



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Sermon Series:** The Gospel & Politics      Part 1  
**Sermon Title:** What Political Party Would Jesus Join?  
**Speaker/ Date:** Armin Sommer/ January 6, 2019

### Mark 12:13–17

We live and minister in one of the most politically polarized and mutually antagonistic cultures (since who knows when)? Jesus takes our political classifications and tosses them aside. He unveils a truth that may shock us.

**Big Idea:** Jesus Christ has no party affiliation; He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

We need to approach politics with 2 important perspectives:

#### I.      POLITICS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT NOT ULTIMATE

**Mark 12:13** - The Pharisees and Herodians were political opposites.

**Mark 12:14-15a** - They're just trying to trap Jesus and question how is the follower of Christ to relate to gov't? Either he will endorse sedition and rebellion, or he will appear to be in collusion with their oppressors.

The first century was an altogether different political climate. Rome ruled. Caesar had imposed his brutal Imperial Tax on his Jewish subjects. It sparked a rebellion, which the Romans brutally suppressed. In today's culture- when it comes to politics Instead of reasoned discourse and respectful listening, we shout each other down and insult one another.

This has led to 2 extremes: First, to avoid politics altogether; Second, to obsess over politics. These two extremes lead to two opposite effects:

#### The Effect of Avoiding Politics

Those who avoid politics ultimately retreat into a completely privatized faith. The problem: faith in God, though personal, is not private. Try as we might to avoid politics, we can't. And if we ignore politics we end up ignoring issues God considers important. He cares about issues like race, immigration, the sanctity of life, and poverty... all of which were biblical issues before they became political issues.

## The Effect of Obsession Over Politics

We tend to blame everything that's wrong on the politicians we don't support. We then gather our info from the sources that resonate with us, and we sprinkle social media with our daily posts. Politics is an important part of life; but it's not the whole. And some Christians have been hijacked by a political party without even realizing it. The result: the allegiance of some is more to the party than to the Savior.

### REALITY #2: Identify Your Highest Loyalty

Consider what Jesus said to the Herodians and Pharisees in [Mark 12:15–16](#).

The denarius represented a full day's wage for the average person. The denarius also bore the image of Tiberias Caesar, who was Roman Emperor in Jesus' day. In [Mark 12:17](#) - Jesus uses it as an object lesson, holding it out before him. Essentially, "This belongs to Caesar? Then give it back."

He's saying, The image of Caesar is on the coin, so it belongs to him. But the image of God is on us, and we belong to God. So give your coins to Caesar, and give your life to God. Boil it down to this:

### We Have an Obligation to Government

Government is God's invention. But though God has ordained gov't, he does not endorse a particular form of gov't. That's an important distinction. Now some forms are better than others. And we should strive to improve the political process. But it's risky to equate Christianity with one form of gov't, or especially with one political party. The Kingdom of Christ exists within a variety of political contexts, some of which offer great freedom, and others that are quite oppressive. But the common denominator that defines Christians across cultures is allegiance to Christ the King.

When most of New Testament was written, Nero was the Emperor, one of the most cruel and wicked rulers. And it is in that context that Paul writes [Romans 13:1](#). The apostle Peter makes a similar point in his writings. [1 Peter 2:13-14a,17](#).

Christians must recognize that in a sense we have dual citizenship: one in the city of Man, and one in the City of God. There will be tension between the 2. But how does that play out for us today?

File your tax returns & pay what you owe, obey the laws, and participate in our democratic system.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Do you have a greater tendency to avoid politics altogether; or obsess over politics? What are the benefits of your choice?**
- **What are some guidelines that we can have in place to warn us that we are either avoiding or obsessing too much over politics?**
- **When you hear of Christians who support the opposite political party- do you automatically question the legitimacy of their salvation?**
- **What are some values that Republicans and Democrats have that are supported by scripture?**
- **Should a Christian align himself or herself with a political party?**
- **What response should we have if we meet a believer who is hostile toward us over our political view?**