

Various Other Things God Has Given Us

Series: Render to God

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Luke 20: 20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. 21 So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 23 He saw through their duplicity and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. 25 He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 26 They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

God tells us that He will render to man what is in accordance with his deeds (Rom.2:6). This means God will repay man according to what his deeds deserve. But what of grace, receiving what we do not deserve. Can both be true? Included in the deeds of man is man's response to the grace of God, i.e. faith. The man whose deeds are done according to faith in Jesus (Jas.2) will be rewarded (Heb.11:6).

But how do we reward God according to His deeds? How do we give back to God what belongs to Him? Thus far we have looked at:

The People God has Given Us

The Nature God has Given Us

The Word God has Given Us.

Today we will look at various other things belonging to God that we must in some way render back to Him. These include:

The Curse:

Cursing belongs to God as well as blessing. Paul speaks of the possibility of being under God's curse in Rom.9:3. "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers..." Paul accepted the fact that many will be lost, cursed and cut off from Christ. Too many Christians deny the curse of God today, as they deny the wrath of God (Rom.1:18). I must be a faithful steward over that truth and reality. Hell is real. It was created by God.

God's Judgement Seat:

Rom.14:10, "We will all stand before God's judgement seat." Like curse, God's judgement seat is to be respected. But, we disrespect His place of judgement when we think all men are appearing now before our judgement seat. We co-op His authority.

God's Work:

"Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food." (Rom.14:20) Specifically Paul is talking about the work of God as in His church at Rome. Jesus builds His church and we must maintain it, not destroy it. We must dedicate ourselves to giving back to God His work in the same shape He gave it to us.

God's Workmanship:

Eph.2:10, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We are God's masterpiece, His poem, His creation, designed for specific work to do. It is not for us to rearrange it, rewrite it, edit it, redesign it, or replace it with a masterpiece of our making. We are to give it back to God as we received it and completing the assignments given to us.

God's Temple and God's Spirit:

1 Cor.3:16, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple." Here Paul is talking about the church. (Later in chapter 6 he speaks of the temple of our bodies.) Our job is to conform and submit and to adjust to being a temple in which the Spirit of God lives. In this way we give this back to God.

God's Bread and Cup:

1 Cor.11:27, "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." Jesus hands us the bread and the cup-He gives it to us to eat and drink. Like children many do not partake, others treat it casually, others abuse it. We must partake in such a way that shows we understand the worthiness of this Supper.

God's Sake:

"If we are out of our mind it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind it is for you." (2 Cor.5:13) What is the "sake" of God? There actually is not a specific word in Greek, just a form of God that means "to God." The idea is that we can act in a way that is done "to Him." Our action is directed to Him. Even if our action may seem crazy to others, it is not crazy to God. We are willing to risk being thought of as out of our minds to men in order to appear in our right mind to God.

God's Eternal Purpose:

Eph.2:10-11, 10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly

realms, 11 according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. I fear that we are too eager to scrap God's eternal purpose for a new purpose that better suits our culture and era. God wants His purpose given back to Him in the same form that He gave it, unchanged, unaltered, and unredacted. All He wants to hear is Mission Accomplished.

From Stand to Reason by Jonathan Noyles:

What belongs to God? We do. Rendering to God means continuing to be faithful in all areas of life, even when we live in a distinctly anti-Christian culture. How do we do that? Here's what I suggest.

First, God's people don't seek the world's approval. Instead, we seek the approval of One. When we try to curry the favor of the world, we're rendering to Caesar what belongs to God.

James reminds us, "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).

Caesar's offer of friendship is false. He turns on us the moment we present God's truth. There is no neutrality here, no middle ground, no meeting the culture where it's at, hoping to gain acceptance.

Second, God's people don't compromise what the Bible says about controversial issues like human sexuality, identity, and abortion.

The world doesn't want us to speak our message clearly, so it condemns the words we use because of the ideas behind them. When we use words like sin, rebellion, salvation, and repentance, we are labeled hateful, bigoted, and intolerant. Worse, we might even be accused of committing hate crimes. Still, we remain resolute.

Remember, though, we don't have license to be unloving, nasty, or mean, but we also can't give in to the cultural pressures to compromise our message. Instead, we stay salty.

Finally, God's people remain levelheaded in all circumstances. We do not allow ourselves to get all worked up just because the world is doing what the world does.

The world's going to be illogical, irrational, and sometimes incapable of civil discourse. We expect that of people in darkness. Because they can't see clearly, they bump into things. Don't be confused or surprised when the world is being the world. Expect it.

Keep in mind that the world knows nothing about the peace of God that passes all understanding. They don't know about trusting a sovereign Lord. When the world acts like the world, remember you're not dealing with light. You're dealing with darkness. When darkness is dark, stay focused on your task. It's your job to be the light.

Whether it's forgoing worldly approval, standing firm in your convictions, or remaining calm in all circumstances, be prepared to render to God that which is God's. Then, when the test truly comes, when the powers of darkness press in on

you from the structures of this world, you will continue to do God's work God's way.