...he even uses a play on the famous slogan giving it new meaning.

1. Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar.

\*But not revenge or revolt...but pay the tax...you live in the land, pay the tax.

\*However...paying the tax does not imply that you are submitting to all the claims of the government.

- "Yes" to the tax...that is Caesar's due

- "No" to Rome as your master...that is not his due.

2. Give God what is due him...what is due to God?...everything.

\*The Roman coin bears an image give the coin to the one who owns the image.

\*Whose image do you bear? Give your life to one whose image you bear.

\*Those who wanted to trap him responded with amazement...his brilliance was once again on display.

\*The difference between the actual brilliance of Jesus and the attempted brilliance of the religious leaders is this:

\*Jesus used his brilliance to illuminate truth.

\*Their attempts at brilliance were designed to trap and trick...to make themselves look good.

**\*It might appear that Jesus was advocating a "two-story" worldview.**

\*"God gets this part of you, Caesar gets that part." (A separation of the sacred and secular)

\*But he was not advocating dividing life into parts.

\*This is an incoherent approach to life...an impossible life.

\*Jesus said **"You cannot serve two masters...one will win out, the other will lose."**

\*Not that you "must not" but rather "you cannot"...it is an impossibility.

\*Many attempt to live a separated "secular/sacred" life...As long as God gets the religious part, I can have the rest.

\*Extreme version:

\*Mobsters...went to Mass after committing murder

\*Terrorists...drunken and sexual orgies prior to committing murder in the name of God

\*Less extreme version:

\*Church, prayer before meals, write a check..."there, God has his...the rest of my life is mine."

\*Nice business arrangement...crazy, impossible.

\*The trap that was set was to force Jesus to choose.

\*So...do we serve Caesar and rebel against God...or Serve God and rebel against Caesar?

\*In other words...its impossible to live a single story life...so who do we rebel against...Caesar or God?

\*"Neither, he replied...We live integrated, single story lives...look at that coin, who made it, whose image is on it?"

-"Okay, then give him taxes...he provides military, roads, aqueducts."

\*"Look in the mirror...who made you, whose image is stamped on your soul?"

-Okay, then give him your ultimate loyalty, your worship...he has provided you life, breath and everything else."

\***Let's take a short off-road trip, not the main point...but an important side point.**

\*What happens when the coin-maker requires loyalty reserved for the man-maker?

\*Then you must obey God...it may cost you your life, or your freedom.

\*However...short of this extreme circumstance...we are to obey the government under God.

\*This is the ideal scenario:

\***1Tim. 2:2 Pray for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.**

\*When kings and those in authority...rule within their limits then...we obey them as unto God.

**\*Rom. 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.**

\*However, when the coin-makers demand worship that is only due the man-maker.

\*Then "civil disobedience" is required.

\*The concept of "civil disobedience" has always been important part of the Church's theology.

\*OT: **Daniel**

**\*NT: Acts 4:18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."**

\*In America, so far, it is largely an academic discussion...but for the early church...as the Roman government tried to exterminate those who would not bow to Caesar it was a life and death discussion.

\*It is, in other parts of the world, still a life and death issue.

\*When is civil disobedience required or allowed?...this is a tough subject.

\*We may need to address it sooner rather than later because of the way our government is trending.

\*But governments trend here and there...and although some in pockets of America some have had to take a personal stand...that included civil disobedience...

\*There are still plenty in our government who are pushing back so that we are nowhere near where other nations have gone in this.

\*But the day may come when we are forced to choose obedience to God over government...but we should be praying...according to 1 Tim, that this day does not come.

**\*This passage is not primarily about the place of civil disobedience...it is about an attempt to outsmart Jesus...and the Lord's response that revealed what an integrated life looks like.**

\*These not so brilliant men thought they could force Jesus to choose a side in the sacred vs. secular war...the Roman issue.

\*But they didn't care a thing about the real issue..."how do we live God honoring lives in a culture that opposes him?"

\*How do I know they didn't care?

\*The Pharisees opposed giving the tax, the Herodians supported it...and here they are working together to trap Jesus.

\*They don't care which side he takes...they only want him stopped.

\*But Jesus had no split personality...he was a fully integrated man...he lived in a single story world.

\*It was his Father's world...no split between the sacred and secular.

\*Jesus lived and taught that must be both "be world-affirming and world-denying at the same time."

\*Cultures and man-made religions tend to choose a side(secular or sacred)(Christ or culture)...Christ followers must refuse to.

\*Scripture provides the basis for understanding this stereo approach:

-We see through the twin lenses of:

- a. a world that is God-created and called "good"
- b. a world that is fallen and not as it should be

\*It is still his world and we still bear his image...but sin has taken its toll.

\*So here is the some of the language used to explain this single-story world-view:

\*"We are to live in but not of the world"

\*"We are not conform to the image of the world, but to be continually transformed by the word of God."

\*Israel upon their great Exodus rescue were to plunder the Egyptians gold (they didn't steal it but they didn't refuse it) but they were not to turn that gold into an object of worship (which, of course they did...and it cost them)...so...

**\*take and use the culture's gold...don't worship it.**

\*One statement of faith called the Harford declaration said the church is to live..."Against the world, for the world."

\*This is not about being unnecessarily combative or obstinate...it is about positioning ourselves to best love those we are called to love.

\*The flatterers got it right when they said of Jesus..." **You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth.**"

\*Who had a greater impact on culture and individual lives than Jesus? No one.

\*And yet what was true about him?

\*He continually swam against the cultural currents.

\*He was not like the protestors of the 60's..."Fight the establishment"

\*Actually this is the cry of the protestors of every generation...including ours today.

\*What else would you protest but that which you believe has been "established" and those who "established it."

\*Jesus was not a protestor at all...he is the King...powerful Kings don't protest...they rule.

\*He was too busy establishing the rule of the true kingdom to worry much about the weak human structures around him.

\*He was not threatened by human cultures and kingdoms...they were threatened by him...still are.

\*Its why Communist cultures as well as cultures dominated by other religions have often outlawed Christian Evangelism.

\*Yet...he was a former carpenter turned itinerant teacher...they had all the power of the establishment behind them.

\*His power in the human sense came from the fact that he was not swayed by men (he was only concerned with the opinion of God) and he taught the way of God (lifestyle of truth).

\*This positioned him to be a threat to the prevailing power structures as well as a blessing to people.

\*He was a threat because they had nothing he wanted...so they had no power over him.

\*He was able to love people because he was unconcerned with looking good in their eyes...thus they had nothing he needed...he was in it for them not for him.

\*He was "Against the world, for the world"

\*They tried to force him into: "Against the world" or "For the world" and he said "nope"...

\*He would not live in either the basement of a world without God...or the upstairs that is leap of faith detached from the world of reality.

\*He was the most "in but not of the world" person who has ever lived.

\*And he was thus positioned to change the world.

\*You cannot change that which you are addicted to.

\*He was able to change culture because he was not addicted to its symbols and structures.

**\*Chesterton: A dead thing can only go with the stream; only a living thing can go against it.**

\*Jesus was fully alive...he swam in the current of the reality of God

\*And this current flows in but not of the world.

### **APPLICATION:**

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's"

\*Is powerful in the simplicity of its expression.

\*Yet is an enormous challenge to understand how to live that way.

\*It is an expression of the reality and necessity of a single-story life.

\*We can and we must understand how to live in the time and space where God has placed us.

\*This is an enormous challenge and attempts to make it simple have only made it confusing.

\*So many go find a Christian leader, author, or organization who aligns with them...then make this person the equivalent of a "Pope"...they speak with authority on virtually every part of our lives:

-Vote

-Buy

-Raise and educate kids

-Engage family life

-Avoid the contamination of the world.

\*In Catholic Doctrine when the Pope speaks "Ex cathedra" he speaks with authority on that subject.

\*It's common to want help making the complex simple...so much easier if someone would just tell me so I don't have to wrestle with these issues.

\*This doesn't mean that mentoring isn't valuable...it is...enormously so...but mentors can give you help in learning how to navigate...they cannot give you detailed maps that remove all need to struggle and decide and trust.

\*Also doesn't mean that we don't need the skillful work of those God has given to the church...scholars, thinkers, writers....we do, I do.

\*But when people look for mentors who will make their lives simple...disillusionment is inevitable.

\*Scientists have looked for "TOE" the "The theory of everything"... a single, coherent framework that fully explains and links together all aspects of the universe.

\*Likewise Christians have looked for the single system that will fully explain and link together all aspects of their lives into a checklist, a simple, easy to follow map.

\*Of course the "ROE" reality of everything is...Christ...**Col. 1:17 "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."**



\*"Trust and obey" is as simple as it gets...but there is no "theory of everything" that will make what is inherently complex...living "In but not of" into something simple.

\*Simple systems to the Christian life sell books and sell out arenas...but they are not sustainable.

\*To live in not of the world is difficult...there is no simple path and no one can give you a system or a seminar that will make it simple.

\*Let's look at some principles:

### **1. Contact:**

\*We are to engage culture in every way that is possible and allowable.

\*There will be disagreements on what is possible and allowable

\*Clearly we are not to run from the world...but to it.

\*Abraham (Israel) was told over and over..."Through you all nations of the world will be blessed."

\*Jesus told the church..."Go to all the nations..."

\*We are to engage people...culture.

### **2. Community:**

\*We need each other

\*The brilliance of Christ is seen in his dual commands..."**go to the world**" "**Stay in community**"

\*We need to push each other, lovingly and gently...when we are pulling back into our fortresses (running scared from culture)

\*We need to go and call each other back, lovingly and gently...when we are in danger of floating down stream in culture like a dead thing...rather than living like follower of Christ.

\*We need each other to live "in but not of" ...to struggle with "give Caesar what is his, and God what is his."

\*Everything is God...now how does that flesh out in your life?

### **3. Conclude:**

\*We need to have lines we will not cross, non-negotiables.

\*We cannot live continually confused about "whether God is alive, has spoken, has a purpose, has power."

\*Is the Bible true, is the Church his body, do I need others, will I float with the current like some dead thing...

\*Seek, but conclude.

\*Struggle, but decide.

\*"Yes...its hard and sometimes confusing...now when will you decide and live decided rather than deciding?"

\*Know what you believe and why you believe it.

\*Don't wait for someone to come and do this for you...if you want help...ask for it.

\*When you come to some conclusions...live humbly but confidently.

\*Be a lifetime learner...of God, others, and culture...but learners add to their knowledge...they don't continually start over from scratch.

\*Scrapping what they have learned so far...because they are forever in search of the "perfect (simple) system"

\*The point of an open mind is to close on something solid.

\*A perpetually open-mind that never comes to conclusion is in no way a positive thing.

#### **4. Commitment:**

\*This is a heart not just a head issue.

\*It aligns with the last point...but that point was more intellectual this is more volitional.

\*You can believe certain things are true but fail to live what you believe.

\*A commitment to Christ is a decision to follow, followed by a million little decisions to live out that commitment.

\*To swim upstream and not float down like some dead thing requires his life in you.

\*His life in us flows as we continually say "yes" to him.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

\*The lights went out in NY and the city burned.

\*The lights going out was not a cause but an opportunity for the chaos.

\*The cause was the darkness that was in hearts of people...darkness that was revealed when the lights went out.

\*When people believe that no one is seeing...then what is in their hearts is seen.

\*What held people back from burning stores on July 12, 1977(the night before the crime spree)...was fear of being seen.

\*Many don't truly believe that anyone is really seeing, or caring...they may not plunder stores or set fires...they find no value in that.

\*However, they will do whatever is in their hearts to do...when the opportunity arises.

\*The world is, apart from God, a rotting thing...a stream flowing away from the life of God...dead things floating with it.

\*They believe they are free to do what is in their hearts to do...but that is not freedom but bondage.

\*We are not to stand on the shore and curse this stream...neither are we to float down it like a dead thing.

\*We are to engage it like Christ did.

\*Christ said..."Let your light shine before men that they may see your life and give glory to God."

\*This doesn't just mean...prison ministry, or street ministry...the places we believe to be clearly dark and in need of the gospel.

\*Goddard, Maize, Andover, Derby, Wichita...nice homes, cars and lawns...are possessed by people who do not possess the life of God.

\*It may not be readily apparent but they are in desperate need of the life of God.

\*We must engage culture with clarity and commitment in community.

\*To do this we cannot attempt to live dualistic...two story lives...its confusing for them and impossible for us.

## SMALL GROUP NOTES

### Intro:

\*Can you think of a decision you made when "no one was looking" that you regret?

-You do not have to elaborate if you don't want to.

\*Can you think of a decision you almost made but didn't because "someone was watching?"

\*A life lived like "no one is watching" is sure to lead to brokenness and regret...why do you think that as a culture more and more people are living this way in a variety of places in their lives?

### Read:

**Mark 12:13** Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words.  
**14** They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with

the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay or shouldn't we?" But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." 16 They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him.

### Discuss:

1. How could these intelligent men continue to believe they could entrap Jesus?
2. What is the trap they tried to set for Jesus?
3. How do you see the "battle between the sacred and secular" played out in the lives of those around you or in your own heart and mind?
4. Terry said that "Jesus was not advocating a two-story worldview."  
\*What is your understanding of a "two-story worldview"?  
\*How is this lifestyle damaging to yourself and others?
5. What are some circumstances where you believe civil disobedience would be allowed? Required?
6. How did Jesus demonstrate an "in but not of the world" approach to life?
7. **Chesterton: A dead thing can only go with the stream; only a living thing can go against it.**  
\*How does this quote apply to being "in but not of the world"?  
\*What are some practical applications for this in your life?
8. How have you seen the Christian life turned into a series of "easy steps" and why is this approach unsustainable?

### Apply:

1. What would God-honoring "contact" with the world look like for you?
2. Do you live in community with others in way that but pushes and protects you at the same time? If not, what steps might you take to get to the next level?
3. Have you decided to be "all in" or are you continually "deciding"? What is keeping you from the "decided life"?

**THE GOSPEL OF**

**MARK**



**Mark 12:13-17**

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DID NOT COME  
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**MARK 10:45**

**J. STILL**



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**He who leads the upright along an evil  
path will fall into his own trap...**

**Proverbs 28:20**



**Then God said, “Let us make man in our  
image...”**

**Genesis 1:26**

**Pray for kings and all those in authority,  
that we may live peaceful and quiet lives  
in all godliness and holiness.**

**1 Timothy 2:2**

**Rom. 13:1-2 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.**

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**World-affirming and World-denying at  
the same time**

**"Against the world, for the world"**

**"You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth."**



**"A dead thing can only go with  
the stream; only a living thing can  
go against it."**

**Chesterton**

**"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to  
God what is God's"**

**Contact**

**Community**

**Conclude**

**Commitment**

