

Question of Responsibility

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles this morning over to Mark chapter 12, Mark chapter 12 this morning, as we continue as our series of discovering Jesus and who He is.

And we've seen as Jesus is now in the last week here as we've come into Mark chapter 12, and it's still on Tuesday of that week, and we find that Jesus is being questioned about many things, and we find that there's a question of responsibility here that they're going to use to try to get rid of Jesus. As you might look at it this way, those in authority had started operation Get Rid of Jesus, and they're now in full swing trying to figure out how to make that happen, trying to remove Jesus from the scene. And the plot to kill Him had moved just from consideration into the point where it was about to stir into conflict with them. And the leaders had been rebuked for their unbelief before the people. We looked at the moral of the vineyard parable, and that parable we know as we left off last week definitely struck a chord in their heart.

But they understood exactly who Jesus was talking about. And we find here that chord that was struck was not a good chord because the chord I think was struck was the chord of pride. And pride is a chord that never produces a sweet sound. There's always a contrary sound when it comes to pride. But when it comes to the Lord, the chord of humility is a sweet sound. To understand the difference, and as Jesus here begins to and continues to teach in the temple as those that opposed Him listened and plotted for an opportunity to hear anything that could be used or manipulated to their advantage. That's one of the things, words are one of those things people love to try to use and to gain leverage and try to manipulate through language and words and usage. And it's no different today than it was then.

People are people. Language has always been a tool that they've used to try to manipulate, to try to influence and to draw others. And we realize as they're doing this, they're listening intently as Jesus is teaching, trying to figure out, okay guys, what do we do to get rid of Jesus?

They were devising a question that we're going to look at today, a question about responsibility and how that responsibility applies to an individual. Because sometimes those are the hardest questions that you have to answer. Okay, I understand the principle about something or a biblical principle that God gives, but then comes the question, how is this principle applied? What's the practical daily living nuance of how does that actually live? Because it's important to understand, God doesn't give us the Bible just for information. He gives us the scripture that we might be transformed, that we might understand how we ought to live, and how do we maneuver, how do we properly live before God in a broken and fallen world? Balancing all the different responsibilities that we have. Because oftentimes, you ever notice in life that responsibilities sometimes conflict?

[3 : 24] You have multiple responsibilities, but they conflict. It's just like having to go to work. You have to go to work. That's a responsibility to earn a living. But yet you have a responsibility to your spouse and your children. And sometimes those are like, okay, where do I balance those? And balance responsibility in that. And really, the question we're going to find today is really comes up a very key thing that we're going to deal with and look at how this responsibility that they bring forth, how does it play out practically in our lives? Because it's a question that we have even today. And there's never been a, you might say in the practical sense, the day-to-day, we have to be attentive to God's Word and understand how does that balance, how does God give priority to conflicting responsibilities that He gives to us? Because there is sometimes, like I said, that conflict of responsibility. How do I balance those things in life? And so we're going to see here as they begin to raise this plot, they have a question here this morning that I think is going to resonate even in our current time here. So if you found Mark chapter 12, let's stand together in honor of the reading of the Word of God. And we'll begin down here in verse 13 and read through verse 17. And the Word of God says this, and they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of Herodians to catch him in his words.

And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true and carest for no man, for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give? But he knoweth their hypocrisy, excuse me, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Bring me a penny that I may see it.

And they brought it and saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marveled at him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we come this morning, Lord, as we look into your Word, Lord, a very important question of responsibility. Lord, I pray today just help us to understand the differences and the dynamics and how our responsibilities come and how it relies very heavily upon the reality of what we're going to humble ourselves before you to understand that you are the ultimate authority.

But Lord, just have your hand upon each heart, each life here today, Lord, each one. Lord, those that need to come to you, those that are struggling, the questions of life that we walk through, Lord, pray just have your hand upon each one today that they might be encouraged and strengthened through your Word and through your Spirit working in their hearts and lives. And Lord, we just ask it all in your precious name. Amen. May be seated. The question devised here is one that directly relates to that of authority, the responsibility of who has authority. And that authority is important because this question is one, when they pose to Jesus, does Rome have authority to collect tribute? In other words, does the government have right to collect taxes?

Now, is that still a touchy point today? Just remember, there's nothing new under the sun. Those things are how to balance those responsibilities and understand how that fits is important because that question, even today, when you start talking about taxes and you talk about authority of government, it becomes a hotbed question, doesn't it? Because it draws all sorts of opinions and about what's the obligation that we have between God and government. Because really, that's often the conflict.

[7 : 39] How do I balance these responsibilities that God has given me with the responsibilities that I have to government? Because I want you to understand very clearly, we do have a responsibility to government because God established government. It has a lane that it needs to be in. And so we're going to look here this morning, look at the spies that were sent. The spies, Luke's gospel calls these men spies.

They were sent to deceive Jesus into speaking against the Romans. That was their plot. We're going to load this question up and give a loaded question that we're going to paint Jesus into a corner to where he's going to say something one direction or another because they thought it was going to be a black or white question. They thought they had the ultimate question picked out that's going to trap him.

So they come and they're there and they had this logical plot and that if they could get the Roman government, I think, to arrest Jesus, they would be clean before the people. Because remember, they were worried about the people and how they perceived Jesus. But they wanted to get rid of him and they didn't arrest him because of all the people and all that's going on here in Luke chapter 20 and verse 20. Notice what it says here in Luke's description. He says, and they watched him and sent forth spies which would feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words and so they might deliver him under the power and authority of the governor. In other words, their plot was to have the Romans arrest him because he was going to speak against Caesar. That was how they were going to try to plot it out. To say, Jesus, we're going to catch him in his words. We're going to catch him in a corner and paint him into a corner that we can manipulate and control.

I want you to see here to catch him in his words, literally pictures drawing him into a place that he would have no choice. It was catching them in a snare. You know, it's kind of like if you've ever seen somebody set a snare, they don't just set a snare out in the middle of the field. They set a snare and then they create a tunnel to draw people into it or draw the animal that they want into it.

And what they're doing is trying to draw Jesus to him and him, him and him in to get that spot where they know that they can get, they think they're going to get him. They're trying to narrow that down and try to set a snare for him. And this subtle approach that they bring, this trap was one of those that they brought forth by very unlikely ones who were the inquisitors because notice here in chat and back over in Mark, notice the two groups that he said that were sent, the Pharisees and the Herodians, their disciples, they didn't even come, but they sent their disciples to fake that they were sincere about their question. Now we've talked about this before, but this is a pretty unlikely group. The Pharisees and Herodians are political enemies, totally opposite of one another where they stood. The Pharisees were against Roman authority and Roman oppression. The Herodians were all for gaining everything they could from government and Roman authority under Herod who had been put in place as king by Roman authority. So you have an unlikely group coming together here, don't you? One thing about it you'll find that it just seems like it doesn't matter what generation, that when two people, no matter what their ideology, when they have a common enemy or somebody they want to deal with, they'll get together no matter what the conflict is between them. You find strange people hanging out together in times that they're standing against somebody that they want to remove. They wanted Jesus out of the way, both for different reasons, but both really for the same reason because they wanted their influence and control. No different today in politics. I want you to understand that this is one of those political and religious dynamics that intertwined.

[11 : 56] And we need to realize that though religion using it in the context of what you believe and government always cross over. They always bump into one another someplace. And we need to understand what direction it gets bumped into is important. And we're going to look here this morning at that a little bit and talk about it from the scripture because Jesus here really nails this down. And these two groups come and they're desiring their own thing. And we can see this working and collaborating to ask and to clarify what's going on. I want you to understand that their goal here is to definitely was not righteous as it was to destroy Jesus. Common hatred makes strange alliances in life. So what they do, they sent their top students, their disciples thinking they were going to kind of put them in. Remember the Pharisees and the Herodians didn't come themselves. They'd already been there. So they sent their disciples forth as spies into him. And we see here in Luke chapter 20, which should feign themselves.

In other words, that's to put on a false representation, a false representation of why they were there. They employ their best tool they had in the arsenal. And this is one we need to be careful of because what tool did they come with as they feigned these things? The tool of flattery. Have you ever noticed the quickest way to get somebody to drop their guard is to flatter them? Flattery is a tool that is used.

And we see here this flattery, this complimenting Jesus as they pretended to honestly inquire for an answer of, okay, because they were coming with the context, Jesus, we're struggling with this thing of taxes. And how do we, should we do it or should we not? That was their presentation, but their heart was, we got him because he's going to have to answer yes or no to this. And how he answers is going to catch him. They feigned him. They were false in their representation. Now notice, look at verse 14.

It says, and when they were come, they say unto him, Master. In other words, they say, they're looking at him and saying, okay, we recognize you as a teacher. Now in Israel, that would have been one with a spoke with authority, that spoke with clarity. The one that spoke, had a position of influence.

Master, that idea of teacher, we know that thou art true. Think about what they're saying to Jesus. Here's a group seeking to destroy him. And they come, well, we know what you say is true.

[14 : 54] We know you're honest. We know you're, you're the one. Now know, it says, and care us for no man, for thou art, thou regardest not the person of men. Notice this, but teach us the way of God in truth.

What are they doing? They're coming to Jesus and telling him what they think he wants to hear. Now the irony here to understand is everything they said was true. Jesus is the one that's the master teacher. Jesus is the one that speaks truth. Jesus is the one that doesn't measure how our opinions think about it. He doesn't regard men's opinions as to whether it's true or not.

I want you to understand what they said was literally true about Jesus. But I want you to also note here something very important because Jesus doesn't bite on the flattery, even though it's true. I want you to understand flattery is a dangerous thing. And oftentimes people will fall into this idea of flattery. Think about Psalm chapter five for a moment. The fifth Psalm speaks a little bit about this. And this is important in this context because notice what it says in verse nine.

It says, for there is no faithfulness in their mouth. Their inward part is very wicked. Their throat is an open supplicant. They flatter with their tongue. People become master flatterers to manipulate.

They'll put on a good front, say all the right things, try to do all the right things, try to put forth. Well, I want everybody to have this perception about me. And then they will flatter with the tongue. Look over at the 78 Psalm. Psalm 78 and verse 36 tells us this. It says, nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth and they lied into him with their tongues for their heart was not right with him. Neither were they steadfast in his covenant. And that's not talking about this group particular, but it's talking about their forefathers. It's talking about the children of Israel. The very ones that are present, the same thing they were taught by their fathers.

[17:07] But I want you to understand something this morning here that we can learn to understand that both flattery and criticism, we need to die to both. Because I want you to understand, remember those that praise you are probably just as mistaken as those that oppose you. Both can be wrong very easily.

But both are very easily tools to manipulate us. And here they come and they give flattery to Jesus.

The question they brought was to bring a point of contention. Notice the question, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not?

Shall we give or shall we not give? I mean, as I read this, I can just hear their tone of voice. In the best, I'm sincerely asking, putting forth that we really need an answer to this because we're struggling.

But I want you to understand, Jesus was not fooled by the inquiry. He knew the reason they ask and the importance of the answer.

[18:20] I want you to understand the second thing that we need to understand here in this picture, is we need to be careful about people who come asking questions about what you believe sometimes. Because people don't always ask you and your opinion for information.

Sometimes they're asking to try to create a confrontation. Because there's a difference. Because consider, Jesus had a lot of people ask him questions. Think about John chapter 3.

He had a man by the name of Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee. But Jesus answered him totally different because Nicodemus came, what, with a sincere question. He didn't want to come to argue.

He had a sincere question about how do I inherit eternal life? There was a sincerity. There was not a conflict. He wasn't there.

He didn't argue with Jesus. Even his questions to follow were not arguments. They were clarification. Saying, I don't understand. Can you help me understand this?

[19:26] But these men didn't come for understanding. They came to try to create conflict. To try to counter the question. We need to understand the difference in that.

And so the question comes up, is it right to pay tribute to Caesar? In other words, as a citizen, should you pay taxes? That's really the question.

And after the first of the year, you'll have that same question again when you get your tax bill. I really have to pay this? Or when you get that statement in the mail that we got recently.

I don't know how many got the pink slip in the mail. Telling you, guess what? You're worth so much more, so we're going to try to take more. The question that they were sure would cause Jesus to either speak against the authority, Rome, or lose credibility with the people.

Because the people's opinion is no different than our opinion today. I mean, most people don't say, I get to pay my taxes. Most people go, I got to pay my taxes.

[20 : 30] Maybe you're one that celebrates paying taxes. If that's you, that's okay. I just don't know of anybody that's like that, excited to pay their taxes. But the question here that really is at heart of the matter, Jesus addresses.

Because the question really isn't directly concerned about taxes as much as it is our responsibility and authority. It's a question of responsibility and authority.

Really, the question was this. What authority does government have in our lives? What authority is attached to it? That's really the core of the question.

What authority, they're asking Jesus, what authority does Rome have to collect this from us? What is our responsibility?

What's our responsibility? Because Jesus includes a second part of that. He includes a responsibility to God. And so we're going to see Jesus' solution to their trick question. Because his answer in this solution will help us today to understand a very important part of what we need to know about how this balance comes about.

[21 : 41] Because the solution to the question is one that's just as important to us today as it was in Jesus' day. He is going to answer the divine role of government alongside our responsibility to God.

So what does Jesus do? Notice, let's look and see how he responds. Look at verse 15. It says, But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

Bring me a penny that I may see it. Now, Jesus here brings, asks for them. He says, hey, bring me a coin, a currency that you're using.

This word penny is one. It's also a denarius. It's a coin that the Roman Empire had. And on this coin was an image of Caesar.

There was an image of Caesar on the coin. And also on this coin, there were some words on the coin. And the words there were this, Tiberius Caesar, the divine Augustus.

[22 : 41] And on the back was the title, Pontifus Maximus. Now, the front side said he was the ruler. The second side said he was the priest of Rome.

So the coin itself was both political and religious. Because you've got to understand, the Romans thought that the office of Caesar was divine.

There was a blending of those things together. And even on the coin, because the coin offended some. And the Jews, the coin itself would have offended them because it's declaring Caesar to be a god.

Now, we can all agree with the Jews. That is a problem. When somebody says, I'm on par with God himself, that's a problem. We understand the conflict there and the offense.

But Jesus asked a simple question. He says, who's on the coin? Now, I want you to understand, Jesus here was not asking a question of information. Because he already knew who was on the coin.

[23 : 46] He was asking a question to make a point. To point out directly what they were dealing with. Because notice what he asked for. He says, hey, who is on the coin?

Whose image is there? The very currency they use daily. Because remember, that's what they used in all their business dealings. They used a government-issued coin with Caesar's inscription on it to conduct everything.

Matter of fact, they even assessed their own personal wealth by how many of those things they possessed. It's not that they didn't recognize the currency in this. And so Jesus points out here, he says, if you recognize Caesar by using his currency and the authority associated with that, therefore you need to recognize that he is placed there with authority.

There's an authority attached to it. You're obliged to pay your taxes. Because notice Jesus' response to them. And notice, and he's asked in verse 16, that whose image is in superscription, they say unto him, Caesar's.

Now can you imagine Jesus standing there that day, and they're like, okay, we got him. And Jesus looks at him and says, render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's. And then he goes, render unto God that which is God's.

[25 : 07] That's an important dynamic because render means to return or to surrender back. In other words, because the inscription was on the coin of Caesar, basically it's saying that coin belonged to Caesar ultimately anyways, so their responsibility was to render back.

To render those things back. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And to God the things that are God's.

See, they tried to direct a question to trap him. And Jesus says, no, you don't understand what you're really asking. Because the question you're asking isn't just about paying tribute or taxes.

Your real question is, what place does government have in comparison to our beliefs? Today we have this argument in this context, the separation of church and state.

They're really asking the same question. This has been a question that's been throughout history. You'll find this complexity of this question. But I want you to see here that Jesus, when he answered them, he left them speechless.

[26 : 19] I mean, I imagine they went away kind of distraught. Because they're like, we thought we had him. We had him funneled down into the snare. We had everything right there. And then he jumps over. Why? Because he saw it.

He understood what was happening. And he brought forth the truth that's important. Because even though it left them speechless, Luke's account in chapter 20, verse 26, and they could not take hold of his words before the people.

And they marveled at his answer and held their peace. In other words, they had nothing more to say. You can look at it this way. You might see the other picture.

But Jesus just pulled the rug right out from underneath them. They didn't even know what hit them. They're looking up at the sky going, wow, how did that happen? They had no comprehension about what just happened.

But I want you to see here the conflict between God and government is still a struggle today. And Jesus here gives us some insight that's very important, I think, for even us today.

[27 : 19] To understand how this fits together. Because this idea of separation in church and state, we need to understand that Jesus said to give authority to both in his answer.

Jesus didn't exclude the authority of one over the other. Now, we're going to talk about that because it's important to understand this idea of authority and what is given here.

Because many people have differing thoughts on this. Different philosophies. So, I'm just going to tell you, before you say amen to one, you need to hear all the options.

Because the first option says this, the state is our only authority. There's people today that think state is the ultimate authority.

This is the secular view that government becomes their God to supply all their needs, rejecting God's authority. There's some that think the state ought to be the ultimate authority.

[28 : 19] Now, the second statement gets a little tricky because it sounds pretty good. The second idea is this, that God is our only authority. There are those who attempt to separate themselves completely from authority claiming they're only under God.

They deny civil authority. Now, I'm going to show you the problem with this viewpoint. Because if God is ultimately your authority, remember, everything else God has already laid out for us are responsibilities.

Because we're dealing with a particular idea of authority in our daily life. In the things that we do. The third idea is that God and state both have authority, but the state is dominant.

There are some who believe this. They recognize God and they recognize the state. And they say, if there's a conflict, I choose the state. People with that philosophy, we need to understand there's a fourth thing.

That God and state both have authority, but God is dominant. In other words, I want you to understand something very important here. Because God ordained government.

[29 : 27] Government has a responsibility under God, but we have a responsibility under government that God ordained. There's a structure of authority that God has laid out.

Because when we understand that Jesus' answer aligns with this final viewpoint. Because notice here, he does not deny Caesar's authority. He just says, render under Caesar's that which is Caesar, and under God, that which is God's.

Now we're going to break that down a little bit for you here this morning. Because this is a scriptural position. God established governments, for they're ordained by God.

Look over at Romans chapter 13. Romans chapter 13. Notice what the word of God tells us. It says, let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.

For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are what? Ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. That they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

[30 : 32] In other words, they're going to be held to account. I want you to understand that God has placed government for a reason. Government has a purpose that God has ordained for them.

And I want you to understand as we look at this dynamic, it's kind of the best illustration in my mind to help illustrate this, is when you look at a pair of railroad tracks, both rails are critical.

For the train to get to its destination, both rails are critical. But you know what happens to a train when the two rails come together? There's a problem. And there's a reason here as we're going to look at this because there are times, I want you to understand, government is not supreme.

Because the question is not of authority, but who do we answer? Who are we most accountable to in a situation? Jesus tells the people, he says, you have a responsibility to the government that you're placed under because they're there because God allowed them to be there.

No matter how horrendous the government is, and I tell you what, when you study history, the Roman government was a horrendous government. They tried to play it up and make it sound good, but there were some very wicked things that took place under that authority.

[31 : 52] But there are some good things that came about it. The gospel was able to travel throughout the known world at that time because of the peace and the security that the Roman government had allowed.

They had provision for people to get from point A to point B relatively safely. Because of their authority, God had ordained them for a reason. But I want you to know there are times that governments don't align with God.

And you have a responsibility to make a choice. Because you're going to fall under one of four of those areas. Because to say, you say, well, God's my ultimate authority.

Yes, he is. But God says there's other authorities placed you under. You have God. You have your parents. When you're growing up, you have authority placed over you.

When you become an adult, you still have authority placed over you. Because you have authority of the government that's there. And that government has a responsibility before God.

[32 : 54] Now, I want you to understand, I'm not saying government always does its job and responsibility to God the way it ought to. But I want you to understand, we don't honor God the way we ought to.

So that's not the point of question. We know that's a struggle. But notice there's going to be times when there's conflict. Look over in Acts chapter 4 for a moment. How do we balance these things when Jesus says to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar and unto God that which is God's?

It's understanding the authority and who has the ultimate overriding authority. Because if government is ordained of God, an authority placed in your life, that government, if they don't do what they're supposed to do, God says, I'm going to hold them accountable.

God holds governments and nations accountable for their choices. As an individual, we need to understand our place in the sequence. Our place in the order.

Because look what, here Peter and John, here in Acts chapter 4 and verse 19, when they're being confronted about preaching the gospel and doing what God has commanded them to do, Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God judge ye.

[34 : 08] In other words, I want you to understand, Peter and John ironically are talking to some of the same people who sent the spies to attack Jesus by this trick question.

Later on, after Jesus is resurrected and went into heaven, these same people come and try to arrest Peter and John. And John looks at him and says, okay, let's go back to what Jesus said.

Is it better for us to obey God or to obey you? Now look at the next chapter in Acts chapter 5. Acts chapter 5 and verse 29. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

While government is ordained of God, we need to understand that the state, the government, and church run parallel to one another. There's going to be times there's going to be some conflict that comes up because you have evil men in positions of power making choices contrary to the things of God.

There's going to be a time when you're going to have to take a stand because when we understand the importance of this stand and understanding how we fit in that authority that God has given is important. Now I don't have time to break down the whole thing of God and government this morning.

[35 : 20] That's a whole other series of things. But I want you to understand God tells us very clearly this. He says those two run parallel to one another. They do not mix.

God, what you believe about God ought to influence government. Government ought not to influence what you believe about God. That's the reason we have a foundational document in our country with the very religious freedoms that we enjoy.

That the government is not going to make a rule to influence what people believe. Now today we have government trying to pass laws telling this is what you're going to believe.

That's a problem. And that's when you have to make a decision not based on how you feel about it. If we went on how we feel, nobody would pay taxes. But Jesus said sadly we're supposed to.

But we've been blessed with an opportunity in our nation unlike others. We're not a monarchy. We have a voice. And that's where what you believe can be brought forth at the ballot box. That's a blessing of God.

[36 : 24] That we have that ability to make an influence. One of the problems is we're in the situation we are because believers haven't made a statement about influence.

To get there. And we need to understand the importance of this. Of how this balance goes. But I want to back up just for a moment. Because I want to look at the other side of Jesus' statement.

Because Jesus said because that coin has the image of Caesar. You ought to render under Caesar that which is Caesar's. And into God that which is God's.

Because there's a very interesting picture here. Because remember as Jesus is looking at them. And talking to them he says hey whose picture is on this coin. And why ought to you give that respect and honor to the government.

Because of that image upon the coin. Jesus here render unto God that which is God's. What's he talking about? Look over for a moment.

[37 : 26] Back to Genesis for a moment. I believe Jesus here is tying this back into a very important element here. An element of responsibility to us. Genesis 1.27 says this.

And God created man in what? His own image. As human beings we bear what you might say is the image of God. The stamp of God upon us.

He is our creator. And if you bear his image. Therefore you have a responsibility before him. You have a responsibility before God. Because you are an image bearer of God.

Just like that coin was an image bearer of Caesar. Your life is an image bearer of God. Now I'm not saying you're godly. I'm just saying that when God created mankind.

He put his image upon us. And that image carries a responsibility. And an accountability. Just like that coin with Caesar.

[38 : 24] Had an accountability and responsibility. The image of God upon you as an individual. Carries with it a responsibility. We bear his image. We have an obligation to his authority.

An authority that has a right to tell you. How you ought to live. And how you ought to worship. How you. What are you going to be accountable for. What is your responsibilities.

Because I want you to understand. That God said that government. Also carries with it the power of the sword. Accountability. I want you to understand.

Because you're an image bearer of God. God says you're also under his accountability. Accountability. And you're going to be accountable to him. In your life. When we fail to obey the state.

There's consequences. What it helps us understand. When we fail to obey God. There's consequences. There's consequences to rejecting God's authority. Let's go back to the topic of taxes.

[39 : 21] You can get by without paying your taxes for a while. But pretty soon you're going to get a knock on the door. That you're not going to like. There's going to be some accountability. Amen. That's just the reality of it. You don't have to like it.

But it's going to be there. You go speeding down the street out here. And the cop pulls you over. I don't think he's going to listen.

If you say. Well I don't believe you have authority. You can try it. I'm just telling you. It's probably not going to end very well. But I want you to understand. The same token. It's a picture that God has authority over you and I.

Why? Because we have his image. And we are responsible before him. When we fail to obey the Lord there's consequences. Our sin bears a consequence of our rebelling against God.

Sin is rebellion against God. It bears a consequence. The Bible tells the wages of sin is death. There's a consequence for it.

[40 : 20] When we disobey what God has said. There's going to be a consequence in our life. We need to understand that we're accountable before him. That Jesus tells us. That if we call upon him.

He will save. He will redeem. He will forgive. But when you call upon him for salvation. Part of that is recognizing him as having authority. There's an authority question that is at hand.

A responsibility. Because of that authority. Jesus is telling everyone that we have an obligation. Just like to honor the rule of the state or the government.

We have a higher obligation to commit our lives to the Lord Jesus. And to obey him and his word. You might put it this way. To yield to the state is our earthly duty.

But to yield to the Lord is an eternal duty. We have a responsibility before him. This morning I want you to understand. And even ask yourself a question. Are you submitting to his authority?

[41 : 15] Because ultimately today we're not worried about whether you paid your taxes. But we are worried about where you stand with the Lord. Because ultimately you're going to be held to account. As one that bears his image.

And the question is what have you done with it? How have you responded to it? Have you rendered unto God that which is God's? That's your life. That's what you possess.

That's the things you do. Are you living in disobedience? To the things of God. Because if you live in disobedience. What you're telling God you don't have authority. And God says there's going to be accountability.

As heads are bowed and eyes are closed this morning. Is the spirit of God working in your heart today? Do you understand the importance of this responsibility you have before the one whose image you bear?

Has there been a time when you've called upon him to be your savior? Recognizing you're a sinner. That has no other way to reconcile that to God than to call upon him. And mercifully accept what he's already given to us.

[42 : 12] If there's never been that moment in time I encourage that to be today. But also today I want to ask you a question. Maybe you're saved. But the question is are you willing to continue under that authority?

The authority of the word of God in your life. Are you making choices that are going to carry consequences? Maybe you need to deal with it today.

Whatever the need might be. You need to take it to the Lord today. Heavenly Fathers we come before you today. Thank you.