

# **The Sanctity of Human Life**

## **A Better “Why”**

### **Matthew 22:15-22**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / February 20, 2022*

**Matthew 22:15-22** “Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Him in His words. <sup>16</sup> And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and You do not care about anyone’s opinion, for You are not swayed by appearances. <sup>17</sup> Tell us, then, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ <sup>18</sup> But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why put Me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> Show Me the coin for the tax.’ And they brought Him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ <sup>21</sup> They said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then He said to them, ‘Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ <sup>22</sup> When they heard it, they marveled. And they left Him and went away.”

Reader: This is the Word of The Lord.

Response: ***Thanks Be To God!***

#### **I. You need to remember that all people are created in the image and likeness of God!**

**Genesis 1:26-27** “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ <sup>27</sup> **So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**”

**Genesis 5:1** “This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, **He made him in the likeness of God.**”

**Genesis 6:1** “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, **for God made man in His own image.**”

**Colossians 3:10** “And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge **after the image of its Creator.**”

**James 3:9** “With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.”

A. Since all people are created in the image & likeness of God...

- a. **We reflect God’s intellect & freedom** when we reason and make choices (Joshua 24:15).
- b. **We reflect God’s holiness** because we were created in righteousness & innocence (Genesis 1:31).
- c. **We reflect God’s triune nature and love** by being created for community with God & others (Genesis 2:18; 3:8).

#### **II. Christians have a better “Why” when it comes to outreach than other well-intended people.**

*“Where there’s a ‘why,’ there’s a ‘will’ - and where there’s a ‘will,’ there’s a ‘way.’”*

**Matthew 22:19-21** “Show me the coin for the tax.’ And they brought Him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> And Jesus said to them, ‘Whose likeness and inscription is this?’ <sup>21</sup> They said, ‘Caesar’s.’ Then He said to them, ‘Therefore **render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.**”

Just as we are to “render” (pay back) to the government the taxes that are rightfully theirs, we make it our goal to “render” to the Lord what was rightfully His: people He created in His image and likeness, to worship Him as Lord.

- A. Jesus is our example of how to treat those in the midst of the most difficult earthly circumstances (Luke 8:40-56).
- B. Jesus is our example of how to draw near to those whom others wouldn’t even acknowledge (Mark 1:40-42).
- C. Jesus is our example of loving others regardless of their past. (John 4:1-26; 8:1-11).

### III. **Christians have a better “Way” than even the best we can vote for or hope for!**

**Hebrews 10:1** “For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.”

**Romans 8:3** “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh...”

**John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

#### **Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:**

1. Pastor Peter said, “Viewing the payment of taxes as obedience to Christ can bring an opportunity for worship where we never would’ve expected it.” Taxes and worship in the same sentence sounds like a bit of a stretch (lol). What do you think?
2. Is it difficult for you to view all people, even those furthest from Christ and His ways, as being made in God’s image? Why or why not?
3. Christians and non-Christians alike are engaged in pro-life efforts and reaching out to the vulnerable. Do you agree that Christians have a better “Why” than even the most well-intended unbelievers? Why or why not?
4. Pastor Peter referenced “supply and demand” when it came to the limitations of legislation and the hope that comes with Gospel-centered ministry. Try explaining that point in your own words.
5. The Bible always shows the law as unable to bring about true righteousness in our life & world. How is that similar to the limitations of even the best legal efforts in our day and age?

**A post-abortion Bible study for women will be starting soon.** If you have experienced *abortion in your past*, please consider joining this group to connect with other post-abortive women through God’s Word to find hope and healing together. For more information, please email Camille Cates at [camille.c@healinghearts.org](mailto:camille.c@healinghearts.org). **All contacts will be kept strictly confidential.**