

Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

SSBC Luke Bible Study #77

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Luke 20:20-26

Sermon Date: Mar 25, 2007

Taxes? Taxes!

My Dad is from the “old school.” You do what you’re told. You obey the law. You return the extra change a store clerk gives you back by mistake. And you pay your taxes. If you want to see him scowl, try taking his picture with a flash camera (he hates bright lights!), or try talking about someone who is paid “under the table” (thus avoiding paying taxes). As I’ve grown older, I’ve realized that many people don’t share my Dad’s views. So I find myself wondering, “What would Dad do?” when a tricky situation comes up.

Of course, as a Christian I also find myself wondering, “What would Jesus do?” Would he do what he was told? Of course! Return extra change given by mistake? Sure! Like flash photography? Well, I suppose not if his eyes were as sensitive to light as my Dad’s are.

But what about taxes? Would Jesus pay taxes, particularly when the government they were paid to was imperfect and at times even corrupt? What would Jesus do in that case? Fortunately, we find the answers to this one in the Bible. And just in time for tax season.

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and are also posted at <http://sermonhouse.com/SSBC>. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studieditor@southshorebaptist.com

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Bible Study:

1. Read this week's Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p>²⁰ Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.</p> <p>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?"</p> <p>²³ He saw through their duplicity and said to them, ²⁴ "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?"</p> <p>²⁵ "Caesar's," they replied.</p> <p>He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."</p> <p>²⁶ They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.</p>	

2. As a man, Jesus had to deal with authorities and taxes.
 - a. What would have been wrong with Jesus outrightly endorsing the paying of one's taxes? What was the taxation system and those involved in it like in those days? (consider the implications of Mt 18:17, 21:31, Luke 5:30, 7:34)

 - b. What would have been wrong with Jesus contesting the tax system or saying people should not have to pay their money to the tax collectors? Why didn't he do this?

 - c. How does Jesus navigate through the trickery of the Pharisees and Herodians and avoid giving his enemies something to accuse him of?

 - d. Did Jesus himself pay taxes when they were required of him? Read Matthew 17:24-27. What do you learn about how Jesus feels about taxes from this story of the temple tax?

3. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from page 2 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

4. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

Get Topical:

5. How should we regard civil authorities today? For a topic like this that is addressed in various places in God's Word, it is a good idea to do a 'topical' Bible study. To do this, a good place to start is with a topical Bible (such as Naves Topical Bible) or with a study bible that has a topical index. The following is an excerpt from the New Naves Topical Bible for the subject 'the duties of citizenship.'

CITIZENSHIP (or CITIZENS)

Duties of: Ex. 22:28 Acts 23:5. Num. 27:20; Ezra 6:10; Ezra 7:26; Ezra 10:8; Prov. 16:14, 15; Prov. 24:21; Prov. 25:6, 7, 15; Eccl. 8:2-4; Eccl. 10:4, 20; Jer. 29:7; Matt. 17:24-27; Matt. 22:17-21 Mark 12:14-17; Luke 20:22-25. Acts 19:36 vs. 35-41.; Rom. 13:1-3, 5-7; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13-17

Look up each of the verses listed below, and note briefly what it teaches us about how to think about and deal with civil authority.

- a. Ex 22:28 (Acts 23:5)
- b. Ezra 7:26
- c. Prov 24:21
- d. Prov 25:6-7
- e. Eccl 8:2-4

- f. Eccl 10:20
- g. Mt 17:24-27
- h. Acts 19:35-41
- i. Rom 13:1-3
- j. Rom 13:5-7
- k. 1 Tim 2:1-2
- l. Titus 3:1
- m. 1 Pet 2:13-17

6. How would you summarize the biblical perspective about our duties as citizens and how God feels about obedience?

For future reference, you can do other topical studies using Naves Topical Bible online at <http://www.studylight.org/con/ntb/>

7. Returning now to the Luke passage, how does Jesus' declaration in verse 20:25 about "giving to Caesar what is Caesar's" apply to us today? How are you doing with this in your life these days?

8. What does it look like for us to "give to God what is God's"? How are you doing in this area? How could you improve?

9. What can you do this week to begin applying something that you have learned or felt convicted about during this study?