

SERMON

study

GUIDE

LUKE 20:19-26 // GIVE TO GOD WHAT IS GOD'S

CONTEXT (or why this passage is not just about taxes)

- Luke is not a collection of essays but narrative
- This is part of larger section: Luke 19 (Triumphal Entry) → Luke 22:1-2
- Luke "hits pause" to explain **why the religious leaders rejected Jesus**
- Bookended by: leaders trying to destroy Him, but fearing the people (19:47 // 21:37-22:2)
- This story = same frame: v.19 (tried to seize him) → v.26 (silenced, marveling)
- Real question Luke is asking: **Why do people who look religious hate the real Jesus?**

WARNING: Religious activity can hide opposition to Jesus

- These leaders wanted the Messiah — until He showed up
- It's a **heart problem**, not an information problem
- More revelation + hard heart = worse position, not safer

3 PROBLEMS LUKE EXPOSES (leading up to today's text)

PROBLEM 1 — Using religion for yourself (19:45-46, Temple cleansing)

- Outwardly doing "the right things" — but driven by self, not God's glory
- You can pray, give, serve... for totally selfish reasons
- What's *driving* you matters to God

PROBLEM 2 — Refusing Jesus' authority (20:1-8)

- Their question about authority wasn't sincere — it was deflection
- Key diagnostic: *How do you respond when God's Word exposes your sin?*
 - These leaders: got angry, tried to silence Him
- Temptation: cast doubt on the messenger instead of receiving the message

PROBLEM 3 — Wanting to be the owner (20:9-18, Parable of the Tenants)

- Tenants = religious leaders. Vineyard = God's. But they act like it's theirs.
- v.14: "*Let us kill him so the inheritance may be ours*" — the motivation laid bare
- Root sin: **we want to be God**
 - True followers: love God being God
 - False followers: resent it

SERMON NOTES:

TODAY'S TEXT: THE TRAP (VV. 20-26)

THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TRY TO TRAP JESUS

- Spies sent
- Pretending to be sincere (v.20), which is still a common strategy
- Flattery first (v.21), then the trap (v.22):
"Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar?"
- **Why this seems like an impossible question:**
 - Say YES → Jewish people angry (Caesar = occupier, coin = idolatrous propaganda – "Son of God," "High Priest")
 - Say NO → Rome kills you for sedition (they later use this exact lie before Pilate)

JESUS' RESPONSE:

- "Show me a denarius" – forces them to produce the coin... in the temple
- "Whose image? Whose inscription?" → "Caesar's"
- **"Render to Caesar what is Caesar's – and to God what is God's."**

THE DEEPER POINT:

- He's not primarily giving a solution to tax problems
- He's turning the question back:
Whose image do YOU bear?
 - Gen. 1 → made in God's image
 - Jer. 31 → His law inscribed on your heart
- **You belong to God. Give Him what is His.**

WHAT "GIVING GOD WHAT IS GOD'S" LOOKS LIKE

- **Give Him glory** – deliberately + wholeheartedly seeking His glory in everything
 - *What's getting you out of bed?*
What's driving your decisions?
- **Give Him obedience** – especially when it's costly
 - Disobeying while creating confusion to get away with it = thinking you're smarter than God
 - "Say it out loud: I think I am smarter than God" – *maybe that shows you how foolish it is*
- **Give Him thanks** – ingratitude = thinking God owes you
 - When you know you deserve hell, *everything else* becomes a gift
- **Give Him trust** – stop trying to be your own savior
 - Religious leaders' mistake: Old Testament screaming "you can't do it" → their answer: "try harder"
 - Self-reliance ends in: depression / pride & delusion / anger at Jesus
 - **The gospel:** Jesus lived perfectly, died as our substitute, gives us His righteousness, provides the Spirit to change and enable us

SO WHAT?

- Look in your own heart – are there areas *off limits* to God right now?
- Unbeliever: give God what is God's = *your trust* – come to Him as King and Savior
- Believer: don't stop – keep repenting, keep believing
- Assurance comes by: (1) looking to Christ and believing, (2) seeing by God's grace you are *responding differently* than these religious leaders

"We want to be sure that when we see Him, we are going to love Him."

SERMON NOTES: