

# Sermon Discussion Guide




## “Jesus and Politics”

Matthew 22:15-22

Brandon Laurantzon, May 9 & 10, 2015

### Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Matthew 22:15-22. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

### Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 Linus from the Peanuts said, “There are three things I have learned never to talk to people about: religion, politics, and the Great Pumpkin! Do you like or dislike talking about politics with people? Why? Do you think talking about politics in church is easier than talking about it in other places? Should it be?”
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

#### RENDER TO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR’S

- 3 Read Romans 13:1. What is your general disposition towards the concept of government?
- 4 Discuss the following two quotes. Brandon said, “We are called to pay our taxes, even when we disagree with how that tax money is used.” Columnist Bill Vaughan said, “A

real patriot is the fellow who gets a parking ticket and rejoices that the system works.”

- 5 Read 1 Timothy 2:1-2. Do you pray for men and women in our government? How can you show honor and respect for them and their positions? Discuss the following quote by John Wesley in 1774: “I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them, 1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy: 2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against: And, 3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.”
- 6 Do you view working for the government as a God-honoring profession? Why was Brandon’s vote for Jesus not as noble as he thought?

### RENDER TO GOD THE THINGS THAT ARE GOD’S

- 7 Read Psalm 24:1. What does separation of church and state *not* mean?
- 8 Should giving your allegiance to God keep you from saying the pledge of allegiance? Why doesn’t Seven Rivers have an American flag constantly flying on its campus?
- 9 Read Acts 5:29. How do you know when civil disobedience is right?
- 10 Discuss the following quote by Scott Sauls.

Matthew’s emphasis on a tax collector and a Zealot living in community together suggests a hierarchy of loyalties, especially for Christians. Our loyalty to Jesus and His kingdom must always exceed our loyalty to an earthly agenda, whether political or otherwise. We should feel “at home” with people who share our faith but not our politics even more than we do with people who share our politics but not our faith. If this is not our experience, then we very well may be rendering to Caesar what belongs to God.
- 11 How do our reactions to politics reveal that we are really worshiping people when we should be worshiping God?
- 12 What do you owe God because you are made in His image? How does Jesus do what we are incapable of doing in this respect?

### Step 3: Final Reflections

- ✠ How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?