



SERMON REFLECTION GUIDE

Luke, Part 57: The Government and God - Luke 20:20-26 - January 25, 2026

SERMON OUTLINE

Intro - Recent Anti-ICE protest seemingly crossed a line by moving into an ongoing Christian (baptist) worship service in Minneapolis. This forces us to reckon with age-old questions regarding the relationship of the *government (state)* & *God (church)*.

Result: Christians feel torn, often guilted into certain political/policy affirmations under the guise of spiritual/biblical fidelity. We've all seen Christian friends become more passionate about political ends than the Great Commission, defending their position as biblical.

One of Jesus's most famous quotes addresses this relationship: **"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."** - Luke 20:25

Background: Jesus has taken up a *position of authority* by (1) riding in triumphal, (2) cleansing the temple, (3) confounding the leaders, (4) telling an exposing parable.

The displaced leaders are angry, and are seeking a way to destroy him (19:47, 20:19)

They use lackeys/spies to trick him with a question that contains a severe dilemma. These spies come with flattery (reverse mirror-image of gossip).

The Dilemma: "Pay the Tax" = loss of goodwill from Jews, "Don't Pay" = Roman Punishment

The Coin: **"Show me a denarius"** (v. 24) — the very fact these so-called Rome-haters have Roman coins on hand exposes them from the beginning.

"Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" — the coin would have had the image of Tiberius Caesar and an inscription calling him the "son of the divine Augustus".

The Answer: **"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."** - Luke 20:25

God's people are key members of both the state and the church - they are not fully separate.

The State: The Bible says that "government is from God" (Rom. 13:1)

Therefore, give to Caesar that which belongs to him *by virtue of his image* being upon it.

Implicit here:

1. **Submit** to the government where you live as a civilly obedient citizen.
 1. Disobey only as the state would ask you to disobey God. (See: Acts 5:29)
2. **Pay** your taxes
3. **Participate** as you are able in godly ways (voting, contributing, prayer, writing, serving)
4. **"Christian Nationalism"** is NOT the goal/desire of Jesus or the Bible. (Jn. 10:18; 18:11, 36)

The Lord: Give to God the things that are God's, but what exactly belongs to God?

Deut. 10:12-14 — All God requires of his people is **everything**. And who can ever do that?

What belongs to God?

1. All things - **Romans 11:36**
2. All governments and positions of authority - **John 19:10-11**
3. All people - belonging to God *by virtue of his image* being upon us. - **Genesis 1:27**

If all things belong to God, then our submission to our government, our civil obedience, our ability to keep our heads in trying times is not for the United States' sake -but for God's sake.

Some things belong to Caesar, but all things belong to God.

Our priority, then is to live as FREE unto the state, even as we are following Jesus.

So, we live our lives as unto the Lord - citizens of his kingdom first, and the state second.



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Have you felt the pressure to hold a certain political position because you claim to be a Christian?
2. What does Jesus understand about the origins of authority that we forget?
3. Quick note on flattery - why is it dishonest and dangerous?
4. What is a Christians responsibility to the government and to state leaders? What three things did Josh say could be easily implied from the text?
5. When should Christians act contrary to their government's laws or policies?
6. What belongs to God? What is Jesus trying to say by phrasing his answer this way?