

## The Gospel According to Mark - I Pledge Allegiance to God

**July 7th, 2019**

**I Pledge Allegiance to God**

**Mark 12:13-17**

“And should this life bring suffering, Lord I will remember What Calvary has bought for me, both now and forever” Today we’re going to talk about pledging allegiance to God and one of the reasons I’m so willing to pledge allegiance to God is because of the words we just sang. I remember what Calvary has bought for me both now and forever! Calvary was the hill on which Jesus was crucified and knowing He loved me that much has caused me to give Him my allegiance! And what did Jesus purchase for me on that hill called Calvary? Forgiveness, mercy, love, eternal life and the power of the Cross to help me live this life in victory, regardless of the suffering! So pledging allegiance to God makes sense! Let’s pray and ask God to drive this truth deep into our hearts today! Pray!

Okay, let’s get some context for our message today. Remember last week we talked about Jesus’ confrontation with the religious leaders concerning His authority to do the things He was doing...

Mark 11:27 They arrived again in Jerusalem, and while Jesus was walking in the temple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him.

Mark 11:28 "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you authority to do this?"

And then after Jesus tells a parable and outwits them in their little game, we read these words...

Mark 12:12 Then they looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

The religious leaders left empty handed, but you know they weren’t going to give up! Check it out...

Text: Mark 12:13-17

Mark 12:13 Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words.

Mark 12:14 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?"

Mark 12:15 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."

Mark 12:16 They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied.

Mark 12:17 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.

So they sent some other Pharisees and some Herodians, who were a sect of Hellenistic Jews who supported the various King Herods on the throne. And this interaction is quite fascinating! In fact it is surprising the things that they said about Jesus. I don’t think they were being sincere! What if we were to fast forward to the days after Jesus’ crucifixion and put the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Priest, and others on trial for what happened to Jesus? Can’t you hear the lawyer cross examining them. “So did you or did you not say the following about Jesus? ‘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 this what you said?”

“Well, yes we said that but...”

“But what? You didn’t mean these things?”

“Well no. Not really.”

“So whether these words are true or not, you thought them to be untrue. Why would you say these things if you thought them to be untrue? Could it be that you were trying to force Jesus to answer a question you thought would entrap Him and allow you to call for His arrest?”

“Objection your honor!” Says the Pharisees lawyer. “This incident happened a long time ago. I fail to see

the relevance.”

“Objection overruled. It is relevant because it could establish motive. Continue.”

“You said these things about Jesus so that when you asked Him the question about taxes He would have to answer you or be humiliated before the crowd. Kind of backfired on you, didn't it?”

“No more questions your honor.”

Of course we know the people responsible for the murder of Jesus never went to trial for their crimes. However, we know that some of them realized what they had done and repented. God is so amazing He forgave them. Those who did not repent will someday face their judgment. But let's get back to our text for today.

Jesus told the Pharisees and Herodians to give Caesar what belonged to him and to give God what belonged to Him, and in so doing established this principle...

We have responsibilities first to God and then to earthly authorities, and we need to understand the difference between our responsibilities to God and to earthly authorities.

Let's look first at our...

### **Allegiance to Man**

What belongs to earthly authorities? What should our allegiance to human authority look like? For this we will look to various passages in God's Word and we'll discover...

#### **The practical application of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's Society needs civil authorities**

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

And then we see the admonition to obey the law in the book of Romans...

Rom 13:5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

(In other words, because it's the right thing not just because you fear being caught.)

#### **The practical application of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's Pay Your Taxes**

Rom 13:6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.

Rom 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Biblical Scholar Henry Turlington stated it this way...

“You owe some allegiance and support to the government whose coinage you use; the coin is an evidence of the civil order under which you live. Certainly, then, it is lawful- according to the way of God- to give appropriate support to the civil government. Jesus never supported any party which advocated violent overthrow of the civil government of His day...Obligations to the state are within the design of God for mankind.”

#### **The practical application of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's Respect the Office**

We discussed this a bit last week. Sometimes earthly authorities may not have earned or even deserve our respect personally, but we should respect the office. This doesn't give a person who holds a position a blank check, but if they hold the office and ask us to do what is right, and required by law then we do so out

of respect for the office. In other words, you can't stop paying your taxes because you don't like the lifestyle of the tax collector! And just because the officer who pulled you over for speeding is not perfect and has made mistakes, doesn't give you an excuse for breaking the law, and you should still respect the office. And I just want to say that while there is no such thing as a perfect cop, just like there's no perfect preachers, we are blessed in Slidell to have some really good guys and gals who put on a uniform and risk their lives to protect ours on a daily basis. We appreciate that. God's Words says this in 1 Peter 2:13 and following...

1 Pet 2:13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority,

1 Pet 2:14 or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

1 Pet 2:15 For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.

1 Pet 2:16 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.

1 Pet 2:17 Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

If the person in office is dishonorable and not worthy of respect, at least give honor to the office and position. More on this in just a minute.

### **The practical application of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's Be a Good Citizen**

Titus 3:1 Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,

Titus 3:2 to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

### **The practical application of giving to Caesar what is Caesar's Pray for Those in Authority!**

1 Tim 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--

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

1 Tim 2:3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

1 Tim 2:4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Some of you are not going to like what I'm about to say, but I'm going to say it anyway, because I'm not here to tickle your ears and just make you feel good! Paul didn't tell Timothy to pray for Kings and those in authority if they were from your particular political party! He said pray for those in the positions whether you agree with them or not! My prayer when I pray for our leaders is that they would seek God's face, His ways, His principles, His wisdom, and His will in every decision, regardless of political fallout! If you're not praying for those in positions of authority, then as a follower of Christ, I think you forfeit the right to criticize! If you're praying for them and yet you know they aren't following Godly principles then you can certainly say how disappointed you are in them and how it will effect your vote in the future. It is okay to voice your disagreement with leaders, but be respectful and civil about it and make sure that you've done your God-given duty to pray for them! Now, having said all of that, you may be very surprised to hear what I'm about to say!

### **There are exception to the rules...**

If earthly authorities ask you to disobey, disregard or violate the clear teaching of God's Word, then you are to follow the authority of God over the authority of man! There is Biblical precedent for this. When told by the authorities not to speak of Jesus again, Peter and John replied...

Acts 4:18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19 "But Peter and John replied, :judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Acts 4:21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Acts 4:22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

So civil disobedience would only be acceptable if the authorities were to ask you to do something in direct

violation of God's Word, His principles, and His commands. The reason is that our first and foremost allegiance is to our Lord and His teachings. Thank God we still live in a country where we are able to exercise our Christian beliefs, and where our allegiance to our country, even in our pledge, still recognizes God's ultimate authority over our lives: "One Nation under God!" With that in mind, let's look at our allegiance to God and what that looks like practically!

### **Allegiance to God**

When I pledge allegiance to God, what am I pledging? When Jesus says I'm supposed to give to God what is God's what does that mean? What am I supposed to give to God? What do I have that belongs to Him?

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's God is the only One who can ultimately give you what you really need**

Jude 1:24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--

Jude 1:25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude nailed it with those two verses! And because Jesus is not only able to keep us from falling and to present us without fault, He actually exercises that ability and authority for anyone who will call upon His glorious Name! As a result we discover this truth:

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's Our Worship Belongs to Him**

Psalms 100:1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

Psalms 100:2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Psalms 100:3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his ; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Psalms 100:4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psalms 100:5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Did you notice some of the elements of worship contained in this passage?

Shout for Joy/Worship with gladness/Joyful songs/thanksgiving/praise/motivation for worship

Psalms 100:5 For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations

Have you ever wondered what the whole raising hands thing is all about for some people in worship? I believe it is two fold. On the one hand it is a symbol of our openness to God and our surrender to His authority and Lordship. On the other hand it is a physical gesture that signifies our utter amazement, astonishment, and deep appreciation for the glory and majesty of God! I mean, what human being who gets a glimpse of the awesomeness, beauty, glory, and pure holiness of God can help being wowed by what they are seeing. It's like when you see a beautiful sunset and you lift your hands and say, "Wow, would you look at that! Isn't that amazing?" It's a similar thing when we recognize and experience the glory of God. We may lift our hands and say, "Wow, God you are just so awesome!" Daniel experienced something like this one night...

Dan 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Dan 7:14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's Our Obedience Belongs to Him**

James 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. . .

God is the preeminent authority in all things and as such we humbly submit to Him in obedience. As I said last week, God is the one authority who can be totally and completely trusted without reservation or question. When we realize His amazing grace and love for us we are motivated to love Him, not to earn His love but because of His love. John gives us a really great insight into this practical application of giving God what belongs to Him...

1 John 4:9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

And then down in chapter 5 John explains the practical application of this truth in our lives...

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

1 John 5:4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

The writer of Hebrews gives us even more insight on the practical application of obedience...

Heb 12:9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!

Heb 12:10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.

Heb 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

And our obedience to God will lead us to understand...

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's Our Service Belongs to Him**

Eph 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

Eph 4:12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Eph 4:13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Isn't it so cool that in serving God in obedience we actually become more and more like Jesus? And our heart will be to not only serve like Jesus served, but our motivation will not be self-serving, but for the glory of God...

Rom 15:17 Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.

Rom 15:18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me. . .

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's Our Trust Belongs To Him**

Earthly authorities may let us down, but we know that we can trust that God will never fail us.

Isa 51:6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

Enough said! God can be trusted! His Word, His promises, His righteousness, His love, and His salvation will never fail! And because of this we see our final practical application of giving to God what is God's...

### **The practical application of giving to God what is God's Our Love Belongs to Him**

Psa 116:1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy.

Psa 116:2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.”

“No disciple-and no Jew-could have understood this saying as permitting a man to obey Caesar, or any other man, in opposition to God. The disciple would always have to choose the cross rather than disobey God. He must always adhere to the first commandment of all, regardless of the personal cost.”  
Henry Turlington

And what is that first commandment?

Mat 22:34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.

Mat 22:35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

Mat 22:36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Mat 22:37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'

Mat 22:38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

Mat 22:39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Mat 22:40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Why would He say this?

Without love for God and His law, we will by nature resort to lawlessness.

Without love for our fellowman, we will by nature resort to total selfishness and the only law will be the law of what I want, regardless of who it hurts. But when we give to God what is God's things change in a wonderful and powerful way. John puts it this way...

1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

Why would we not be willing to pledge allegiance to our Creator God who first loved us and loved us so much He was willing to allow Jesus, His only begotten Son to give His life in order that we might have life?  
Let's pray!