

Are We Honoring Jesus as Lord – Part 11: Luke 20:19-26 ESV

# Revenge, Government, and God: Are Christians Free to Do Whatever?

Services: Wednesday, March 16, 2016 at 11 AM & 7 PM

Holy Thursday and Good Friday – Services at 11 & 7

**Introduction**: Dear friends in Christ: Our topics today are revenge, government, and God:

- First: Jesus' words, *though spoken in love*, resulted in people seeking revenge! Is that okay or not?
- Second: In their attempt to take revenge, *Jesus addressed them on the topics of government and God!* Do we owe them or are we free to do whatever?

As we return to Luke chapter 20, we pickup with the end of *last Sunday's* gospel reading:

1. **Revenge – Let's Pay Him Back**: <sup>19</sup> **The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on [Jesus] at that very hour** [when He told the parable of the wicked tenants], **for they perceived that he had told [that] parable against them** [that is, the parable we studied last Sunday about the tenants/farmers who beat the servants (prophets) and killed the son (Jesus)], **but** [they did not take immediate action because] **they feared the people.** <sup>20</sup> **So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere** [literally, righteous], **that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor [Pilate].**  
// So the religious leaders were ♦angry with Jesus and

♦fearful of the people, so they determined to get back at Jesus in a way that *appeared* right.

- a. Why did Jesus tell the parable? He wanted the religious leaders to see ♦their evil and ♦the horrible consequences that would come upon them – *If they did not repent!* Jesus gave those men a **golden opportunity** to ♦receive God’s gift of forgiveness and ♦be blessed forever!
- b. How did the religious leaders respond? They basically said, “We don’t like what Jesus said, so we are going to ♦watch Him carefully and ♦listen to everything He says. Then, *when He slips up*, we will ☹️seize Him, ☹️try Him, and ☹️condemn Him; then we will deliver Him over to Pilate for **crucifixion**☹️!”
- c. How should we respond to those who hurt us? These are excellent words of instruction from Romans 12: <sup>17</sup> “**Never** pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup> **If possible**, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. <sup>19</sup> **Never** take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> **But** if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. <sup>21</sup> **Do not** be overcome by evil, **but** overcome evil with good” (NAS).

2. **A Trap in the Form of a Question:** <sup>21</sup> **So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach**

rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. <sup>22</sup> **Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?"**

- a. How did they cover up their trap? They began by giving Jesus *three wonderful compliments*, so that He would not be suspicious.
- b. What were they unaware of? Jesus is God in human flesh, so He knew **▶**their minds, **▶**their hearts, and **▶**their intentions. Even we can fool other people, *but we cannot fool God*; He knows it all, *so let us be completely honest with Him!*

3. **An Answer Packed with Implications:** <sup>23</sup> **But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them,** <sup>24</sup> **"Show me a denarius [an ancient Roman coin]. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's."** <sup>25</sup> **He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."** <sup>26</sup> **And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but [instead] marveling at his answer they became silent. //** So even the ones trying to trap Him marveled at Him, *but most of them did not repent* 😊.
  - a. What belongs to Caesar? According to **Romans 13**, *God has established and sustains all governments; therefore, the Spirit moved Paul to write:* <sup>5</sup> **"...one must be in subjection [to the governing authorities], not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience...."** <sup>7</sup> **Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed,**

**respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed” (ESV).** Think about taxes in America: Our government was *clever* to establish the payroll deduction system! Once **sinful people** are given the money, *it becomes difficult for the government to get its share!*

- b. What belongs to God? A tithe, plus many other things, *but God doesn't force anyone*; instead, He invites people to ☺see His love, ☺trust in Him, and ☺honor Him by doing His will. Here are a few more examples of what belongs to God. Micah, the OT prophet, wrote: **“He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But:**
- i. **to do justice** [*to do what is right in the eyes of God*],
  - ii. **to love kindness** [*to gladly be kind and merciful to others*], **And**
  - iii. **to walk humbly with your God** [*to trust in Him for everything and live in agreement with His Holy Word*] (Micah 6:8 NAS)?

**Conclusion:** Let us pray: Dear Lord Jesus, when others hurt You *so very much*, You forgave them, so help us to do the same! Father in heaven, You have established our nation and given us all that we have, so help us to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to You what belongs to You. Amen!