

## Sermon Notes

### Contours of Faith: In Power and Out of Power

David A. Renwick, National Presbyterian Church

July 3, 2022

Mark 12:12-17, Psalm 46:1-7; Jeremiah 29:1-14, Micah 6:8, Daniel 6

Jesus on Church & State:

*“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and render to God the things that are God’s”* Mark 12:17

What questions does Jesus statement raise initially?

#### I. CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO ALLEGIANCES

Jesus points out that we live in (at least) two realms of appropriate (and at times conflicting?) allegiance:

*Is it helpful/not helpful, does it create/relieve stress, to think that until we get to heaven, there may never be a complete resolution between the conflicting obligations of our different roles/allegiances?*

#### II. WHAT MUST WE “RENDER” TO GOD?

Ultimate Allegiance!

1. Ten Commandments: #1 & #2! Exodus 20:1-17

*What does it mean to own God our ultimate allegiance? -- to have God as our first, unquestioned priority (to be one nation UNDER God)?*

2. Read *Psalm 46: 1-7* – *What difference does it make to know that God’s power is more important than who is in or out of political power?*

#### III. WHAT MUST WE “RENDER” TO CAESAR/THE RULER/ THE POLITICAL REALM?

Two large sections of Scripture deal with God’s people ○ When they are IN power, or coming into power, building a nation (e.g.,

Moses, King David, Solomon, the Prophets, etc.) ○ And When they are OUT of power (e.g., Slavery, Exile, the early Christian Church)

##### A. IN Power

The following are major themes when God’s people are in/or coming into Power: (see Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms of David, Esther, etc.)

- i. Establishing God’s Passion for Human Liberty (Exodus 1-15)
- ii. Establishing Laws (the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17), and the Just Rule of Law for all

##### iii. Constant admonitions

- a) To administer justice fairly (Micah 6:8)
- b) To protect people from injustice and vengeance -- so
  - Nobody gets judged by circumstantial evidence – two witnesses (Deut. 17:6, 19:15, etc.)
  - Everybody gets time for a fair trial – cities of refuge (Deut. 19-21)
- c) To care for the weak, on the underside of society: widows, orphans, strangers, aliens (immigrants, people of other races)

Deuteronomy 27.19:

“Cursed be anyone who deprives the **alien**, the **orphan**, and the **widow** of justice.” All the people shall say, “Amen!”

Psalm 68.5

“**Father of orphans** and **protector of widows**” is God in his holy habitation.

##### B. OUT of Power

- i. Violent Revolution – (*once: Exodus 1-15*)
- ii. Non-Violent Resistance (*e.g., Daniel 6, Nehemiah 1*)
- iii. Bearing With, and Bearing Witness, in an Imperfect World (*even when persecuted! See, e.g., Joseph (Genesis 40-50); Jeremiah 29; Jesus, Paul (Acts 24; Romans 13), and John (Revelation 1:9)*)

Jeremiah 29:1-14.

*7But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.*

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said: “You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world”

1 Peter 2:16-17

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. *Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

Romans 13:7

Pay to all what is due them— *taxes to whom taxes are due*, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

1 Timothy 2

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, *2for kings and all who are in high positions*, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. *3This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

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