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Matthew 15:15-22

Then he said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'

I have written and preached in Perry chapel on this passage before, 3 years ago when it was last the lectionary reading for this Sunday. At that time I said and wrote that as well as giving to God what belongs to Him we should take seriously giving to Caesar what belongs to him. Taxes provide for the running of society and a well-planned tax system will ensure that hard work and initiative are rewarded, while at the same time providing care for the poorest and equality of opportunity for those in need. A well planned tax system provides for defence of the nation, enforcement of laws and help to poorer countries. It is striking the balance between these priorities that is the business of government and the centre of political debate. For the Christian we need to take seriously paying to Caesar what is Caesar's, it is incompatible with Christian life to cheat on our taxes and Christians should examine their conscience before engaging in creative schemes to dodge paying tax, remembering rulers are appointed by God.

This time I want to look more at giving to God what is His by right. He is our Creator, and we are under His control, He rules over the circumstances of our lives. Therefore, acknowledgment of His reign over us is due to Him. Remember your Creator, in the days of your youth. Ecclesiastes 12:1. For some of us this verse comes a little too late, our youth as gone, but we remember Him and honour Him nonetheless.

He has loved us, therefore we should love Him too. We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19. In the words of the hymn: O dearly, dearly has he loved, and we must love him too.

He gave us His Son to be our Saviour, therefore we should give him our lives. For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 2 Corinthians 5:14. If He gave His life for us then we should give our lives to Him.

He strengthens us by His Spirit, therefore we should use our strength in His work. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

He gives us gifts, therefore we should use our talents for His glory. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give

encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:6

Give to God what is God's: Love so amazing so divine demands my life, my soul, my all.

Andrew

All to Jesus, I surrender;
all to him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust him,
in his presence daily live.

Refrain:

*I surrender all, I surrender all,
all to thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all.*

All to Jesus I surrender;
humbly at his feet I bow,
worldly pleasures all forsaken;
take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus, I surrender;
make me, Savior, wholly thine;
let me feel the Holy Spirit,
truly know that thou art mine.

All to Jesus, I surrender;
Lord, I give myself to thee;
fill me with thy love and power;
let thy blessing fall on me.

All to Jesus I surrender;
now I feel the sacred flame.
O the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to his Name!

Jud-son W. Van De -Vent-er (1855-1939), 1896

