

Challengers of Hope 05 Render to Caesar STUDY NOTES

Read Matthew 22.21. We need to all give to God what is God's – for example, our worship, our tithe, our love, our obedience. That is fairly basic and I believe all of you understand that simple truth. But this verse also tells us to "render to Caesar what is Caesar's". This is a big deal to walk in your dreams. Remember we said God gives you your dream in a micro-form – to see what you will do, and if you despise the micro-form then you will fail to walk in your dreams.

Read Luke 16.10-12. Notice verse 12 – if you want to own your own dreams, your own ministry, your own business, your own assets, God will bring "another man" into your life. The Greek word for "another man" is allotrious. It means a foreigner, a stranger, someone not like you, someone who is from a different background, culture – today, someone from another planet, alien. Something that is not your own, someone who is not your family. Someone different, a Caesar so to speak. And how you deal with your Caesar and what is his will determine whether you walk in your dreams.

In Latin we say "Caesar", in Russian "tsar", in German "Kaiser". It originally meant elephant, but it came to mean a supreme rule, an emperor.

One of God's favourite things to do with anyone WHO HE WANTS TO WALK IN BIG DREAMS is bring a Caesar into their life – a ruler, an authority, but someone whose ways are strange, someone who we do not get – a boss who we cannot fathom, a pastor who we just do not get, a mentor who does not make sense to us! And then how you respond to their AUTHORITY will determine whether you walk in your dreams.

You see if you want to change the world, if you want to do anything of worth – there needs to be a structure. Now how authority works depends on the people in the structure and the task the structure needs to complete, but God loves authority – He much prefers it over chaos and lawlessness and disorganization. Authority brings order, structure, and productivity – in a nation, a company, church – even a family.

Jesus grew up in Israel under Roman rule. He might have thought – I bet life would be better without a Caesar, without Roman soldiers on the street making me carry their bags, without them taking my nice jacket, without Roman tax collectors taking all their taxes, without the oppression people feel, without them breathing down our necks all the time. However, Jesus said "Render to Caesar what is Caesars!" – do what the government want, serve your employer and do not disrupt and rip apart your local church!

The Pharisees and the Herodians wanted to get Jesus into trouble – so they asked him a question about taxes. Whenever people want to get a pastor into trouble by his words, they ask him political questions, nothing changes. They asked the question "Should we pay our taxes?" They thought they had tripped Jesus up, if he said yes he was dishonouring Moses and if he said no, he would get into trouble with the Roman empire. But Jesus took advantage of their question to point to a deeper truth – you need to learn how to respond to authority, not just godly authority, not just authority that asks you to do things you like, not just authority that says "YES" all the time to you. But real authority – a person in charge of you that is strange to you and does strange things – authority that is human, broken, corrupt, that doesn't have your best interests at heart. IF THAT AUTHORITY, IF YOUR "ANOTHER" SAYS GIVE ME A COIN – give them the coin. His face is on the coin.

Now your Caesar may demand your worship – and that is where you draw the line – you do not worship Caesar, that belongs to GOD ALONE. Don't get fall into the ditch on either side of the line. If you need to learn how to not worship and idolize people, then you need to listen to the sermon "The Fourth Man" I preached last Wednesday which is on YouTube and the app.

But the purpose of this sermon is how to avoid the ditch on the other side of the road. We must learn to render to Caesar what is Caesars, or you will never walk in your dreams.

You need an attitude towards the authority figures in your life. When I hear people hating the Prime Minister, I hear people who will never be great. When I hear of Christians who cannot go to church because no pastor is good enough for them, I hear people who will never be great or effective in the kingdom. When I hear people who hate work, and moan about their bosses, I know people who will be poor forever.

If you cannot handle someone telling you to give them a coin that has their face on it, to do something at a certain time, to pay your taxes, to drive at 70, to not prophesy in a certain way or in a certain service, to follow a dress code for work, to wear a mask – you will never increase and never walk in your dreams. **IF YOU RESENT THOSE IN AUTHORITY OVER YOU, YOU WILL NEVER WALK IN YOUR DREAMS. IF YOU ARE ANNOYED THAT THOSE IN AUTHORITY HAVE PRIVILEGES THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE, THEN YOU WILL NEVER WALK IN YOUR DREAMS.**

When you are clashing with authority, often God is looking for you to change, change your attitude, change your heart – so that He can promote you.

Unless you learn how to be a son you cannot be a father. Unless you learn how to be pastored, you cannot be a pastor, unless you learn how to be discipled, you cannot be a discipler, unless you learn how to be employed, you cannot be the employer, unless you know how to be bossed, you cannot be the boss.

And the challenge comes when you disagree with your Caesar. As long as Caesar is just like you and does whatever you want, there is no challenge. What matters is your attitude when your Caesar does something you do not want done, when they are most alien, most strange – when you disagree with their choices, their decisions, their attitude, their behaviour. That is the true test – and if you get it right you will walk in your dreams.

Therefore, everyone of us needs to learn to understand authority and stand under authority.

I. UNDERSTAND AUTHORITY

Jesus said "Render to Caesar" – Jesus understood knew Caesar, he knew his position, he knew his authority, he knew his place. He didn't try and be equal to Caesar, he didn't start minting "Jesus Coins", he didn't start a political revolution, he didn't reluctantly pay his taxes, he just did it. He got in and willingly obeyed Caesar. Only when you realize there are CAESARS in your life can you move forward into the place of accepting their authority and respecting their authority.

Now here is a question: did Jesus honour Caesar because Caesar was such a nice guy and agreed with Jesus on everything and Jesus voted for him? Well, Caesar at the time was Tiberius, Augustus' stepson. He was famous for being cruel and immoral, even among the Roman emperor's standards! He was sick, I cannot write down for a church Bible study

what he did with his life, it is horrific. He used to kill people for fun. So, no Jesus did not honour him due to his character, he honoured him BECAUSE HE WAS CAESAR, HE WAS A GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS. Who are your Caesars, and how do you honour them? You need to know!

- In your family. If you live in mum and dad's house they are in charge, I don't care how alien they are to you.
- In your workplace. You is your boss, they are your Caesar
- In your church. Churches are the body of Christ – they should be organized and there is authority and a chain of command.
- In your school perhaps if you are still in education
- In your local community and area
- In your region and nation

Now think of who these people are and check your attitude – are you faithful with what is theirs? We can only change our attitudes if we first understand authority and what is theirs!

2. STAND UNDER AUTHORITY

Jesus encountered a soldier in Matthew 8, and that soldier amazed Jesus with their faith. Read Matthew 8.5-10. This man understood authority and it led to a faith so great it astounded Jesus. The centurion is telling Jesus: "You do not need to come to my house, I trust your authority, I understand what it is to STAND UNDER AUTHORITY, and he got a miracle. We often miss out on miracles because we do not understand how to STAND UNDER AUTHORITY. I know people who get offended if I delegate things, they have no idea what being in my position of authority entails."

Someone who does not understand authority always gets upset when they see delegated authority. Do you realize the people in the Bible have the same sort of experiences with authority that you and I have had? They had corrupt government, they had bad parents, they had lazy bosses, they had unfair pastors. But the Bible has something to say!

Read Romans 13.1, Colossians 3.18-22 and Hebrews 13.17.

Read I Timothy 6.1 and Romans 13.7.

Now we need to speak to those who are in authority and define what makes authority good authority. I believe that good authority is balanced. There are three balances that make authority good.

I. It balances Responsibility and Power.

If you remember last week I said that if we expect equity, you will end up offended. But one thing that should be roughly equitable (it is impossible to balance it perfectly in this life) is the balance of responsibility and power.

My daughter is 15, she has a lot more responsibility than when she was 5 and has a lot more power too. That is good parenting. Do not hold one of your children responsible for the behaviour of another one of your children unless you gave them the power too!

In work, if your company is failing to pay its bills, maybe it hasn't paid a supplier and the debt collector is called in. That collector doesn't turn up at your door, he turns up at the bosses door. Your boss might have mortgaged his house to get that company

started, all the responsibilities are his, so the power should be his. It does not make them a bad boss to pay you less, to make demands of you for your salary and then not accepting your demands. That's their power. And that should not offend you.

In Numbers 12, Miriam and Aaron did not realize that the kingdom of God was a kingdom. They did not realize that God assigns authority the way He wants. They had never touched on the things Moses was responsible for, but they wanted the POWER. That is never wise. God took the time to explain to them both that you cannot have the power without the responsibility. You do not have the pulpit; you are not the power here. I have to sometimes take that time to explain to people.

People have come along and just expected to have the power to preach in Tree of Life. Just because they have been a couple of times. It's the same sound that came out of Miriam's mouth "So, what makes you so special that you speak all the time, God has called me to preach, I demand to be heard" –

I DO NOT HOARD THE PULPIT, I AM NOT DOING THAT TO BE SELFISH – I HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO FEED THE PEOPLE. I HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD THIS CHURCH FORWARD. God put that on my shoulders, and I have to be a consistent, clear voice to lead the whole family forward. YES, that might look privileged to you, but that is because you do not understand authority is RESPONSIBILITY AND PRIVILEGE – and you want the privilege without the responsibility!

2. It balances the tasks that need to get done and the people who do it.

Good authority both cares for the people and GETS THE ASSIGNMENT DONE. A lot of time people get upset because the authority does not invest 100% of its time caring for them, because they do not realize that authority also has to get a task done. If you work at the widget factory, yes, they should take care of you as a worker, but they also have to make the widgets. Without authority that factory would be chaos, the church would be chaos, the home would be chaos, the nation would be chaos, the community would be chaos.

AUTHORITY WORKS WHEN IT GETS JOBS DONE – when the roads are paved, when the gospel is preached, when the widgets are made, when the lessons are learned. THERE IS A TASK FOR EVERY GROUPING OF PEOPLE, and AUTHORITY HELPS US DO THAT.

So, a flight attendant is there to help you and serve you, agreed, but at the same time she must combine the PEOPLE with the TASK – of making sure the plane is safe and gets where it is going. So, you cannot just wander around the plane, when the seatbelt sign is on you need to put your seatbelt sign on and so on, because it is not all about you and what you need, there is a task that needs to be done

3. It balances ruling and being ruled

Remember our centurion! He said, "I am UNDER AUTHORITY so my men obey me" – we need authorities that are under authority: your manager should be managed, your babysitter should obey your mum and dad, your elder should obey the pastor.

If you are in authority in a structure, you should recognize and commit to representing the best interest of whoever gave you the authority. If the guy who owns the football team wants you to play an aggressive, fast-paced game, that's how you captain the team, no matter your preference. NOW for those of you listening who delegate – REMEMBER

THIS – you delegate, but it is still there. DO NOT EVER BLAME THE PEOPLE YOU DELEGATED SOMETHING TO FOR IT NOT GETTING DONE. I gave it to them to do, I don't care – your job is to get it done. Manage the people, love them, walk them through what they should do, lead them, and make it happen.

Now, I know as well, that over the last few years, we are hearing more and more about authority behaving in ways that are utterly inappropriate. Bosses, pastors, politicians doing things that are deplorable. The problem is that because of this, there are many people rejecting all authority. There are many people who will never be great because they are so stirred up by the media that they will never submit to a CAESAR. They will never render to CAESAR what is CAESARS. All the CAESARS get generalized into one group.

One policeman treats someone badly because of their skin colour. That does not mean all policeman are bad. One businessman is corrupt, does not mean they all are. One pastor runs off with the choirmistress, doesn't mean they all do. One example is not enough for us to ignore this vital component to walking in our dreams.

WHEN AUTHORITY FAILS, GOD IS STILL THERE. We render to Caesar what is Caesars, but we only render worship to God. We do not idolize authority – oh, people have done that – but we still honour them. We are honouring that God allowed them to be in place, we are honouring their title, their position, we are honouring the system that God has put in place that we need to be faithful in that which is another's to walk in our dream.

AT SOME POINT IN YOUR LIFE YOUR CAESAR will:

- Make a wrong decision. Not just one you do not agree with, but a wrong decision.
- They will do something immoral
- They will do something immature
- They will do something unfair
- They will discriminate on a wrong basis

They will fail in integrity, character and maturity. But God still looks at the reactions of the people under the authority. Their failing does not excuse you from RENDERING TO CAESAR what is CAESARS. Not in the slightest.

If you do not render to Caesar what is Caesars, you will never have what is yours. You will not walk in your dreams. It's a set up God does for everyone because it tests your whole soul – kindness, wisdom, humility, grace, all of it. It's like an exercise that builds up everything. GOD PUTS YOU IN A SITUATION WITH A HUMAN BEING IN AUTHORITY OVER YOU AND GOD WATCHES YOUR RESPONSE TO SEE HOW YOU ARE DOING. It's much easier to submit to God and render to God, He is forgiving, kind, can give 100% of His attention to you and still have 100% attention. He has no flesh. BUT TO RENDER TO CAESAR, that is the real test – that is how God decides who to promote. The greatest sons become the everlasting fathers!

Remember Noah got drunk (it is found in Genesis 9). That is immoral, immature and sinful behaviour. A Christian leader should not be getting drunk, ever. Even if everyone you know, all your friends, all the shops in your town, all your town, dies in one day. Still not an excuse. That makes it understandable, but it doesn't make it right.

His sons however split into two groups – two obeyed and honoured him even when he failed, and one rebelled. God watched and their future life and ministry was based on that!

Saul was a terrible king at the end of his reign, but David still looked at him and said “who can touch the Lord’s anointed” – God promoted David because David had character and grace in the face of corrupt authority. That is a test some of you need to pass! You have failed in the past, but now you know – now you will pass. You have the answer key today, you know the test is coming, so revise!

You need to learn to respond properly and still submit and still honour – that is the test. That is the being faithful, that is rendering to Caesar. There is a **RIGHT RESPONSE TO WRONG AUTHORITY!** When authority asks you to do something you should never do, you can still not do it rightly! When authority abuses you, you can still deal with that rightly. When authority extends beyond its function, you can respond rightly. Never is verbal abuse or attacking someone physically the right response. Never is stirring up strife and causing division the right response.

So, what is the right response? It is twofold – there are two things you should do, the first one first and the second one second.

1. STEP UP
2. STEP OUT

Step Up. Imagine your boss is making inappropriate sexual advances to you. That is wrong. His authority does not cover that. He is still your Caesar though; he still pays your salary. You need to render to Caesar what is Caesars, you still need to show respect. People disagree, they want to go on the keyboard and expose and humiliate, but that is what Seth did to Noah and it was wrong, and that is NOT what David did to Saul, and Saul was right. I want you to walk in your dreams, I am helping you in this.

What you do, is you step up – **YOUR BOSS SHOULD HAVE A BOSS.** You step up and speak to the Boss’s Boss. Now you do not do this just because someone does something you disagree with or do not like, I am talking about abusive, out of order behaviour. You prayerfully and carefully **STEP UP** and go to the higher authority.

The good news is you all know the **HIGHEST AUTHORITY OF ALL** – God. You can pray about any situation, and that is a way of stepping up. Pray for that person, pray for wisdom, pray for God to move on people’s hearts.

If stepping up does not work, it’s time to step out. When Saul was throwing spears at David – that’s not good authority, you do realize that. David had God, but Saul had no king. So, at that stage, David gives us a great example of **STEPPING OUT**. You remove yourself from danger. Wives, if your husband is beating you, get out the house. David just left. He didn’t raise an army, he didn’t start a newsletter, he didn’t start a website, he didn’t call his friends to pray for Saul, he did NOT BRING ANYONE ELSE INTO IT – he would not lift his mouth against the Lord’s anointed. He knew he could never be king if **HE ATTACKED CAESAR**. He honoured Saul while removing himself, stepping out of the palace. And due to that honour – God started bringing people to David, and gave David a kingdom in **MICROFORM** and eventually David became the king.

Everything is better when we act with **HONOUR** – your house, your family, your business, your job, your community, your nation, your church! **IT’S ALL BETTER WHEN WE**

RENDER TO CAESAR WHAT IS CAESARS – Caesar likes us better, his realm does better, and we get promoted and released to walk in our dreams.

CHOOSE HONOUR!

Examples of ways to choose honour:

- Pay taxes
- Celebrate church
- Go and do a decent days work
- Submit to your husband
- Honour your parents



Tree of Life Church
where dreams come true

Challengers of Hope 05 Render to Caesar QUESTIONS

- I. 1. What kind of people are our Caesars and why is it important we know who we are?
2. Who is “another man” in Luke 16.12? What kind of people are that “another man” in your life?
3. Did Jesus say to render to Caesar what is Caesar’s because Caesar was so moral and godly? What can we learn from this?
4. Why did the soldier in Matthew 8 get his miracle?
5. What does Romans 13.1 teach us about who are the Caesars in our life?
6. What does Colossians 3.18-22 teach us about authority in the family?
7. What does Hebrews 13.17 teach us about authority in the church?
8. What does a good balance of responsibility and power look like?
9. What kind of examples of someone wanting power without responsibility can you think of?
10. Why does good authority balance the task and the people doing the task, what happens if that is unbalanced?
- II. 11. If authority becomes abusive, what are the two things we can do to deal with that situation?
12. When do you find it the most hard to obey or submit to a Caesar, what sort of situations do you struggle with in being faithful with that which is “another man’s”?
13. What can you do to resolve these situations?
14. What one thing can you do this week to render to Caesar what is his?
15. What about this message inspired, encouraged or challenged you the most?

