

November 5, 1929

I am going to talk to you about last Sunday's Sunday School lesson. What I am going to say may not have been brought out in your Sunday School class. Jesus had been teaching for some time and he told the story of the parable of the vineyard and when he got through with that story they were pretty well angry. They felt perfectly sure that he was talking about them, the leaders of the Jews at that time. They sent the Pharisees and the Herodians to ask him some questions.

I want you to get a clear concept about who these people were so you will see how bitter the people were against Christ. The word Pharisee meant to separate. They were strict almost unreasonably strict in the observation of the letter of the law, the law as it was understood by the Pharisees. A Pharisee observed it and for that reason they should be the very best kind of citizen. They were so strict in it that they felt that the average Jew was unclean. They believed in the freedom of the law. They believed in predestination, in the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the body. They did the best that they knew how to be good citizens. They lived in keeping with the law as they interpreted it. Being the type that they were they could not afford to even support except outwardly the Roman government. The Herodians who probably developed from the Sadducees hoped that through Herod the Petrach that the kingdom of the Jews was going to be established. In other words, the Pharisees were the people who would not support the Roman government and the Herodians were the ones that did and these Pharisees and Herodians were bitterly opposed to each other. It is noticeable, so noticeable that a record is made of it. They asked him this

question, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the Roman government?" That is what the question was in substance. A great number of the Jews said, "No." Here is a group of Jews who are following the Roman government in its leader and they say that it is. Now if Jesus answers, "Yes," then he puts himself out of touch with that great mass of folks; if he says, "No" then he is in rebellion against the Roman government and they have a case against him. They did not see how in the world he could get away from answering it. He understood the spirit that was back of it. He understood their hypocrisy. He said, "Show me a piece of the tribute money." Why certainly they handed him out one of the Roman coins. He said, "Whose head and superscription is on this coin." They said, "Caesar's." Then he said, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." That answer as everything that Jesus said has an eternal meaning for every living human being.

Support your church, pay your taxes to your government. You have as a citizen of this state and of this nation an obligation to support your government whether you believe in those who are at present administering your government or not. It is your government, so render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. We cannot live in an organized human society without a good government and the government cannot exist if the people will not pay sufficient taxes to keep the government in existence. Obey your laws; conform to the regulations which are the statutes of your state and your nation and pay your part in the upkeep of the government. It is one's duty; it is one's obligation. That is, render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's but it is the other side of human life that is important and I think it is much more important to render unto God the things that are God's. Not only give your money to your church but support it. If your religion calls you to that church, it is your duty to support it and it is your duty to develop that side of your life. See that your church is properly supported financially, yes, but a much better way is to give it that

support that comes out of one's heart and soul. Love God with all your heart and soul and body and your neighbor as yourself.

The Sadducees came after them and asked a question about divorce and one of the scribes came and asked him a question about which is the greatest commandment and he answered those questions in such a way that they asked him no more questions. He told them that in heaven people were not given in marriage; that the greatest commandment is to love God and the second is like unto the first to love thy neighbor as thyself. Realizing that certain relationships are temporal and earthly and that we must love God with a whole heart and the way to express that love to God is by loving our fellowman and if the people that live in this Republic of ours could get ahold of the 12th chapter of Mark whether they were Christian or non-Christian, Jew or Gentile, if we could get that truth into our hearts and souls and live it we could make this world a much better place for human beings and we would grow and develop, we would make much better men and women than we are.

A great many people who are religious do not realize that they owe an obligation to the state. That is a part of the trouble in Western North Carolina. Such people are not good citizens in a state and they are not good citizens in a religious organization. Such people are not to be consored but they are to be pitied and helped. There is a great field of service out in the world to carry the truth about human relationships and human people to the other people of the world.

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