

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Matthew 17:24-27 - NCBC, November 1, 2020

Main Point: **Our gospel witness is more important than our patriotic freedoms.**

- Paying the temple tax was an expression of Jewish patriotism (24)
- Jesus and His disciples are free from Jewish obligations (25-26)
- Jesus humbly puts His witness before His privilege (27a)
- Jesus supernaturally provides what's needed to preserve His witness (27b)

Application: **Humbly surrender your personal rights for the sake of Jesus' reputation (1 Cor 9:19-23)**

Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit myncbc.org** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of careful regathering.
- **Congregational Meeting Next Sunday at 9:30am.** Everyone is invited to come hear ministry updates and interact with our church leaders during this quarterly update.

<<Christ Our Hope in Life and Death>>



Amen. Jesus is our hope in life and death. Nothing else can offer lasting hope for this life and eternity. No amount of money. No political platform. No dating or marriage relationship. Only Jesus is worthy of our hope in life and death.

So let's continue worshipping King Jesus by opening our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 17**. In God's providence, **verses 24 to 27 in Matthew 17** offer timely wisdom as we prepare for our nation's political elections this week. I pray this message encourages us to *Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing* in the midst of our turbulent times.

I offer a special welcome to those worshipping online, or in our Extra Precautions Chapel. For those online, please use the links alongside the livestream for fill-in-the-blank sermon notes, the preaching manuscript, and children's coloring pages. At anytime you may pause this video, print those files, and then rejoin our worship with those notes in front of you.

Now before we read today's Scripture, let's remind ourselves of the surrounding context:

Matthew 16 opens with Jesus warning His disciples about any religious influence that seeks to focus your attention on earthly concerns more than the concerns of God Himself.¹ Worldliness, or setting your mind on the things of man,² is like a leaven of unbelief that corrupts every part of your life.³

Then Jesus takes His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, where in the face of public wickedness, God helps Peter to see that Jesus is in fact the Christ, the Son of the living God,⁴ who will build a people for Himself with an greater authority and power than Hell itself.⁵

Then in **verse 21**, Jesus begins to repeatedly prepare His disciples for His death and resurrection in Jerusalem.

Jesus is just a few months away from dying as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,⁶ but the disciples still think that Jesus is the Messiah who is going to be their nation's new political and military leader. When the disciples think of the Christ – they are thinking of a Lion⁷ – not a suffering lamb. The disciples have no concept of a suffering Messiah.

But Jesus will not be swayed from His rescue operation for sinners. The only way God can make a people for Himself out of sinful humanity is through His death and resurrection in our place.

So Jesus rebukes Peter for his worldliness in **verse 23**, and then teaches that anyone who follows Him must deny himself, submit to God, and obey Him as a way of life. Self-focused living can never truly satisfy your soul. Your soul was made to be satisfied by the glory of God!⁸

In fact, Jesus says in **verse 28**, some of the disciples won't die before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

So six days later, in **Matthew 17**, Peter, James and John get a personal glimpse of Jesus' kingdom glory as He is transfigured before them.⁹ This is another stunning confirmation that Jesus is indeed God's Son, the promised Messiah for Israel.

Yet, as they come down the mountain in **verse 9**, Jesus repeats that He must die and be resurrected before His glory will be revealed to the world. Jesus came to suffer as our sacrifice for sin before He will return as king to overthrow evil and bring shalom to this earth.

Then He heals a demon-possessed boy,¹⁰ – proving that no one is too broken for Jesus – urges the disciples to believe that He is able to accomplish God's will on earth¹¹ – and then again in **verses 22-23** tells His disciples that *the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and He will be raised on the third day.*

¹ Matthew 16:1-12

² Matthew 16:23

³ Matthew 16:11-12

⁴ Matthew 16:13-16

⁵ Matthew 16:17-20

⁶ John 1:29

⁷ Genesis 49:8-10; Isaiah 31:4; C.f. Revelation 5:5

⁸ Psalm 16:2, 8-9, 11; 17:15; 145:16; Matthew 5:6; 16:24-28

⁹ Matthew 17:1-8

¹⁰ Matthew 17:14-18

¹¹ Matthew 17:19-20

Jesus couldn't be more clear. He is a humble servant. His heart is gentle and lowly towards sinners.¹² He wasn't sent to condemn the world; He was sent to save the world.¹³

And all this provides helpful context to **verses 24-27** before us today. Matthew's gospel is the only place where this account is found, and it offers further insight into Jesus' humility.

So if you're able, I'd invite you to stand for the public reading of God's Word, as I read from the ESV, starting in **Matthew 17 verse 24:**

24 When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?" 25 He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" 26 And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. 27 However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

This is the reading of God's Word.

Let's Pray Together.

¹² Matthew 11:29

¹³ John 3:17

As I've prepared to preach this text, I've felt like a chef preparing a meal. I've already set the table with the context, allowing you to savor the meat and potatoes of Jesus' humble mission to die for the salvation of sinners.

But as we approach **verses 24-27 of Matthew 17**, this paragraph is like the onion rings for our meal. Because studying these verses is like peeling multiple layers off an onion!

These verses have been challenging to prepare to preach. Onions can make chefs cry! The more I sliced and diced this text and exposed its layers, the more challenged I became!

In fact, on Friday I told Jody that preaching this text the Sunday before national elections was bound to just make a bunch of people angry. To which Jody promptly replied, "That's nothing new. You do that every time you preach!" Thanks babes... I think? 😊

So please... come to the table humble and teachable. I have no axe to grind except the supremacy of Jesus Christ as our Lord!¹⁴ I am not naïve to the cost of speaking into such a politically charged climate. I desire to faithfully serve God's Word to us in a manner that is appetizing and life-giving... even while I understand that some have a natural hatred for onions.

But our deeply held assumptions about patriotism need to be confronted. Some of us have gotten swept up in the swelling current of rage, fear, and worldliness in

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

recent weeks and months. We have set our minds on human concerns more than the concerns of God.

Honestly, I believe this matter of American patriotism is one of New Castle Bible Church's greatest spiritual weaknesses. This is one of our blind spots, where we are often more cultural than biblical.

So praise God this morning that Scripture has the life-changing power to reorient our perspective, quiet our fears, and refocus our allegiance to the glory of Christ!

Here's how we're going to approach this text. I'm going to summarize the main point in one sentence, then we're going to simply use four statements to guide us through the text. There's nothing particularly memorable about today's outline ...but I pray that it is clear and simple enough for even a child to understand. Then at the end, I'll take a few minutes to offer some practical applications for us in our own present context.

So are you ready to submit your heart to God's life-giving Word?

Here's the main point of **verses 24-27**:



Our gospel witness is more important than our patriotic freedoms. However significant you believe Tuesday's election is, this Scripture reminds us the outcome of this election is *not* the most important thing. Jesus already taught at the end of **chapter 16** that the main thing in life is the glory of God. Only God's glory can satisfy your soul.

Therefore, Jesus now teaches Peter (and us) that our gospel witness is more important than our patriotic freedoms. There's something that is more important than exercising our own rights. Anytime we value being right, more than we value giving others a right opinion of Jesus, we fall short of God's glory. Whenever we scandalize Jesus' reputation for the sake of our own personal freedoms, we must humble ourselves and repent. For our gospel testimony to wicked unbelievers is more important than the exercise of our freedoms.

To help unpack this, we must first understand from **verse 24** that,

Paying the temple tax was an expression of Jewish **patriotism** (24)

Paying the temple tax was an expression of Jewish **patriotism**.

In **verse 24** some tax collectors catch up with Peter in his hometown of Capernaum.¹⁵ These were not Roman tax collectors like Matthew, who betrayed the Jewish people by collecting taxes for Rome. These tax collectors were Jewish patriots, who were collecting the two-drachma tax that was expected from every Jewish male, 20 years of age or older, to fund the Jewish temple.

You see, this tax was connected to God's law in **Exodus chapter 30** that obligated every Jewish adult male to give two-drachma, or half a shekel, to fund the temple ministry.¹⁶

A drachma was equivalent to a Roman denarius, which was approximately one-day's wage for a working laborer. So in our economy today, two-drachma equals a flat tax of approximately \$132 from each man.¹⁷ Since few coins

were minted for this amount, it was common for Jewish men to partner up, and pay this tax with one shekel coin worth four drachma – sufficient to cover both men's temple obligation.

Each year, the Jews would begin collecting this tax during the Feast of the Tabernacles since all collections were due in Jerusalem at Passover.

Therefore, don't miss this – paying the temple tax was a joyful thing for a Jewish man. It was a tangible way to support God's temple – the religious pride of the Jewish nation. Nothing quite symbolized the pride of the Jews more than the temple of God in Jerusalem. After all, the temple represented God's presence among His people. The temple of God at Jerusalem was what made their nation distinct from all other nations! To be a Jew, by definition, was to be pro-temple, and so paying the temple tax was a joyful expression of Jewish patriotism.

So now that Jesus and Peter are back in town, these collectors approach Peter asking,

"Your teacher pays the temple tax, doesn't he?"

The question's grammar clearly anticipates a positive answer, and Peter answers quickly "Yes. Of course! We've just been up north; we'll get it to you shortly."

¹⁵ Mark 1:21 and 29 combine to tell us that Peter's home was in Capernaum.

¹⁶ Exodus 30:11-16; c.f. 38:25-26. While Exodus 30 does not specify that this tax be required each year, by the time of Jesus this had become an annual obligation for all Jewish men. (Interestingly, during the economic

depression of Nehemiah's post-exilic reforms, the annual temple tax was reduced to a 1/3 of a shekel for every Jewish male 20 years and older, Nehemiah 10:32-33.)

¹⁷ \$8.25/hr (Illinois' current minimum wage) * 8 hr/day * 2 days

Perhaps the collectors wondered if Jesus was going to claim the tax exemption for temple priests?¹⁸ Perhaps they had heard rumors about Jesus claiming to be greater than the temple,¹⁹ or even how Jesus had threatened to tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days?²⁰ But Peter calms any fears, and reassures them: Jesus is pro-Israel. Jesus is pro-temple. Jesus is Jewish.

But then in **verses 25-26**, as Peter returns home, Jesus questions Peter to teach that,

Paying the temple tax was an expression of Jewish **patriotism** (24)

Jesus and His disciples are **free** from Jewish obligations (25-26)

Jesus and His disciples are **free** from Jewish obligations.

Jesus didn't want to miss this opportunity. As all-knowing God, He already knew about Peter's conversation.²¹ So He speaks first in **verse 25**, asking a hypothetical question,

What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect taxes? From their sons, or from others?

Jesus doesn't ask about the temple tax. He asks more broadly about all human government.

Do earthly kings get their revenue from their own children, or from those outside their own royal family?

Now of course the answer is obvious. It would not make sense for a father to collect revenue from His own children who are dependent upon Him. That would basically be taxing Himself! Certainly Peter understands that earthly kings only tax people outside their own royal family. So he answers in **verse 26**, "From others."

To which Jesus replied, *Then the sons are free*. One of the privileges of being the King's child is that you are exempt, or literally free, from paying taxes to the King.

Now come back to the specific context of Peter's conversation about Jesus paying the temple tax. What was the point of Jesus' question?

First, Jesus clearly has no obligation to pay the temple tax. Jesus is God's Son – the very One to whom the Temple was built to honor, and to whom its sacrifices pointed! He literally referred to the temple as "His

¹⁸ By the time of Jesus, the rabbinical tradition of Judaism had an entire chapter of the Mishnah devoted to this annual temple tax. From this we learn that pledges for the tax might be exacted from "Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed slaves, but not from women, slaves, or minors" (1:3). Priests did not pay it (1:4); Gentiles or Samaritans were not allowed to pay

it (1:5). C.f. Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar NT Commentary

¹⁹ Matthew 12:6

²⁰ Matthew 26:61, 27:40; Mark 14:58, 15:29; John 2:19; c.f. Acts 6:14

²¹ C.f. Matthew 9:4; John 2:25, 6:61; Revelation 2:23

Father's house."²² Why should anyone expect God's Son to pay a tax on His own temple?

But there's even a deeper meaning to Jesus' declaration that *The sons are free!* After all, He uses the plural sons, not just the singular Son which could refer to Himself or even the nation of Israel as a whole.²³

When Jesus uses the plural "sons" He is including His disciples along with Him in the statement of freedom.

Track with me carefully here. Jesus doesn't say *everyone* is free from tax obligations. Only the *sons* are free. Jesus is emphasizing the privileges of *sonship*. His focus is on our personal relationship with the King.

Only the Jews paid the temple tax, not Gentiles. So by saying the *sons* are free from the temple tax, Jesus is drawing a dividing line through the middle of the Jews. He's saying some of the Jews are free sons, because of their personal family relationship with God, while other Jews are still in bondage and do not have the privileges of sons.

Don't miss this. Not all Israel is God's true family ... it is not the biological children of Jacob who are the privileged children of God.²⁴ The true children of God are a *spiritual* family – a royal family created by the adopting work of God's Spirit²⁵ who causes us to believe that Jesus is God, and testifies to us that we are children of God.²⁶

In other words, this declaration of freedom for God's sons means that Jesus and His disciples are free from all Jewish obligations! Not only the temple tax. Once you've been adopted by God as His spiritual child, you are "free" from the entire Jewish system as a whole.

Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic law and satisfied its condemnation of our sinful souls!²⁷ Through faith in Jesus, God's sons are free from any commitment to the Temple! Free from the sacrificial laws. Free from a human priesthood. Free from circumcision. Free from bondage to the entire Mosaic Law and all its rabbinic traditions!

Through Jesus, the law of the Spirit sets you free from the law of sin and death!²⁸ Church – glory in this: something greater than the Temple is here! Place has given way to Person...and now a personal relationship with Jesus frees us from all obligations to Jewish law or customs! The sons are free!

So how then should we live as privileged children of God? Well, God's children do not use their freedom as an opportunity for selfishness, but instead love and serve one another.²⁹

And that's why in **verse 27**,

²² Luke 2:49, John 2:16

²³ C.f. Exodus 4:22 where God refers to Israel as His son.

²⁴ Romans 9:6-8; c.f. John 8:31-47

²⁵ Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5

²⁶ Romans 8:16-17

²⁷ Matthew 5:17; Romans 3:20-22; 7:4-6; 8:1-4

²⁸ Romans 8:2

²⁹ Galatians 5:1, 13-14

Paying the temple tax was an expression of Jewish **patriotism** (24)

Jesus and His disciples are **free** from Jewish obligations (25-26)

Jesus humbly puts His **witness** before His privilege (27a)

Jesus humbly puts His **witness** before His privilege.

After correcting Peter, and pointing out that Jesus and His followers are free from Jewish obligations, He quickly adds,

However, not to give offense to them...go and pay the temple tax for both of us.

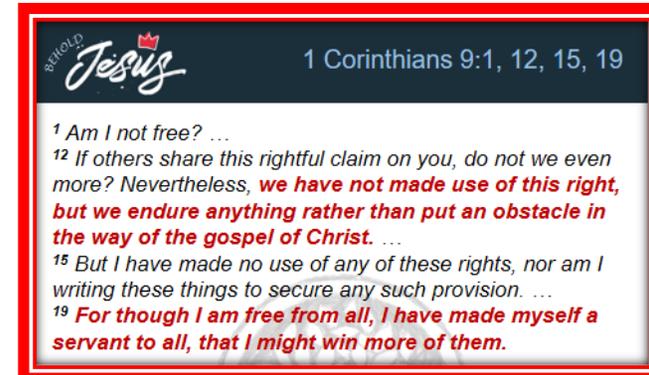
Peter – we have no obligation to pay the temple tax. We are fully within our rights to refuse to pay it. However, there's something more important in life than standing up for your own rights. There's something more important in life than digging in your heels when you know you are right.

This isn't worth scandalizing the Jewish people who have not yet come to believe that Jesus is their Messiah. Exercising our royal privileges as God's children and refusing to pay the temple tax now will only make it more difficult for the Jews to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

So yes, even though the temple is currently a den of thieves,³⁰ and even though the veil of the temple will be torn in two at my death,³¹ and even though paying this tax potentially funds the evil oppressions of the religious elite...Peter... go and pay our \$264.³² Because our gospel witness to unbelievers is more important than exercising our God-given privileges.

Church – isn't this a fascinating picture of the humility of King Jesus? Are you living with this mind of Christ today?³³ Or have you succumbed to a kind of American patriotism that justifies offending the very people God has called us to win by our love?

Listen to how the apostle Paul says this in **1 Corinthians chapter 9**,



In **verse 12** Paul writes, *We have not made use of our rights, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.*

³⁰ Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46, c.f. Jesus' passion for cleansing the temple of its evils in John 2:11-12 and Matthew 21:12.

³¹ Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45; c.f. Hebrews 10:20

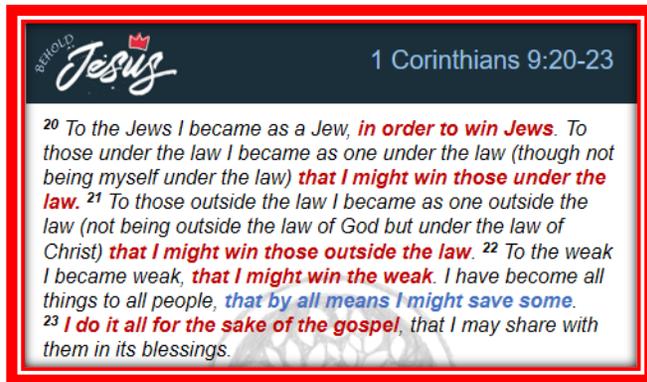
³² Our modern economic equivalent of 1 shekel (or 4 drachma, meaning four days wages for a minimum wage worker).

³³ Philippians 2:5-8

Talk about keeping the main thing the main thing!

Then **verse 19**,

For thought I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them.

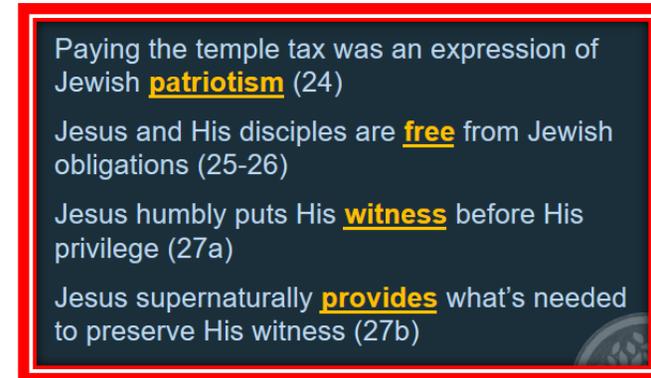


To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Church – this is what it looks like to put your witness before your privileges. So ask yourself today, Am I doing what I’m doing, and saying what I’m saying, and posting what I’m posting, and reacting how I’m reacting... for the

sake of God’s gospel to lost sinners around me, or for the sake of my own privileges and/or personal rights?

Jesus humbly puts His witness before His privilege, and then, let’s not neglect the miracle in **verse 27**.



For Jesus always supernaturally provides what’s needed to preserve His witness.

To love and humbly serve those who have a strong different political perspective to you... To sacrificially give beyond what God requires you to give to those who have sinned against you... to go to the cross and suffer unjustly ...all for the sake of winning souls for God ... is supernatural.³⁴ This kind of posture towards wicked unbelievers is not natural.

And so Jesus tells Peter,

“So that we don’t create any stumbling-block for unbelievers, let’s do what we really don’t have to do. Go talk to Judas,³⁵ and take the money from the funds that

³⁴ Galatians 5:22-23

³⁵ John 13:29

others have given to support our ministry,³⁶ and go pay the tax.”

Isn't it interesting, that's not what Jesus said! Why don't they just pay the temple tax out of the funds that **Luke 8** tells us Jesus had?

Perhaps it was a conscience issue related to the accounting of designated funds? If people gave money to Jesus and His disciples for their ministry, it didn't seem ethical to redirect those monies to fund the ministry of Jerusalem's temple!

Listen carefully church. Your gospel witness will never call you to violate your conscience.³⁷ But your gospel witness will require you to give more than you have yourself. Love and mercy always cost more than you can pay yourself.³⁸

Just think about God's miraculous provision which allowed Peter and Jesus to love their unbelieving neighbors for the sake of their gospel witness:

God sovereignly saw that a shekel was dropped in the sea, and scooped up, but not swallowed, by a fish. God then sovereignly saw that this exact fish would be near the shore at the exact moment that Peter threw out a line. Notice Jesus didn't tell Peter to use a net... he was a professional fisherman with a net! But in this case, Peter only needed to catch one fish. The exact fish that had a coin worth exactly \$264 in its month!

³⁶ Luke 8:3

³⁷ Romans 14:23

Dear brothers and sisters, God never asks you to give to others what He has not already first supplied for you. So if you are in a difficult marriage, or one of your neighbors has become an enemy, or if you are constantly arguing and quarreling with others... behold Jesus is your Sovereign God who will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory!³⁹

You no longer need to go to a physical temple to worship Him. Fall down and worship our Jesus right here and right now! For Jesus has the power to provide all that you need to live as God's child and share His mercy and generosity with sinners!



After all, our gospel witness is more important than our patriotic freedoms.

Even though Jesus and His disciples were biblically exempt from all the Jewish obligations, Jesus humbly put His witness before His personal rights and privileges.

³⁸ Romans 14: 1, 3-4, 10, 13, 15

³⁹ Philippians 4:19

So how is God applying this Scripture to your heart on this day set aside to remember our persecuted brothers and sisters?



Will you Humbly surrender your personal rights for the sake of Jesus' reputation?

You see whichever political party wins the election Tuesday is not the most important thing for Christians. God's glory, or Jesus' holiness going public, is the most important thing for Christians. Our gospel witness is more important than our patriotic freedoms.

If this makes you angry, please give yourself time to prayerfully consider the mind of Christ in this text before you lash out. Jesus truly loved sinners so much that He voluntarily submitted Himself to unnecessary obligations to sinful authorities...all in order to win the Jews.

So let's keep the main thing the main thing this week. Pursue Jesus' glory in your prayers. Pursue Jesus' reputation in your voting. Pursue Jesus' reputation in your relationships with others – especially in your

relationships with unbelievers. And be willing to endure any personal cost or inconvenience rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.⁴⁰

If you find yourself justifying how you are acting or reacting because you know you are right... be careful dear brother or sister. Pray for the mind of Christ.

We must never put a stumbling-block in another's pathway towards Jesus simply to prove that we are right.

Maybe you have strong convictions about COVID, or face-masks, or this week's elections? Ask yourself, is this a battle that Jesus would even fight? And if so, how can you engage with the mind of Christ, as a servant to all, so that you might win more people to the glory of God?

It doesn't matter if we are talking about national government, a boss at work, or even a husband or father in a home... it's always quite easy for us to justify why we shouldn't have to submit ourselves to sinful authorities. Jesus had plenty of good reasons why He shouldn't pay the temple tax, right? But He humbled Himself and paid the tax in reliance upon God's supernatural provision.

O how many unbelievers could be won for Christ if we just humbled ourselves to give what we aren't obligated to give, so that we can love and serve rather than offend unbelievers around us?

May God grant us the humility we need to depend on His spiritual supply, as we strive to keep God's glory the main focus of our lives.

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 9:12



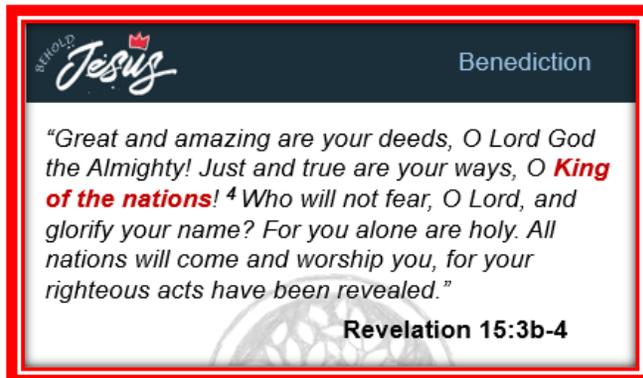
Let's pray.

<<For the Cause>>

Next week: Pastor Shaun begins 3 week Fabulous Fall Sermon Series! /// TODAY: REDEMPTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Remember to take advantage of the online Downloads and links!

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4

Recommended Resources on Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing:

- Exodus 30:11-16
- Matthew 12:6; 22:15-22; 26:61
- John 8:31-39
- Romans 12:18; 14:13-23
- 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 9:1, 12, 15, 19-23
- Galatians 4:4-7; 5:13-14
- Philippians 3:20-21
- 1 Timothy 2:1-12
- Hebrews 11:16
- 1 Peter 2:13-17

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/mark-dever-on-politics-and-the-local-church/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/29/opinion/sunday/christians-politics-belief.html>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/policies-persons-and-paths-to-ruin>
- <https://www.samstorms.org/enjoying-god-blog/post/a-brief-reflection-on-john-piper-s-recent-article-concerning-the-presidential-election>

- *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*, Jonathan Leeman
- *Before You Vote*, David Platt

- *Minding Your Political Manners*, sermon by Pastor Kevin on Titus 3:1-8 preached at NCBC on March 13, 2016.

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read Exodus 30:13-14 and Nehemiah 10:32-33. How was the temple tax in Matthew 17:24 different than Roman taxation? How was paying the temple tax by the time of Jesus an expression of Jewish patriotism?
2. Read the following verses, then discuss: Exodus 4:22 with Romans 9:6, 27; John 8:31-39; Matthew 5:9; Romans 8:14-17 with Galatians 4:4-7. What does it mean to be God's son? Who is able to truly be part of God's family? Are you a child of God?
3. Review Matthew 17:25-26. From the perspective of earthly kings, what kind of privileges are enjoyed by a royal family? If God is the king, and Jesus and His disciples are God's sons, then what does "the sons are free" mean in verse 26 (Cf. Galatians 5:1, 13-14 and 1 Peter 2:16)? What are we freed from, and freed to?
4. Review Matthew 17:25-27. Peter gave the right answer for the wrong reasons. Why do you believe Peter answered the way he did? Why did Jesus want him to answer the way he did?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 9:12, 19-23. What rights or privileges do you voluntarily surrender for the sake of your gospel witness? Where are you most tempted to fight for your own rights in a way that jeopardizes your witness for Christ?
6. Read Philippians 3:20-21. How should an eternal perspective change how you view earthly politics and election cycles? What causes people to rage and bitterly polarize during political election cycles?
7. ****BONUS**** For Personal Study: Prayerfully consider one of the recommended articles as you prepare to vote in this week's election. Pray that God will help you to pursue Jesus' glory in all your civil engagement.