



WHO GETS OUR ALLEGIANCE?

Matthew 22:15-22

- ***Why is the world so eager to choose sides?***
- **Worldly divisions can easily become a spiritual trap.**
- *“Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which He could be arrested.” (Matthew 22:15)*
- **Christians cannot afford to get caught up in the traps of worldly divisions.**
- Paul - *“Soldiers don’t get tied up in the affairs of civilian life, for then they cannot please the officer who enlisted them.” (2 Timothy 2:4)*
- **Jesus gave the perfect example of how to navigate a spiritual trap.**
- *“His reply amazed them, and they went away.” (Matthew 22:22)*
- ***How can we navigate spiritual traps?***

To Navigate Spiritual Traps We Must:

RESIST POLITICAL CONFORMITY

- *“They [Pharisees] sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with Him.” (Matthew 22:16)*
- **Jesus faced the same trap many of us face - to be true to the Lord, or to a political alignment.**
- *“Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future.” John F. Kennedy*
- **The Gospel is *Trans-political* - it is far bigger and broader than any political platform.**
- Paul - *“For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.” (Romans 1:16)*
- **The 21st Century Christian should know the words of Jesus better than the words of a political candidate or commentator.**
- ***How have I struggled with political conformity?***

To Navigate Spiritual Traps We Must:

REPENT OF FINANCIAL IDOLATRY

- *“Now tell us what You think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”*
(Matthew 22:17)
- **Finances were an explosive topic in the 1st Century just like they are in the 21st Century.**
- *“For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”* (1 Timothy 6:10)
- **Most of us come to Jesus from a place of financial idolatry.**
- **What are the warning signs that we struggle with financial idolatry?**
- **Anxiety can be a warning sign of financial idolatry.**
 - *“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6-7)
- **Stinginess can be a warning sign of financial idolatry.**
 - *“The stingy are eager to get rich and are unaware that poverty awaits them.”*
(Proverbs 28:22 NIV)
- **Discontent can be a warning sign of financial idolatry.**
 - Paul - *“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.”* (Philippians 4:11)
- **God often uses difficult times to break our idolatry.**
- *“Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.”* (2 Corinthians 8:1-2)
- **The right response to idolatry is repentance.**
- Peter - *“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord. . . .”* (Acts 3:19-20)
- **Are there signs of financial idolatry in my life, and what do I need to do about it?**

To Navigate Spiritual Traps We Must:

RECOGNIZE OUR OBLIGATION TO AUTHORITY

- Jesus - *“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. . . .”* (Matthew 22:21)
- **Even Jesus submitted to the governing authorities He reigned over.**
- Jesus - *“We don’t want to offend them, so go down to the lake and throw in a line. Open the mouth of the first fish you catch, and you will find a large silver coin. Take it and pay the tax for both of us.”* (Matthew 17:27)
- **When we rebel against authority, it: 1) disrupts our witness for Christ (1 Peter 2:13-17), 2) upsets the Lord (1 Samuel 15:23), and demonstrates a lack of faith in the Lord (Romans 13:1).**
- Peter - *“Fear God, and respect the king.”* (1 Peter 2:17)

- There may be times when our earthly authorities oppose the biblical practice of our faith, and in those moments we must choose to obey the Lord.
- Peter - *"We must obey God rather than any human authority."* (Acts 5:29)
- ***Are there any areas where I have been negligent in my obligation to authority?***

To Navigate Spiritual Traps We Must:

REGARD THE LORD AS OUR CHIEF AUTHORITY

- *"Give to God what belongs to God."* (Matthew 22:21)
- **We honor the Lord's authority *in our Generosity.***
- Jesus - *"Give to God. . ."* (Matthew 22:21)
- **Christians should earnestly seek to become as generous to God and others as He has been toward us.**
- *"All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ."* (Ephesians 1:3)
- **The pathway to generosity begins with *Contribution*, progresses through *Obligation*, and culminates in *Lavish Generosity.***
- **At Celebration Church, we encourage our members to strive to get to the next level in their giving:**
 - **Giving Nothing to Giving Something**
 - **Convenient Giving to Proportional (Percentage) Giving**
 - **Proportional Giving to Tithing (10%)**
 - **Tithing to Spirit Led Sacrificial Giving (more than 10%)**
- ***Are you willing to commit to growing towards generosity?***
- **We honor the Lord's authority *in our Commitment.***
- *"Give to God what belongs to God."* (Matthew 22:21)
- **Everything belongs to the Lord, including our: 1) Possessions (Psalm 24:1), 2) Time (Ephesians 5:16), 3) Relationships (1 Corinthians 15:33), 4) Hardships (James 1:2-4), and 5) Heart (Proverbs 4:23).**
- ***What part(s) of my life am I holding back from the Lord?***

- *"Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"* (Matthew 22:17)
- **This was a nearly perfect trap because of how much we regard politics, money, and authority in our hearts.**
- Jesus - *"Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."* (Matthew 22:21)
- **The way to avoid a divided allegiance is to give full allegiance to the Lord.**
- *"And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."* (Romans 12:1-2)
- ***What is the Lord speaking to me through this message?***