

Rev. Thomas Emery
“Render to God” Matthew 22:15-20
Salem Presbyterian Church
Sunday, September 19, 2014

In the Scripture passage for today, we see the Pharisees launching their attack - they go at Jesus by asking Him divisive questions in public. They began, "Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" In debates, we would call this a “dilemma question.” If Jesus said that they should not pay it, they would report him to the Romans. If Jesus said that He should pay it, the people would be angry, and He would be a traitor. They would be angry, because taxes were as sore a point with them as they are with us! The Jews were a heavily taxed conquered people.

TEACHING POINTS

Teaching Point One: *Rendering to Caesar is easy.* But Jesus' answer raises more questions: How do you know what is God's? How can you tell where Caesar's due begins and ends? Why is there a difference? How can you serve them both? And how do you know when you've made the separation properly?

Teaching Point Two: *Rendering to God is the hardest spiritual problem for most of us.*

Teaching Point Three: *It's all about a surrendered personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ*

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21b NIV).

ACTION POINT

Every time we enter God's house and see a cross, we are reminded that the reason we are to give to God the things that are God's is because God has already given us everything. We remember that when we come to the Lord's Table and hear the words, "This is my body, broken for you. This is my blood, poured out for you..." God has given us everything. The world challenges our devotion to God with its allures and empty promises of happiness. If God has given us everything, why shouldn't we return our surrendered hearts to God through Jesus Christ?