

# JESUS, KINGS & TAXES

DATE: SUNDAY, 3RD APRIL 2020 | SERIES: JESUS - PART 6

## MATTHEW 17:24-27

*24 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"*

*25 "Yes, he does," he replied.*

*When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?"*

*26 "From others," Peter answered.*

*"Then the children are exempt," Jesus said to him. 27 "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."*

### NOTE TO LEADERS:

The key objectives this week are to:

1. To be reminded that we are ambassadors to the King, and as such, we submit to the local authority and laws in order to represent Him well.
2. That as children of the King, we should never live in fear because He will always provide for our needs.

## START TALKING

1. Was there something in Sunday's message that inspired or challenged you?
2. How do you respond when you are told to pay for something that you shouldn't be required to pay for?

## START THINKING

1. 2 Corinthians 5:20 tells us that we are Christ's ambassadors. An ambassador to another country always keeps the local laws in order to represent well the one who sent them. How can we be good ambassadors for Christ in order to represent Him well in this world, through these extraordinary times?
2. Steve shared three things we can learn about Jesus from this story. What do you think Peter might have learned about himself from this story?

## START SHARING

1. Though there was no need for Jesus and His disciples to pay the temple tax, Jesus did it anyway to avoid unnecessary conflict. Share about a time that you de-escalated a situation in order to avoid unnecessary conflict or offending someone. How did it impact your relationship with the other party? How did you benefit from doing this?
2. Jesus provided in an unusual way for His and Peter's taxes (Matthew 17:27). Share with the group about a time when Jesus has provided for you in an unusual/supernatural way. What did you have to do first (like Peter had to catch the fish) so God could move?

## START PRAYING

Thank you, King Jesus, that as Your children we carry Your name, we are under Your protection, we have Your authority, and we are in Your care. Please bring each of us a personal revelation of this incredibly powerful truth!

## START DOING

Steve shared on Sunday that it's important for us to submit internally to authority. In what area of your life are you not submitted internally to authority? What are you going to do this week as a starting point to change that?

# SUMMARY

## OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

Steve enlarged our view of Jesus this Sunday with an interesting story from Matthew 17:24-27. All Jewish males had to pay a Temple tax to support the upkeep of the temple. Tax collectors set up booths to collect these taxes. The Bible tells us that when Jesus and the disciples arrived in Capernaum, *the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, 'Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?'* In typical Peter style, He answers a question without really knowing the answer: *'Yes, he does.'* Then he went into the house to talk to Jesus about it. Jesus then uses the situation to emphasise His role as the King of kings. Just as kings pay no taxes and collect none from their family, Jesus the King owed no taxes. But Jesus provided for the taxes for both Himself and Peter in order not to upset those collecting the taxes as they did not understand His Kingship. Although Jesus provided the taxes, Peter still had to go and catch the fish, i.e. he had to work for it. Ultimately, God is our provider, and He supplies all our needs, but He may want us to be active in the process by doing our bit, e.g. working for it.

In this story, Jesus makes three points:

### 1. He is the King, and we are His children.

*'From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes - from their own children or from others?'*

*'From others,' Peter answered.*

*'Then the children are exempt,' Matthew 17:25-26*

Jesus knew about this conversation between Peter and the tax collector even though He wasn't present. In His response on the matter, He's implying that He is not just an earthly king, but THE heavenly King. And because earthly kings and their families were exempt from paying taxes (as was the case at that time) then so are we, His children. But the point He was making, was not about the tax, but that He is the King of kings and we are His children. When we put our faith in Christ, we are adopted into THE King's family. We carry His name, we are under His protection, we have His authority, and we are in His care. What an incredibly powerful truth! Peter later phrases it like this: *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood ... God's special possession ...* 1 Peter 2:9. It is so important that this idea becomes truth in our hearts, and not just 'head knowledge', in order for us to appropriate our identity in Christ.

### 2. It is good to obey earthly authorities.

In this time, emperors held the same status as gods and Christians were seen as rebels against authority because they preached that there was another King - Jesus - so it was pretty confusing. For Jesus to rightly refuse to pay taxes because He is the King of kings would have caused confusion in the minds of pagans, so He willingly submits to the authority of the land. As citizens of South Africa, we should follow Jesus' example by submitting to the governing authority in our land. Jesus did not need to pay taxes, but He did. Paying our taxes is honouring to God, in the same way as submitting to the governing

authority is. This is something that is taught throughout the New Testament:

- *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority.* 1 Peter 2:13
- *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God ...* Romans 13:1
- *Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.* Romans 13:5

When we submit to governing authorities, it should be in our actions, our words, our minds and our hearts. God can't raise up leaders in His Church to positions of authority unless we submit internally as well as externally.

### 3. Supernatural provision.

*... go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth, and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.'* Matthew 17:27.

Jesus provides the money for His and Peter's taxes in a coin from a fish's mouth! This is a great reminder to us of His supernatural provision. Sometimes provision comes in unusual ways, but like in this story, it still involves some work on our part. Peter had to go and catch the fish!

Finally, Jesus knew the future then, and He still knows the future today. He will ALWAYS know the future, so as children of the King, we should never need to live in fear!