

September 16, 2018
IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD - Part 6
"Politics"

It's amazing how corrosive and mean-spirited politics has become.

We live in a mad, mad world - a mad, as in angry world, and a mad, as in crazy world.

For many today, *politics come first*, and then a person's politics tends to determine their faith.

Mark 12:13 (NLT): "Later the leaders sent some Pharisees and supporters of Herod to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested."

Mark 12:14-15a (NLT): "14'Teacher,' they said, 'we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don't play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us - is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? 15Should we pay them, or shouldn't we? ...'"

The leaders have devised what appears to be the perfect trap about taxes that requires a "Yes" or "No" answer from Jesus - and either way he answers, they've got him.

Mark 12:15bc-16 (NLT): "15...Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, 'Why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin, and I'll tell you.' 16When they handed it to him, he asked, 'Whose picture and title are stamped on it?' 'Caesar's,' they replied."

Mark 12:17 (NLT): "'Well, then,' Jesus said, 'give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.' His reply completely amazed them."

Jesus had out-manuevered their trap - each listener heard what they wanted to hear.

Psalms 24:1 (NLT): "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him."

Genesis 1:27 (NLT): "So God created human beings in his own image...."

Everything, including every person, created with the image of God stamped on them, belongs to God.

GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT GOVERNMENTS:

1. Civil governments are a part of God's plan, and He expects us to submit to them.

Romans 13:1 (NLT): “Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.”

1 Peter 2:13-14 (NLT): “¹³For the Lord’s sake, submit to all human authority – whether the king as head of state, ¹⁴or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.”

Throughout Scripture we see God using secular or pagan authorities and kings to accomplish His purposes.

2. God expects us to pay taxes.

Romans 13:6-7 (NLT): “⁶Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. ⁷Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.”

3. God commands us to pray for governing authorities.

1 Timothy 2:2-3 (NLT): “²Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. ³This is good and pleases God our Savior”

Praying for leaders isn’t an endorsement of the individual but seeking for God to work in and through the position or office.

4. God expects us to choose Him over any ruling authority.

Acts 5:29 (NLT): “But Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’”

Philippians 3:20 (NLT): “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives...”

Christians place God over any political party - our faith determines our decisions in the political realm, versus our political identity determining our faith decisions.

An ambassador represents another country in a foreign land, and while the ambassador interacts with the local culture, he’s always committed to his home country.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (ESV): “¹⁹...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us....”

As ambassadors, we don't have to abandon our political beliefs, but we don't put them ahead of the values of the Kingdom of God and our King, Jesus.

Psalms 68:35 (NIV): “...Praise be to God!”

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