

Luke 20:19-26

¹⁹When the scribes and chief priests realized that Jesus had spoken this parable against them, they sought to arrest Him that very hour. But they were afraid of the people.

²⁰So they watched Him closely and sent spies who pretended to be sincere. They were hoping to catch Him in His words in order to hand Him over to the rule and authority of the governor. ²¹“Teacher,” they inquired, “we know that You speak and teach correctly. You show no partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. ²²Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

²³But Jesus saw through their duplicity and said to them, ²⁴“Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?”

“Caesar’s,” they answered.

²⁵So Jesus told them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

²⁶And they were unable to trap Him in His words before the people; and amazed at His answer, they fell silent.

Berean Standard Bible

1

Living with one foot in each world. Luke 20:19-26

You can be friendly, but you cannot be friends with everyone. 20:19-20

Guard your ways. 20 “pretended to be sincere”

Guard your words. 20 “hoping to catch Him in His words”

You can be trustworthy, but you cannot trust everyone. 20:21-22

Your personal value is not based on others. 21 “You speak and teach correctly”

Your social value is not based on others. 22 “Is it lawful”

You can be faithful, and must be, with earth and Heaven. 20:23-26

Be faithful with what you have. 25a “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s”

Be faithful with who you are. 25b “and to God what is God’s”

2

Be a smarter Christian. Luke 20:19-26

Be wise with people. 20:19-20

Some people are openly aggressive. 19 “they sought to arrest Him”

Some people are passive aggressive. 20 “pretended to be sincere”

Be wise with words. 20:21-22

Some questions have easy answers. 21 “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes”

Some questions have hard answers. 22 “Jesus saw through their duplicity”

Be wise with things. 20:23-26

Some things are of this world. 23-25 “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s”

Some things are of the Lord. 25-26 “to God what is God’s”

3

How to be a true friend, and to have true friends. Luke 20:19-26

Your intentions take you forward. 20:19

The truth must always be spoken. 19a “spoken this parable against them”

The truth will not make you popular. 19b “sought to arrest... they were afraid”

Your imagination takes you inward. 20:20-23

The truth may not unite you. 20 “pretended to be... hoping to catch Him”

The truth may separate you. 23 “Jesus saw through their duplicity”

Your image takes you onward. 20:24-26

The truth is knowing who you are. 23 “Whose image and inscription”

The truth is being who you are. 25 “Give to Caesar... and to God...”

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“And to God...” Luke 20:25

Render unto Caesar.

Render unto Caesar because God put him there. Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-14

Render unto Caesar because he needs my help. 1 Peter 2:12

Render unto Caesar because of the benefits. Romans 13:4a, 1 Peter 2:15

Render unto God.

Render unto God because of who God is. Ephesians 4:6

Render unto God because of who I am. Romans 6:22a

Render unto God because of the benefits. Romans 6:22b

Other possible titles

When you are facing fake friends
Separation of Church and State
Find the Third Option
Choose Option C
How to avoid being charged with tax fraud
Do you want Al Capone as your cell mate?
The government wants my tax dollars. What does God want from me?
God and government
Politics and religion
Correcting the con artists
When you disagree about how your tax dollars are being spent
Ask a question to answer a question
Inspiration for image-bearers
Where does your loyalty lie – really?
Addressing taxing issues
O how I love Jesus, O how I love government
Caught between two loyalties
Heaven's people with earth's problems
When solving problems, deal with the root, not the fruit
When the issue is more than money
Show me the money (movie: Jerry Maguire)
Your money matters
Separating Cost from Value
How does God spend His money?
How to lose friends and influence people
How to help hypocrites

Quotes and illustrations



Roman denarius with the head of Tiberius. The inscription reads "Ti[berivs] Caesar Divi Avg[vsti] F[ilivs] Avgvstvs" ("Caesar Augustus Tiberius, son of the Divine Augustus"), claiming to be the son of the god, Caesar Augustus, had supposedly become a god when he died. The reverse shows a seated female, usually identified as Livia depicted as Pax. The words read, "Pontifex Maximus" ("Chief Priest") (Image thanks to the Numismatic Guaranty Company)

An anonymous wag once said, "While there are just two certainties in life: death and taxes, at least death doesn't get worse every time Congress is in session!"

At this time, the Jews were still under Mosaic Law, thus, their interpretation of the 10 Commandments and the prohibition in the 2nd commandment against "graven images" (Ex. 20:4) caused them to violently oppose, at the cost of their lives, even allowing banners with Caesar's image to enter Jerusalem...yet they carried it on coins in their pockets every day.

Evangelist, D.L. Moody, was once reprimanded by an overly pious Christian, when Moody told the man he was on his way to the polls to vote. This pharisaic believer said, "Mr. Moody, do you not know that your citizenship is in heaven?" The ever-practical evangelist replied, "Yes, I know that; but remember that I own property in Cook County (Chicago)."

The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax. Albert Einstein

A man on vacation was strolling along outside his hotel in Acapulco, enjoying the sunny Mexican weather. Suddenly, he was attracted by the screams of a woman kneeling in front of a child. The man knew enough Spanish to determine that the boy had swallowed a coin. Seizing the child by the heels, the man held him up, gave him a few shakes, and an American quarter dropped to the sidewalk. "Oh, thank you sir!" cried the woman. "You seemed to know just how to get it out of him. Are you a doctor?" "No, ma'am," replied the man. "I'm with the United States Internal Revenue Service." (With thanks to Scott Carson)

Paying taxes has never been popular. Taxes are not a donation, nor are they a voluntary contribution. Failing to pay them, or paying less than you're supposed to, is also a sure way to get the government's attention. You'll quickly learn how strongly the government feels about the payment of taxes. (With thanks to Scott Carson, again)

Music and songs

Songs about God's wealth and possessions

He owns the cattle on a thousand hills

Songs about my wealth and possessions

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Look at v19. What differences do you notice about the attitudes of Jesus, and of the priests? How do you account for those differences?
 2. List some factors that may help us be confident, as Jesus was, in the face of opposition.
 3. What are each of the actions in v21, and how do they each build positive character traits within us?
 4. A denarius was a coin with blasphemous inscriptions. Based on v23 why do you think Jesus asked for a denarius?
 5. Is it morally right to pay taxes to an ungodly government?
 6. What is God's (v25) and how do I give it to Him?
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