

1. Vv.13- 17. Giving to God what is His.

In an alliance of convenience a group of Pharisees (opposed Roman rule) and Herodians (with Herod dependent upon Roman rule) tried to catch Jesus out with a question meant to stump him. The logical puzzle also had political implications because paying taxes to Caesar was required by the Roman conquerors. So, Jesus was meant to be caught in an inescapable dilemma; support the Roman conquerors and lose the people's support or face the wrath of the Romans if he rejected their taxation (as did the Zealots). The Roman coin signifies both the benefits of the Roman rule and the costs paid through their taxes. Producing the coin on request from Jesus shows their hypocrisy, they were using Roman coinage. Jesus affirms the 'debt' owed to Caesar (see also Rm. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The Pharisees and Herodians question show that they are primarily concerned with what is owed to Caesar. **Jesus shifts the focus by adding what is of first importance, what is owed to God.**

Reflection/Response. How do we live as active citizens while remaining loyal to God?

2. Vv. 18-27. The Realness of the Resurrection.

A group of Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, devised a logical puzzle to trap Jesus into the conclusion that the resurrection was nonsense. Jesus again rejects the presupposition behind their question. The realness of the new resurrected life is not dependent on it being the same as life in this era (see 1 Cor. 15:35-57). The dead will rise but their life will be different. God who gives life in this era will give **new life** in the age to come.

Reflection/Response. On what is our hope of the resurrection based? How do we show that the hope of the resurrection motivates our living?

3. Vv. 28-34. The Greatest Commandment(s).

A teacher of the law also came to test Jesus (Pharisee in Mt. 22). He was impressed with Jesus' response, but he also wanted to challenge Jesus. In response Jesus challenges the teacher of the law to acknowledge God's requirements: to love God with one's whole being and one's neighbour as oneself. The teacher of the law accurately recited God's requirements but fell short of committing himself to follow them. God's rule (kingdom) is evident when people know **and obey** God's commandments.

Reflection/Response. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is a joy and a privilege as well as a great responsibility. How do we show others we are disciples of Jesus Christ?