**Follow – Gospel of Mark - Wk 30 – Two Things for Sure**

**Taxed are due, YAY! It can be stressful and frustrating. Our nations independence was triggered by oppressive taxation. Few things stir up emotions like taxes… it happens with Jesus too.**

**Old saying, “Nothing is certain except death and taxes”**

**Jesus talks about both today.**

**We’ve are walking with Jesus in Mark – The week leading to the cross.**

**(SUNDAY) Jesus entered Jerusalem… goes to the temple and leaves.**

**Passover – a weeklong Independence Day celebration!**

**(MONDAY)**

* **Jesus Curses the Fig Tree - Pointing to Israel.**
* **Cleanses the Temple in judgement - Pointing to Israel.**

**The authorities were mad and planning on killing him**

**(TUESDAY) The priests corner him – “Who do you think you are?”**

* **Jesus responds with a parable about the destruction of the Vineyard - pointing to the leaders and Israel.**
* **Adding He is the chief cornerstone being rejected – and that judgment is coming – pointing at them.**

**You can imagine the authorities are getting angrier!**

**Tuesday - Priests faced off with him, now some Pharisees & Herodians**

**2 groups that hated each other joined forces to pick a fight with Jesus**

**(Pharisees, ultra conservative – Herodian, ultra liberal – common hate)**

**TAXES - A QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP**

**Mark 12:13 Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. (Knowing everyone hated Rome and unfair taxes – they tried to corner Jesus – on politics – pharisees love politics) 14 They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. (fake flattery) You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. (phony admiration – those who smile to face but plan to stab you in the back) Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”**

**You want to get a church quite – bring up govt and taxes.**

**Imperial tax – nearly 30 yrs the Jewish people have been forced to pay money to Rome. Some were defiant (zealots), begrudgingly paid - but everyone hated the taxes.**

**“Should we pay them?” If he said yes, he’s an enemy of Jewish people. If he said no, he’s a revolutionary in need of arrest by Rome.**

**This is an Independence holiday week… This is our land!!**

**You can almost see their smug arrogant faces…**

**15b But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” (I now what you are trying to do) he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” (love the drama) 16 They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. (pic - head of Tiberius Caesar, “the divine”. On back, Pontifex Maximus = great high priest of Rome) 17 Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.**

**He was not saying God does not own all things.**

**Bible says all thing in it, on it and with it – are the Lords.**

**“Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s”**

**\*\* Government has some authority- but God has the final authority**

**He was telling them (us) If you use, benefit, and take advantage of the system created, pay what is required.**

**Simply – Do you recognize Caesar’s authority when you use his coins, you use it on a daily basis? (yeah…) then you’re obligated to pay the taxes he requires.**

**Submit to the authorities in your life (whether you like it or not), as long as it does not infringe on your service to God.**

**The govt does not have all authority. Honor the rule of state. We must obey God over Caesar. Jesus establishing jurisdiction. (Paul echoed this in Rom 13)**

**“Give… to God what is God’s.”**

**\*\* One citizenship will always eclipse another**

**As the coin is stamped with the image of Caesar – so you are stamped with the image of God. (Gen 1:26-27) It is fitting and rightful to give God what is already His – you.**

**Reality check - Heaven is not a democracy or republic – it is monarchy. A Sovereign King - There will be no democrats in heaven… republicans – libertarians – green party. We have a different citizenship.**

**When your life is over - your party, opinions, and theories will not matter… but one thing will. Did you give to God what was God’s? Your life.**

**If you are a follower of Jesus your citizenship in the kingdom trumps a president or party. \*\* Be careful what hill you choose to die on. We are called to die on the hill Jesus did- calvary. Death to self to save others.**

**After Jesus said this – they were stunned to silence. It has been said – “In the answer of Jesus, God was glorified, Caesar was satisfied, the people were edified, and His critics were stupefied.”**

**At the trial of Jesus, they said Jesus told people to not pay taxes (Luke 23) liars. Sometimes it doesn’t matter how you answer – people will twist your words and hear what they want to hear.**

**Then another group tries to pick a fight with Jesus – the Sadducees.**

**Priests - the religious / Pharisees – the legalist / the Herodians – the liberalist / Sadducees – the intellectuals.**

**DEATH - A QUESTION OF ETERNITY**

**Mark 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 19 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. (Black Widow wife) 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. (Jewish law that was designed to take care of windows) 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”**

**Absurd question – ie. Did Adam have a belly button?**

**When she gets to heaven there are 7 guys waiting for Deborah.**

**Knowing Jesus teaches the immorality of the soul, they try to trip him up - If there is a heaven, who is the husband in a resurrection?**

**Particularly interesting because of who asked it - wealthy Sadducees (worked w/ Rome) did not believe in the afterlife.**

**\*\* Many today believe the same things… explain.**

**24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error (there are right and wrong beliefs – culture tells us all beliefs are right… Jesus says – you are wrong)**

**Nearly every culture has a view of eternity - ancient Assyrian, Egyptian tales, Greeks, Romans, native Americans, middle eastern, Asian, to tribal religions, religions – all different. They can not all be right. Jesus says they are not.**

**24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error (Jesus says - you are wrong**. **Even intellectuals get it wrong.) because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?**

**Usually, the case for anyone in error in what they believe:**

**Gives the two main reasons – Why People Are Wrong**

* **They don’t really know scriptures –**

**They arrogantly quoted the Bible “Moses says” - it didn’t really know it.**

**People are often led astray by not knowing the bible – the greatest pool of people for cults are Christians who do not know their bible.**

**Ever head any of these: Adam and Eve ate an apple in the Garden of Eden. / High Priest never entered the Holy of Holies w/out a rope tied around his ankle. / The Lord helps those who help themselves. / Cleanliness is next to godliness. / Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem when she was expecting Jesus. / There were three wise men. / Noah only took two of every animal into the ark.**

**Most people believe these things are true – but none are in the Bible.**

**The greatest issue of the decline of a believer’s life and the influence of the church in the world – is a lack of reading the Word of God. Read it - study it - memorize it – live it!**

* **They don’t really know the power of God – they claim to know God but deny true real power – life transformation.**

**2 Tim 3:5 - …having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.**

**Like them – many know the “feelies” – the “goosies” – the minor chord progression emotions – have a lot of encounters… but leave without any real transformation - It’s all emotions.**

**God help us to know the real power – not just experiences!**

**Jesus then corrects poor theology**

**He says plainly as a fact… 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.**

**\*\* We won’t be married in the kingdom of heaven**

**Sorry LDS friends, Jesus has spoken. She won’t be married to any of them. Like angels we won’t have sex or be procreating. Marriage is not needed. Won’t be married. Angels don’t have babies.**

**However, the friendship and intimacy of people will still be there. Love will be perfect – and we will love perfectly!!**

**\*\* We won’t be angels in the kingdom of heaven**

**Sorry you will not be an angel – but like them we will be spiritual beings with a greater purpose - new bodies, no death.**

**Mark 12:26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”**

**If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did not continue to live, God could not say that He is their God, speaking in the present tense. He would have said that He was their God.**

**\*\* Every soul is eternal and will face God – everyone**

**As sure as we are standing here – as Abe, Isaac, and Jacob are alive – we will live for eternity. We are eternal living beings.**

**\*\* Every soul will face God – everyone**

**This earthly life will come to an end – but our life is not over - We will face God and give account for our life.**

**Heb 9:27 - it is appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment.**

**Jesus often talked about eternal life and eternal judgment – the right and the left – those apart from Christ - Matthew 25:46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

**John 5:24 “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.**

**As Jesus says - A resurrection is coming for all of us – some will be resurrected to life – others to eternal punishment.**

**Well, I don’t like that - I think all go to heaven - I think this life is the end (Sadducees) I think all religions will get you to God**

**Jesus is using strong words here when he says about this…**

**24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error… 27 You are badly mistaken!”**

**\*\* Heaven will be greater than all the hype of this world - has to offer**

**Heaven is not like here, but a little better – it is greater than you can imagine. 1 Cor 2:9 “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”**

**Like a child that has that special toy, blanket, object (Noel - stuffed dog - lost it in Pennsylvania, spent day looking for it. Summer - Winnie the pooh blanket) But they are so far beyond that now… they can see much more important things. They don’t miss them. That is what Jesus is saying - what you think you need today will seem so small in the kingdom of heaven.**

**When we get our affections fixated on this life – we often miss the next.**

**When we preoccupy on the politics of this life – we often miss the next.**

**We miss Jesus – his rule – the abundant life he has now – and to come.**

**Two things are for sure – Death and Taxes.**

**We all have to file our taxes by the end of the month…**

**We will all have to stand before God at the end of this life..**

**If you don’t pay them – you will be judged and imprisoned.**

**If you do not know Jesus as Lord – you will be judged and imprisoned.**

**Are you ready for both? If you were to stand before God today – and He asked, “why should you be welcomed into the Kingdom of God?” What would you say?**

**John 3:16 – lays it our clearly - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life**

**Week 31 – Then a religious leader – who was an honest seeker asked Jesus a question.**

**The Priests tried to pick a fight (12:1-12)**

**The Teachers of the law tried to pick a fight (12:12)**

**The Pharisees and Herodians (they hated each other) tried to pick a fight (12:13)**

**The Sadducees tried to pick a fight (12:18)**