



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion” By Pastor Jody May

Luke 20:19-26

Paying Taxes to Caesar

¹⁹The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. ²⁰So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. ²¹So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. ²²Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” ²³But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, ²⁴“Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?” They said, “Caesar's.” ²⁵He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” ²⁶And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

What we are looking at here in the text looks like a legitimate question asked of Jesus: ²²“Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” Is it right to pay taxes to Cesar? We as Americans can relate to that question...

From 1765 to 1768 there were several taxes developed in The Parliament of Great Britain like the *Stamp Act* and *The Townshend Acts* by which American Colonists were taxed heavily and unfairly. Heavily because taxes were imposed on them that were not required of people in Great Britain but yet the Colonies were considered a part of Britain. But the rub of this was that the 13 Colonies **held no representation** in Parliament making it unfair. There was no one speaking for the colonials in Parliament which was operating corruptly at the time due to a lack of money from multiple European skirmishes.

This produced a slogan out of the colonies which I think you have heard, “**No Taxation without Representation**”. This led to the British government deploying troops to Boston in 1768 to quell unrest, leading to the Boston Massacre in 1770.



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 "God, Country, & Rebellion" By Pastor Jody May

The burning of the *Gaspee* in Rhode Island in 1772 and the Boston Tea Party in December 1773, furthering escalated tensions. This led to The Continental Congress declaring King George a tyrant who trampled the colonists' rights as Englishmen, and they declared the colonies free and independent states on July 2, 1776. This led to a War against Tyranny which lasted until the fall of 1781 (240 years ago) where the combined forces of the French and Colonialists captured Yorktown (See the Movie *The Patriot*).

I say all this in way of opening that Americans have a bad taste in our mouth about Taxes and Tyranny, period. So, when we see "Taxes" in the scripture we think that is the main point BECAUSE in the History of our country that was the argument that led to our freedom. We like to take our experience and place it on the scripture and want to read this text as if **the importance of it is to understand how we should view governmental powers and taxation**. While that is important, I think that is the **secondary thing** to take away this week, not necessarily the first.

The context of this story is that the Jewish leaders despised Jesus, they were Jealous of Him, they hated Him because I believe they were **Covetous** (Exodus 20:17) to desire greatly, of Him. They wanted to be like Him, they wanted the praise like Him, they wanted the awe of Him, they wanted not to be afraid like Him, they wanted followers like Him, they wanted the authority of Him, which as we have now said over the last three weeks came from God through the Scriptures, they were never going to get it back!

That reminded me of a view in *modern psychology* that agrees with what is portrayed in scripture and it is seen in, "**that which we cannot have we seek to destroy.**" We cannot stand to see someone else have what we cannot attain.

Coveting in essence is two things it is:

- 1st **NOT BELIEVING** that **God has determined** what is best for you and that your greatest joy is living how He has **preordained** for you.
- 2nd it shows that **God is not good enough** for you and that you **rebel** against God's commands when you desire something more than God.



The Gospel According to Luke
Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion”
By Pastor Jody May

Here’s another thing about coveting. It is the doorway to multiple other sins; it leads us to a full out rebellion against God and others.

James 1:14-15 ESV

But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.
15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

In the text today, what I think is of **first importance** is that we see that the Coveting of the Jewish Leadership has led them to sin against **Jesus as God and as their Neighbor** in multiple ways. The hypocrisy I think you will see today, is that since they heaped upon Jesus all their jealous hate, it has now made them **believe that all things were permissible towards their neighbor**, if it got Him/Jesus out of their hair! (a means to an end)

- ◆ You don’t have to go far to see that played out, turn on the major media outlets and all rules of balanced reporting has gone out the window, why? Because all things are permissible if it gets someone out of your hair.

Goal today: The job for us today, **#1** is to see in loving Jesus as our God and in loving our Neighbor as our self, is to become aware of the **sin of Coveting** in our lives, so we may realize our rebellion against God confess it, and refrain from sinning against our neighbor. **#2** to understand what it means to **pay Cesar what is Cesar’s and to offer God what is God’s: Proper and Holy Worship**. So, if you held me to it today here’s is what I would say is our main point:

Coveting leads to Rebelling against God and Country
◆ **Country is the collective formation of your neighbors.**

Let’s look at the different ways, in the text, in which Coveting produces other sins that propel us to Rebel against God and our fellow countryman:

- **Haters (v.19)**



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 "God, Country, & Rebellion" By Pastor Jody May

¹⁹The scribes and the chief priests **sought to lay hands on him at that very hour**, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

Hate comes from understanding that they were willing to put up with political enemies to be able to devise a plan against Jesus. *"The enemy of my enemy is my friend."* [Is an ancient proverb](#) that is 2,400K old and is very un-Godly. Although the function of this proverb shows the definition of Biblical hate, which a simple definition is *to like/love someone less than another*.

The **Pharisees were standing there with the scribes, priests, and elders** as Jesus had just delivered His story on the tenants of the vineyard. They knew that Jesus was talking about them as well. According to [Mat. 22:16](#) and Mark [12:13](#) the Pharisees left there and got together with the Herodians. The Herodians were Jewish leaders that worked with Herod to run his government which meant management of the Jews, no one liked them either. The Pharisees have been working with them since [Mark 3:6](#) when he healed on the sabbath, and Mark said they were working to kill him back then! You put that together with our text today (¹⁹*The scribes and the chief priests **sought to lay hands***) and you see the Scribes and Priests **recruited** the Pharisees and Herodians to set a trap for Jesus.

People who hated each other found someone they could hate more, Jesus. Can people who don't like each other work together, the answer is **yes**, just find them someone or something they hate more. Coveting definitely leads to rebellion at the highest levels and it usually **starts with the realization you HATE**, or you are willing to work with those you don't like to discredit someone you dislike more.

- **Prideful (v.19)**

¹⁹The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this **parable against them**, but they **feared the people**.



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 "God, Country, & Rebellion" By Pastor Jody May

Their **Hate** led them to **Pride**, **they believed they were above reproach (who gave you this authority!?)**. But WAY more than that, they feared the people, because the people were already believing something about Jesus:

Mat. 21:46 ESV

When they sought to seize Him, they feared the people, because they considered Him to be a prophet.

He was considered a prophet by the people, **He was esteemed!** Yet they were the ones that wanted to be called Master, Rabbi, and Teacher by the people and they now were being neglected. They were used to being invited to people's homes while they declined the invites from those perceived to be lowly and sinners. And now their pride had been hurt, Jesus had taken their pride away by putting the common man's pride **back in God**, the message of the Kingdom and the promise of the Messiah. Jesus was turning the worship back from not what man can do but to what God IS DOING and what He will do!

They were perceiving this at least rightly, so what they did was to come up with a plan, **not to taint their hands**, but to get the Roman government involved so they, the Romans, would look like the bad guy. They didn't want to lose any more 'standing' in front of the people.

Sometimes, not all the times, our Pride is hurt by the accomplishment of others, and instead of praising someone for their success, we clam up and even point out the negative things about that person. Want to fight against pride? **Wear yourself out praising others**, make much to do about what others do, take more notice of others around you, for in God's Kingdom **the Gospel says that all goes to His glory**, which is what you want, right!? Then definitely make sure along with praising others give God the praise for what that person is accomplishing. The Lord's earthly brother reminds us of the blessing choosing humility.

James 4:10 ESV

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.



The Gospel According to Luke
Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion”
By Pastor Jody May

The Gospel proclaims to us: Don't worry about your glory in this world being taken away by those around you, for it is God's responsibility and promise to exalt you in the right ways, bringing Him glory and you joy. **Humbling is the way to Godly exaltation which is permanent and never fading.**

- **Hypocrisy (v.20)**

²⁰ So they watched him and sent spies, who **pretended to be sincere**, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

So, from Coveting it has led us to Hate, which heightened their sense of Pride, which now gets them to operate as **Hypocrites**. **They acted other than what they really were.** These spies pretended to be sincere, they tried to play as if they were honest and were putting forth an honest question. In the end I bet you **THEY believed** they were doing the right thing **by being hypocritical?** (Coveting always leads to Justifying the means to an end)

Here's the problem with pretending to be sincere with God and others, it is that you actually **start fooling yourself!** I have known a lot of people that thought they were sincerely lonely, unhappy, or upset with how life was treating them which lead them to self-justify their behaviors of adultery, debauchery, and gluttony; rebelling against God and neighbors.

Is there sin you are hiding because you are denying what you are feeling inside? Are their behaviors you justify because you don't like where God has got you in life right now? Are you acting as a hypocrite by sincerely showing your emotions to everyone and then assuaging them by turning to destructive habits? Do you spend a lot of time painting on social media the person you wish you were by what you see in another's life? If you are, you may be suffering from hypocrisy caused by coveting.

Romans 12:9 ESV

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion” By Pastor Jody May

The law of the Gospel is you choose to be genuine in your love of God and others. If you are honest with how you feel about others, then God has provided among the body those who are willing to help you to deal with that. Because the people of HCC are here help us love each other because that is what brings God glory.

- **Deceitful (v.21-23)**

²¹ So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. ²² Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?” ²³ But he **perceived their craftiness**, and said to them,

They tried to deceive Jesus, being deceitful is the same as lying. They try to use **flattery** on Jesus, which is a **form of deception for they didn’t like Him**. They knew it and He knew it. Jesus sees through the deception, he sees the plan of the spies, and is going to expose it with Truth.

Deceiving, it’s not pleasant to think of ourselves in that way is it, yet it happens all the time. We call it **buttering up people**. Men, how many of you have played up to your spouse with gifts, acts of service, and the such so that you can get what you want at the end of the week? Are you using flattery to get what you want out of your spouse? Ladies, how many of you know the way to your man’s heart, his stomach: his appetites, have you given him things he desires for the sole purpose of getting something you desire, were you dishonest about it?

I say all that because, yes, a marriage is a relationship of give and take and sacrificing for one another, but it is a relationship to be built on honesty imaging the relationship we have with Christ. Be real, speak open with your spouse about your needs and desires and while it may not get you what you immediately, what it will bring to you, is a more fulfilling marriage leaving your children an example of enduring for the cause of Christ.

- **Stubborn (v.26)**



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 "God, Country, & Rebellion" By Pastor Jody May

²⁶ And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but **marveling** at his answer they **became silent**.

You know what the very image of stubborn is? Getting schooled, getting shut down and still desiring revenge on the person you started picking on out of your own covetous behavior. Again, even in the last couple of days before the crucifixion, the Stubbornness of the Jewish leadership could not accept the glory of Christ, could not accept the mercies of His lessons, walked away in silent rage and chose to murder the savior instead.

Stubbornness is a destroyer in the church as well or it may be the cleaning maid. Many times, people can't bring themselves to get over another person's behavior or even a person's presence in the church and they leave. While it may decimate the attendance roles in the church it also purges the church of people that may be caught up in and may be unrepentant of covetous behavior. Family it is a hard thing to hear but the first concern of the church is not always to be concerned about stopping those who walk away in stubbornness but rather pray for their eyes to be opened as to why they walked away.

Now, we have been saving vs 24-25 for the last section here, Jesus' short lesson on taxes. Does it have some insights on dealing with covetousness? What did that lesson mean back then to those that were listening to Him?

- **The Answer for Coveting (v.24-25)**

²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵ He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Why was this such a hot topic? Just like Americans, Jews were hacked about paying **UNFAIR TAXES**, especially when it came to a lack of representation in the Roman Government! They paid taxes to the temple, taxes to King Herod, and taxes to the Romans which did not care about all the other taxes you were paying.



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion” By Pastor Jody May

Their original question was, “Is it right to pay taxes to these crooks!?” No Jew thought it was right to pay them, BUT every Jew did pay them for the Romans **were great about beat downs**, if you did not pay what was owed. They thought Jesus would have to answer “No” because this was the popular answer, it is the answer the people wanted to hear. They were going to get the Romans to kill Jesus for them because they wanted the people to like them, they feared them!

But our Lord being wise and not concerned about earning man’s favor gives the correct answer. Whose picture is on the coin? Tiberius Cesar, right, **so pay the man what is owed him**. *Who keeps Herod in line, who paves your roads, who builds the highways between our towns and maintains them, who provides security from robbers, marauders, and foreign kings? Rome does, so pay them what is owed.*

Acts 5:29 ESV
But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.”

To Jesus this is not a political issue, but the issue is **do you recognize who has placed the Romans in authority over you?**

All governments are used by God to promote order, pay them for that service because the money you do have has been determined by God to be given to them for your care.

Here’s what this means: **Rendering to Cesar trusts God with what He has planned for you!** By paying your taxes you worship God, you put His desires first, you **GLORIFY Him even when it is hard**, and you show that **trusting Him is better** than not paying your taxes which trusts your will over His.

That whole attitude of **TRUSTING GOD** even when it is **HARD** is what keeps us from **COVETOUS behavior** for it means whatever God has for me, **I AM OK WITH IT!**

How does this pan out for us?

Perhaps we don’t like our position in this world, but it was given to us so that we would glorify God, is was a pre-ordained move by God.



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 97 “God, Country, & Rebellion” By Pastor Jody May

Sometimes we are in positions of unfulfillment not to cause resentment against God but to learn about the hardships of man. How else can you talk the gospel with people unless you experience first-hand what it does for you?

Sometimes we are in positions of pain, not to resent our lives but to value the message of the Gospel and to be saved by the belief in a better world to come. Your best life now is built in the realization that your best life is yet to come!

Sometimes we are in positions of weakness for we get the honor of showing that when we are weak Jesus is strong. You would never know that joy UNLESS God on purpose puts you under the control of others that are not that nice.

Sometimes we are given strength and not the opportunities to use it because we are to model meekness which is the ability not to use strength but the ability to use restraint instead.

Sometimes we are in positions of lowliness so instead of looking down on others we may learn organically that all men are created equal.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 ESV

18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Let us stop Coveting over the things we don't have and thank God for what we do have because it is through those things, our lives, our circumstances, that God has chosen to save us and make us an example to the world showing the Kingdom of God. In this way we can fight against our rebellion against God and our neighbor and instead we can choose to love by surrendering to God's control over our lives.

You want to fight coveting? TRUST GOD, choose sincere love, and accept what He has for you today.



**The Gospel According to Luke
Wk. 97 "God, Country, & Rebellion"
By Pastor Jody May**

PRAYER

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, that has paved our life's path, trust Him, for He knows what is best for you.

Go in the name of the Son, that has brought us freedom by His rule, trust Him, for He has perfected the path of trusting His Father.

Go in the name and power of the HS, that empowers us to choose love rather than coveting what is not ours, trust Him, for He was sent to guide us in accepting God's plan for our lives.