

## Romans 13 : 6-7 – Christianity & Politics 3 – 21 April 2013

Now, as you know in GLCC, we have been going on a little miniseries on Christianity and politics and today, is the 3rd and last installment of this series and I like to open this session, with a short little video clip that may be relevant to all of us today.

Video clip plays.

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Well, does that look familiar to you. I am told that in Singapore, 95% of us, have already found out income tax or our tax returns. I wonder if you are one of them. Now, can I ask you, how many of you were reminded to file your tax, last Sunday, how many of you were reminded? None? Oh, so all of you do that you are supposed to file by this week, is it? Wah, an amazing, I thought I was going to collect some reminder checks from those who have forgotten. Yes, if you have got your text by the 18th, you are safe. If not, forget the things that are past, look forward, alright, don't be distracted.

Today, we're looking at a very simple, but relevant subject on taxation. Now, all of you, who are young people, you say, I do not need to know about tax, but one day, you will have to file taxes, this message would come in useful to you when that time comes.

But, this is what Benjamin Franklin has to say about taxes. He says, in this world, nothing is certain, but death and taxes. This is what he says, there are 2 things, certain in life, and it is "Death and taxes."

And may I say, too many people, there is nothing more scary than death and taxes, but this is the reality of life, we all have to pay our taxes. Do you know what taxes you have to pay in Singapore? GST - goods and services tax. What else? Property tax, what else? Income tax, what else? Road tax, what else? Sorry? What tax? Monthly, road tax, yah, road tax. Conservancy is not quite a tax right, conservancy is about your MPSC or neighborhood. Any other taxes? No more tax, already, okay.

Well, this is your income tax, for those of you, who are earning, or not attending, or your earning, less than 20,000, you don't have to pay taxes in Singapore. Good news, alright. If you earned, up to \$30,000, you have to pay, \$200, a year, for your income tax. It is a very low rate, I am told, worldwide, this income tax bracket. \$40,000, you pay \$550. What is this, \$80,000, you pay, \$3350, so, this is where the big jump takes

place and so on and so forth. So, this is your income tax, what you are expected to pay.

This is your road tax and those who drive, you pay taxes on the roads. This is, GST (goods and services tax). It was, 5%, now it is 7%, but these all the taxes, that IRAS, gather and collects from Singaporeans, income tax, corporate tax, those of you, who owned companies, our employers, property tax, GST, trust, stamp duties, clubs, they collect taxes as well, private lotteries duties, you buy lotteries, they would charge you, sweepstakes duties, casino tax duties, I am so glad, none of you mentioned this. Shows that, your don't go, you are hiding it from us. But, these are all the taxes and when we talk about taxes and when you list them all out, , you sometimes, feel that the government is always out to squeeze money out of you.

Have you heard the story, of this little boy, he wanted \$100 to buy a toy and so, he prayed to God and after 2 weeks, there was no answer. No hundred dollars given to him. So, he decided to take things to the next level and he decided to write a prayer to God. So he says, dear Lord, I need \$100, would you be so kind as to answer my prayer, thank you. And he sent it addressed to God.

Now, the postal services, saw this letter and thought it was very interesting and decided to give it to the president. And so, when the president opened the letter, he looked at it, he smiled and he told his secretary, write a \$10 check for this boy. So, the boy, received these \$10 in his mail and he was delighted. And, he wrote back, dear Lord, thank you for giving me the money I ask for, but, somehow, you send it via Washington DC and those fellas just charge me, 90% tax.

This is the idea, we have of our government and our tax bodies, because they are always trying to squeeze money, out of all of us.

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I have a very simple plan today, I have a simple go today. My goal today, is for all of us at the end of the sermon, to do something, that maybe we have not done before, to feel, something we have never felt before. I know, this is sensitive, because it touches your pocket, your money, your wallet. But by the end of the sermon, I hope I accomplished, this goal, that you will say, I will pay my taxes and I will happily pay my taxes. Now, by the way, I'm not given tax relief for preaching this sermon. (Laughter in the congregation). The government, doesn't know. But, I hope that by the end of the service, you will be able to say "I will pay my taxes." Now, if you're here for the 1st time, you are not wrong, this is not a government speech, this is a Bible

teaching session, this is a preaching of God's Word. But God wants us to be able to say, "I will pay my taxes."

I read about this pastor, his name is Ray Stedman; he's gone on to be with the Lord, not very long ago, he was on the face of this earth, ministering in the United States and he said, when he was younger, he didn't have to pay taxes, because he never earned enough. But when he came to a point of time, when he earned enough to qualify for paying taxes, he was rather upset that he has to pay. And so, he was cheeky and he wrote this, he wrote to IRAS, and he wrote this, he wrote to IRAS, IRS, Internal Revenue Services, he wrote to them the tax return and he addressed them as this "Infernal Revenue Services". It's supposed to be internal, but, he was so upset with them that, they're taking money from him, he tried to be sarcastic and says infernal, like fiery, revenue services.

The next year, he pay taxes and he repented a bit, and so, he says the "Eternal Revenue Services". And the year after, this is what he wrote, I have repented from all those sins and I now hope to pay my taxes, cheerfully. There was something that clicked in Ray Stedman's mind and life.

Maybe, today you are like this. Wah, that government always like this, always squeezing money out of me. I really hate being taxes. I really don't see the point. I hope you will move in your hearts, your spirit, and your attitude to be like that of Ray Stedman, that we would be able to say today, "I will pay my taxes."

Some of you today are still wondering, did I really pay all my taxes, did I just hide some details, did I just do tax evasion. Well, I hope at the end of the service, you will be able to say this and maybe, I think, you still can change your tax returns, if I'm not wrong, you can just email them, am I right? Lawyers? Can I? still can? Ah, after today, you still can't make right what is wrong if it's not already done so.

But let me share with you about taxation. Now, taxation is not a modern thing. It's not a new thing, is not like in the 20th century or so. He began, many thousands of years ago, the 1st Bible mention of taxation was in the times of Joseph, in Genesis. In Genesis 41, we see here, "Pharaoh, proceeded to appoint overseers over the land and to take, 20% tax of all their produce. It's the 1st biblical mention of taxation. So, I am saying, this is not a new thing, it's been there for thousands of years. And let me say to you, another thing, biblical times, we see taxation instituted in the nation of Israel. God instituted taxation for the Jews, for the people of Israel and we call it the mosaic taxation, or the mosaic taxes. This is what is given .

For many of us, when we think about the giving during the times of Israel, with think about what, this word, with think about the word, when we think about giving, in the Old Testament, you think about tithing, alright. Actually, tithing, I want you to know first of all, it's not a voluntary contribution. It is a compulsory contribution. It is actually more like taxes than love offering. You see, all of us, you think about tithing, oh, the Jews, they willingly, or voluntarily give to 10%. Actually no, it is compulsory, it is like a tax.

So, I'm not going to use the word tithing because it is really not. It is a taxation. And, during the times of Moses the taxation, is not just one simple giving, it is rather complicated, in a sense. Let me share with you.

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1st of all, every single Jew, under the rule of God via Moses, they are to give a Levite tax, okay, a Levite tax. This is what most of us would identify with the 10% giving. It is found in the Scriptures, I put the verses up for those were copying notes and so on, you might want to know the reference, otherwise it is really fine, just go through with me.

In Leviticus 27, they are supposed to take 10% of their harvests and to give it to the Levites. The Levites were those responsible for religious worship in those days. The Levites were also like the government, the civil authorities in those days. During the time to Moses, there is no president, no Prime Minister, no defense minister, they were ruled by God via the Levites. So, they were to give 10% of their produce, but that's not all.

Secondly, every Jew, has to give the festival tax. This is told to us, in Deuteronomy and it is a very interesting tax, very generous tax. 10% of your income, your earnings, would be given to this fund, to do what? To set up festivals. So, the whole nation has a big buffet lunch or buffet dinner and they celebrate it, because God wants them to have this national identity, this celebration together, we are the people of God, this is the festival tax. A lot of money, 10%, just to eat. Shik, but it is compulsory, so not so shik unless you don't mind giving it but the children can enjoy, the whole nation celebrate, this is the taxation plan.

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Besides this, they have called the welfare tax. The welfare tax, is get that one in 3 years and the welfare tax is money gathered so that this could supply the needs of

those who are down and out, the orphans, the widows, the foreigners in the land. So, the people of Israel were not really xenophobic, they had this fund set up to take care of strangers and foreigners. They gather this, once in 3 years.

Now, besides these 3 major taxes, they are 3 other small taxes, what are they?

1st of all, it's a profit sharing tax, this one nothing to do with stocks, this is all about crops and you will be familiar, maybe it is study the book of Ruth. When Ruth was hungry, when Naomi was hungry, what did they have to do, do you remember, they went to the fields and gathered crops that were, from the corners of the harvests and what that has dropped on to the ground. You see, God has commanded that for those who are reaping the harvest, you don't reap everything. You leave some behind; for what? So that the poor may have access to food. That's the way, God has built it into society, so that welfare is taken care off, it's a profit sharing tax, you can see that in Ruth, but the 1st given to us is Leviticus 19:10 you shall not stripped your vineyards bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyards, leave them for the poor and for the sojourners, I am the Lord your God.

Wonderful economy in Israel, great benefits, great welfare care, God sets it in place. In the 4th tax, a profit sharing tax.

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The 5th tax, is a temple tax. Every Jewish male above 20 years old, not national service, but to give a tax now, a half shekel, to be given to the temple for the ministry in the temple. All right, what ever you need to do in the temple, you need money and is provided for by the half shekel temple tax and again, this is given in Exodus 30:13,

Each one who is numbered in the census (Added by Pastor: these are males, 20 and above) shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (Added by Pastor: the temple tax)

Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary .....(Exodus 30:13 ESV)

The last tax, is the land Sabbath tax.

Every piece of land, that you use for agriculture, at the 7th year, you cannot use it anymore. Leave it, and what ever grows from there, other people can come and enjoy the fruits. So, the farmer is to leave it behind, let it grow and other people can have access to the land and you have to do it once in 7 years. By the way, do you know

why, God sent the nation of Israel away to Babylon? Because, they neglected to pay the taxes; they did not want to obey God law.

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So, these are the 6 taxes. How much, is it altogether? Now, when we learned about tithing, how much do you have to pay or give to the church? In today's Christianity, people who preach about tithing, how much do you have to give? 10%, do you know how much they have to give in their tithes and their taxes, anybody knows? Let me tell you exactly how they have to give. Okay, this is the verse, Exodus 23:11 for land Sabbath tax. But the Levites tax is 10%; that's the meaning of the word tithe. Tithe is actually 10th, that's all. The word tithe, simply, literally means 10th. So they are to give 10% already to the Levites; you still have 5 other taxes.

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The 2nd tax, the temple tax is also 10%. Oh, you are scared already ah. Wah, God I am so thankful I'm not living in Israel then. The 3rd tax, is also 10% in 3 years, so, it works out to be 3.33% every year. Besides that, the profit sharing, temple tax, land Sabbath tax is a bit hard to measure. Generally, people are estimated to be 1 to 2%. So, in total, how much tax does an Israelite have to pay? 23 to 25%. This is their tax structure. Anyone can tell me what's the general average taxation Singaporeans have to pay, anybody? 15%, was the average? Or the median, anybody knows, bankers, financial people, uncle Joe, you know or not? Don't know, I don't know how much it is, but, 23 to 25% sounds quite a bit. In the States, what is the average? Do you all know? Okay, nobody knows, how much taxes you all have to pay. But this is the Israelites tax and in the book of Malachi, you read this

Will man rob God? They have gone to such a state, so bad, that the Israelites, did not even pay their taxes and therefore God says in Malachi, you are robbing me. But you say "How have we robbed you?, In your tithe and your contributions. You are cursed with a curse, you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Now, bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be put in my house. And thereby, put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I were not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. So, we see here, the taxation system, is a serious one that God desires.

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be

food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.

(Malachi 3:8-10 ESV)

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By the way, this is not all that the Jews have to give, this is compulsory. But on top of this, God calls for what? Free will offerings, right? So, you have to 5 major offerings in the book, I know, I chining ?? you all up, but bear with me, these are the compulsory ones and then they are also the voluntary ones. The voluntary ones are the sin offerings, burnt offerings, trespass offerings, peace offerings, meal offerings. Voluntary, you are not coerced, you're not forced to do it, but if you want to do it, it is acceptable to God's sight.

So, if you look at this, really, this is the tax structure for Israel. They do not have prime ministers, you see, but for the nation to run well, these are necessary taxation. Now, I want to sidetrack a little. People often ask: Pastor, how come GLCC doesn't preach nor practice tithing. How come we never monitor people's income and say you must give 10%. I am going to be bold, today and put up a statement and some of you who come from different church backgrounds, you may want to kill me, but kill me after I've finished the sermon alright. I believe this alright, I believe teachings, that the church must tithe is un-biblical okay. (Laughter in the congregation) like I said, after the service alright. I believe, teaching that the church must tithe is un-biblical, Wah, this is like suicide, not only will you kill me maybe but the church me just run out of money because a lot of people today gave, because they believe I must tithe. So, this is the way the church finances are sustained.

But I'm not here about the church finances, I hear to teach God's Word and from what I can study in Scriptures, teaching that the church must tithe is un-biblical. 1st of all, let me define what is tithe. Again, the word tithe just means 10%. To teach that the church must give 10% is un-biblical. Another keyword you must look at is the key word "Must". Is it wrong to give 10% ? No, it's not wrong lah. But to say that you must, I think that's where you'll become un-biblical, it's not in the Scriptures.

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Number 3, practicing it is not the wrong thing, but teaching it as if God says and commands it, is the wrong thing. Okay, so let me, I hope I have clarified that. 10% must, teaching versus practicing it.

Why do I say, this is un-biblical.

1. It's never commanded in the New Testament, never. You can read your Bible, and if you can find me a verse I surrender, alright. But it is never commanded in the New Testament that Christians today, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, must give 10%. Not found.

2. If you want to practice tithing, then please just give more than 10%. I am serious, because, that's how the Jews gave. Somehow, we think it's only the 10%, when the Jews gave 23-25%. Right? I mean, you have got to be constant, if you say, Old Testament do this, New Testament also must do, then do what Old Testament does. Don't pick and choose, the 1st tax, Levite tax. There are other givings involved.

3. New Testament giving, it's out of gratitude and not out of guilt. I really don't think it is helpful for a church to believe, I must give 10%, otherwise I am guilty in God's sight, no. The New Testament teachings is we give as cheerful givers. It's not motivated because you have to but you gave because you want to. And to teach the church, you have to give, you have to give, you have to give you rob God's people of the joy and privilege of giving. I think, it's un-biblical and our whole church is moving along out of guilt and not because they are Gospel transformed, not because they have experienced and are living out the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. New Testament given is total, not partial. So, if I teach that you have to give 10%, your mindset, our mindset is, aw, that's easy, 10% of my money is God's, 90% is mine. Wah, shiok ah. God, don't disturb me, I have given you 10%. You know what it feels like, it's like this, how come the waitress gets 15% and God only gets 10%. I think, this is a very good slide, you know, it's a very good question. Where in the world, does it enter into a Christian's mind, that 10% is God's and the rest is mine? Rubbish!, I say. I believe, New Testament teaching is all is God's. All that I have, and all that I am is God because Jesus came to die for me and if I really understand that then actually all that I have, my ordinary account, special account, privilege banking account, my Mercedes-Benz, my condo, my car, my apartment, my foreign investments overseas. You know what? you don't give 10% to God, it's all's God's.

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New Testament giving, brings it to a different level folks. Therefore, if we say that the church must tithe, I don't see it in the Bible, it actually robs you. Now, I know, from tomorrow or next week onwards, our offerings, may drop, but that's fine, I think God takes care of it. What I am most concerned about, is the way you give, the reason you



give, the motivation you gave and I want you to be excited about the Gospel, Jesus Christ and not just because someone here is forcing you to give.

You see, the Old Testament is clear. If you really want to tithe, like a Jew, please, 23-25%. But, this is the way, the Old Testament people are being taxed, alright. Now, this is somewhat kind of a history of taxation in the Bible, there are others, I don't think you will be necessary for me to share. But, I want to answer this question, right? I start out by saying, at the end of the sermon, I wish you would say, "I will pay my taxes". Now, the question is why should I pay my taxes? Let me just give you 3 very simple reasons.

1. Because of condemnation.

What you mean by condemnation. The Bible says in Romans 13:2, that if you do not do what is necessary, then, the government, if you resist them, you will incur judgment.

The word judgment, is the word *kríma*, in the Greek, which means, judgment, punishment, condemnation. Let me tell you why most of you filed your taxes. You know why you filed your taxes because if you don't file, you kenna fined and not only, you kenna fined, maybe you kenna jailed, am I right? So, most of us today are motivated to file taxes, before 18 April because I am scared, I scared I will be caught and it is a serious thing, I checked up the website, I RAS, website, official ones. Tax evasion is someone who has deliberately provided us with inaccurate or incomplete information about their activities, to reduce their tax liabilities or obtain undue tax credits and refunds. And, so, these are some of the examples.

I tried to search the website for the punishment, they never say. What's the punishment for tax evasion? They can ask you, to pay 3 times of what you evade right or even get you to jail, if I am not wrong, at least that's for GST, I know. But, it is so serious that they also have this reward, reward for whistleblowers. So, if your boss, skips or evade taxes, you can report and you can get money. So, I teach you, and you can get money tomorrow if you try. It says here, if you wish to be rewarded, Wah, of course, why not, if you wish to be rewarded for the information or for the documents you provide, such information or documents, must be provided personally. You bring it there, at the above address. A reward on 15% of the tax recovered and capped at a \$100,000 will be given, only if the information and the documents you provided have led to the recovery of tax that would have otherwise have been lost. So, the government is serious. And so, let me tell you flat out, one reason why you should

give your tax today, is otherwise, you will be caught. God has set in place a government to close this loop, you see.

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But, a 2nd higher-level motivation, this one, a bit more noble and better, I think, is conscience.

The Scripture says: therefore, one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience. Now, that is very interesting, conscience means, even if nobody catches you, you feel bad because you know it is wrong. I was very, very excited or interested when I read about the United States and how the US has a department of the treasury set up in 1789 and is said that in 1811, after maybe like 20 over years, in 1811, someone wrote a bill, or send some cash back to the treasury that said, I cheated the government of \$5, he is the \$5 I want to return to you. Now, that began what they called the US Conscience Fund. Any American, who has cheated the government, defrauded the government, feels really bad about it, you can return this money anonymously back to the government. Why, because your conscience is stricken. So, this is what he called the Conscience Fund and these are what people have written.

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"Please accept this money for two postal stamps I re-used," so, they cheat, they take the same stamp and they rubbed away the ink and they paste back again, I am so sorry, the US government, my conscience really, I can't have peace and therefore I want to pay you back the money, years later.

Someone else said:

"About eight years ago I took from a railroad station an item worth about \$25 and this has been on my conscience since, so I'm enclosing \$50 to clear my conscience."

Hey, they are people with good consciences, very sensitive, alright, they pay back, \$50, 8 years later.

"When I was a boy, I put a few pennies on the railroad track and the train flattened them.

I understand there is a law against defacing our money.

I have not seen this law, but I desire to be a law-abiding citizen."

So, he returns the money.

Another one.

“I am sending ten dollars for blankets I stole while in World War II.  
My mind could not rest. Sorry I’m late.

An ex-GI

PS: I want to be ready to meet God”.

Conscience, you see, it's not right.

Sometimes, they are not really sincere, like this one.

“Dear Internal Revenue Service, I have not been able to sleep at night because I cheated on last year’s income tax. Enclosed find a cashier’s check for \$1,000. If I still can’t sleep, I’ll send you the balance.” (Laughter in the congregation) this guy is funny, that's why, it's got to be anonymous all right, it's got to be anonymous. Hey, but people today are stricken by conscience and I’m told, they are millions of dollars now in the US Conscience Fund. Ah, they use it back into the general purposes of the country, they collect the money happily, anonymously because people are stricken in their conscience.

So Why should I pay my taxes?

1. Condemnation, Otherwise the government would catch me.
2. Conscience, my conscience, will not let me go.

Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

(Romans 13:5 ESV)

These 2 reasons, anybody can follow, even if you are not the question, right? If you are not a question, I can understand this too. The 3rd reason is where it is applicable to believers of the Lord, why? Because, it is commanded.

3. Commanded

Why should I pay my taxes? Not only because my government tells me so, not only because my conscience tells me so, but because, my God tells me so in the Bible. He says, for because of this, you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. To what very thing, restraining evil, maintaining peace.

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That is a very simple principle in the Bible that says, a work man is worthy of his labor. Right, if you work, he eats, you pay him, you do not muzzle the mouth of an ox. The government works, it works for something. The government works to preserve the peace and restrain evil and for this reason, God says you pay them. In fact, the word ministers, as I have shared with you is the word used to refer to liturgical worship, meaning, spiritual worship. God sees them as His personal servants, serving you, to preserve law, order, peace and restraining evil, for this reason, you pay them. God says, you pay them.

For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

(Romans 13:6 ESV)

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This week, all of us, the whole world, must have heard of the Boston bomb blasts in Massachusetts. All of us would have probably heard about this. I mean, this is a scary thing and I'm told, they are marathons going to be held in Singapore and people are talking, what if this repeats itself and so on and so forth. The whole nation, the whole state is in a sense of unease because they do not know who has done it, at least in the beginning. So, there is tragedy, life lost, injuries, property loss, it's a horrific act by people who have gone out of their minds. But in this picture, it was interesting, why do I show this picture? Because, in this picture, it is given by the authorities to say, you could actually see one of the suspects here. Amazing, the police, the government in the United States is so good that after they look at all the surveillance cameras and so on, they could spot the man. You know where he is? Oh, you are all also, wow, you all are FBI training or what, like that you also can tell he is there. You guys are absolutely well read, yup, it is this guy, the guy with the white cap. How do you all know? Newspapers!.

Now, let me ask you, let me ask you. If not for the police, if not for the FBI, would anyone be able to catch this guy? Very hard, right? You try, you try, you try, I don't think anyone would be able to and he managed to catch the suspects in one or 2 days, it's amazing. And they managed to identify the 2 suspects, one of them of course has died, the other one is now seriously injured, in the hospital. But, it required a lockdown, 900,000 citizens, locked down, stay at home and the police force, came out, full force, to look for these two guys. Let me ask you, who pays for them. I do not

have the statistics of how many people were mobilized, how much money was spent; someone's got to pay right? If you were someone living in Boston, which you pay that? I think you will, because, you may be the next guy who dies and when they caught them, they were absolutely delighted. Captured, the hunt is over, the search is done, the terror is over and justice has won, suspect in custody. This is the tweet given out by the Boston Police Department and people cheered, people celebrated and people said "Thank you, police!". When I read this, I say, then, pay your taxes. (Laughter in the congregation).

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Seriously, if you really want to thank the police, if you are thankful for the security, the peace in this nation, then I say to you, pay your taxes. Why? Because, God says, they are the reason why they are put in place. That's why, you can sleep at night. That's why, you can be confident walking out in the streets. That's why, today we have freedom to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because, God has set in place, liturgical servants, for this purpose. Therefore pay and it says: Pay to all what is owed to them; we owe them ah, it's not a gift, we owe it. Taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue, this is referring to tolls and customs, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom, honor is owed. So, this is the biblical teaching in God's Word. We have to pay, we have to respect, we are to honor.

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Question? Pastor, when I give money to the government, taxes. They use that money for a lot of reasons, some of the reasons, I cannot agree, how, do I still give taxes. I mean, don't you have that questions, you look at the budget, every year, people listen to the Tharman Shanmugaratnam, give the budget, no, good, good, wah, bad, bad, bad, this one, lousy. And, we have all these kind of ideas, it's a lousy way to spend money, I don't agree, therefore I give my taxes, can or not? Does this argument, logic hold. In fact, let me stretch it even further, this week, I read about Dubai, you know, Dubai? Dubai recently purchased a Lamborghini, as a police patrol car, and the top of the line, you know. Lamborghini Aventador, the top one, wow, really slick, police man, sitting inside, patrolling the streets. I say, Wah, if you are a citizen of Dubai, you say, is this overbought or what? And then, you may say, I refuse to pay for a Lamborghini, I don't even have a bicycle, you gave a Lamborghini.

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So, how, if you don't agree with the way they use the taxes. How about, if you were living in the days of Jesus Christ and Paul. Caesar, uses the money, to lay out lavish parties for his own purposes. I mean he eats and drinks and spends all that money, on himself, lavish lifestyle and the people, the poor people have to give taxes for that. Do we then say to the poor questions, poor people, don't give, because he's wasting it all away. Don't you have that question? Let me settle the question for you. In the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the end of the day, the sermon is not about moral, is not about taxes, it's all about Jesus and so, today, let's look at Jesus. How did He do it? The Bible tells us, when they came to Capernaum, the tax collectors of the two drachma tax, now, this is a shekel tax, this is the temple tax, alright, the text that is given to the ministry of the temple. The collectors of the two drachma tax, went up to Peter and said "Does your teacher not pay tax?". Wow, great question? Does Jesus pay tax? If He doesn't pay tax, the Roman authorities would be called in. If He pay taxes, then is He subjecting Himself to the Roman rule. Wow, that's a great question, but anyway, Peter says yes, He does pay tax. And when He came to the house, Jesus spoke to him, for saying, hey, Simon, you just now answered for me, let me ask you, what do you think Simon, you, so clever, you give the answer, let me ask you, from home do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or others ? Peter scratched his head and said err.. I think, the kings, collect taxes from citizens, from the subjects, from others. Then, Jesus said to him "Then, the sons are free right, the Princess, don't have to pay taxes to the kings, right, the child, doesn't have to pay tax to his father, right, then, are the sons free?" What Jesus is saying is this, actually, I don't have to pay tax, why do I have to pay the temple tax, when I am God's Son. You get the logic? I don't have to pay tax because I am God's Son. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea, cast the hook and take the 1st fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel, take that and give it to them for Me and for yourself. Jesus say, pay the tax. I will submit Myself to all authorities. I don't have to, I am of and of the kingdom but I will pay.

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What is even more remarkable is behind the scenes, if you understand this, Judas, when he betrayed Jesus was paid 30 silver coins. The 30 silver coins, was taken from this tax collection, the shekel, the 2 drachma tax. If you really think about it, what Jesus did and I'm sure He is aware of it is that He paid and contributed to that fund, to that money that would ultimately result in Him being crucified on the cross. The religious leaders are going to use the money for a very wicked purpose, but that did not stop Jesus from paying the taxes. I want to say to you, we have no excuse not to

pay taxes. Even if the Singapore government wants to buy a helicopter to ferry the Prime Minister around, we will still pay our taxes. If Jesus could do it, so shall we.

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But, let me close with this final illustration, in the Bible, where we are familiar with this phrase, "Render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's." We quote this so often but there are some subtleties, that I just want to share, and we will close. The story, is very simple. It was Wednesday, this is the last week of Jesus life on earth, Wednesday. Friday, He will be crucified, alright. Before Wednesday, he had gone around, teaching and exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees were furious, they want to catch Him, they want to send him to the cross, they want to send Him to be judged and so one of the things they devised, is to trap Him, trap Him with what, trap Him with this issue of taxation. So, the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Him in His words. So, it is a devious scheme, they are laying a trap. Like a hunter would play a trap for a prey. So, they sent their disciples in, they didn't go themselves, very clever, because if they go themselves, Jesus would know already, but they sent their ka kias (colloquial for henchmen) the subordinates. Jesus can't identify them, doesn't matter, as long as you, elicit this confession from Him, that He will not pay taxes to Romans, we have caught Him. So, they sent their disciples, along with the Herodians, the background is that the Herodians are pro-Roman government and they needed them as witnesses to say, "Jesus say, don't want to pay tax." Send Him to be crucified, He doesn't obey Caesar.

So, this was the scheme, so they sent, and the disciples then said, "Teacher, we know that You are true and teach the way of God truthfully and you do not care about anyone's opinions for you are not shaped by appearances." You know, before you want to kill someone, you fattened the cow, you but to him up and then you....sst, you kill him, and that's what they did, it's all flattery, it's all flattery. But behind that flattery is the knife. Tell us then, what you think, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Whoa, is the devil and the deep blue sea kind of situation. If Jesus is no, I am God's child, I am God's son, I am under no authority, you know what, that's it, game over, the Romans will come for Him. But if Jesus say, yes, I will give to Caesar, then, the Jews would say, how then can you say you are King and aren't you going against God's Word that says that there is no king, there is no ruler but God? So, how would Jesus get out from this conundrum. Jesus, aware of their malice said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites, show me the coin for the tax." Now, this is where the genius comes in and I think there is a little subtlety that I never realized until now, show me the coin, there is a little denarius, you call it, is called denarius and he

brought Him a denarius and Jesus said to him, "Who's likeness and inscription is this?" 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."

Now, let me show you the denarius, it looks like this, I think. These photos, of course I never go back and it out the coin, but, historical, museums this place, I like this. So, you have Caesar's inscription on one side and then, the priest inscription, who is Caesar by the way on the other side and if you look at the words here, I study a bit of, no lah, laughter, it is Tiberius Caesar's, son of Augustus, I memorize it okay. Tiberius Caesar, son of Augustus this is Caesar. On the other side, it is Pontius Maxim. What is Pontius, head of church, priest. Maxim is highest. Caesar, in this coin is saying, I am Caesar the emperor and I and the great high priest. In fact, if you study the Roman history, you will realize, Caesar calls himself, God. And the Romans are supposed to worship Caesar as god. Wow, so Jesus, brings out this coin, now, this coin a denarius, is an insult to the Jews. Why? 1. They believe, they are not to have any images inscribed. That already, is upsetting to a Jew, wow, inscribed a man's face. 2. You are saying, this little idolatry gadget, is to be presented to a false god, do you know how upsetting this is for a Jew to give taxes. Not only do you have to give to a foreign king who subjugates me but you have to give an offering of an idol to a false god. This is absolutely difficult for a Jew. But Jesus say, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, give back, pay back, it belongs to him. The harder part is this, what you mean by, to God the things that are God's. He says, give what is social, economic to Caesar, but what belongs to God, let me ask you, what belongs to God? And this little coin, one side belongs to Caesar, the other side belongs to what, what belongs to God? Caesar shouldn't have it, only God should have it and it is (Laughter in the congregation) maybe I am not very clear, social, economic stuff, give to Caesar, the spiritual worship, render to God. In that one statement, in that one demonstration, I think, the people around Him, got it.

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Pay my taxes but my worship is due to my God. It is God's will for us to pay taxes. It is God's will in Jesus' days to pay taxes. Let me close with this, be subject again, I have referred to this many times, but let's be reminded: Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it is to the emperor, crazy king called Nero as supreme, or as governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God that by doing good you should put to silence, the ignorance of foolish people, fear God, honor the emperor.



1Pet 2:13-17

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution,[b] whether it be to the emperor[c] as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants[d] of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

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This is our last sermon in our series on Christianity and politics, I doubt very much, I will come back to the subject in the short-term, but let's remember this as a principle for our lives. Being a Christian, is not just about having salvation in heaven and going out to preach the Gospel. Being a Christian is most of all, following Jesus, reflecting the beauty of Jesus in us and that means, every aspect of our lives, is not something we can throw away, it's what we have to diligently, conscientiously apply ourselves to. And in this case, submission to government, submission to authority, is the will of God for all of us and I pray that in GLCC, we will have the best citizens in the Republic of Singapore because we are Gospel transformed, because we want to follow the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ and as we do so and especially, when times becomes hard, especially when the government becomes really unreasonable, it may be, there may be, this is where the Gospel light shines forth. Something in us, makes us different from the world that is around us.

Let's bow for a word of prayer. Being a Christian, is not just about believing in Christ for my eternal security and preaching the Gospel. It is inclusive of those two very important things, but what is lacking often times in between is the life of Christ in us that pervades every corner, every arena of our walk, in our lives, here on this earth. It is the will of God that we would submit ourselves to every human institution that we may put to silence, ignorant men that they may see that God is real, Jesus is real. In those 33 years, that our Savior walked on this earth, He was a model of the life of God. Never was He abusive or non-submissive to the government and even in the aspect, Scripture highlights it for us today.

My friends, today, your act of paying taxes, can be an act of worship. You do it not just because the law will, the long arm of the law will reach out to you, not only because your conscience speaks out to you, but because you want to do this as an act of worship, you do it because of Jesus Christ. I began the sermon, and saying death

and taxes are 2 things that are certain in life and death and taxes, are 2 things that people are scared of a life, but do you realize, in Jesus Christ, there is no more fear of death. In Jesus Christ, there is no more fear of taxes. He will provide, He will enable and today, we can live in confidence the Gospel life, the Gospel light can shine out of us if you're rooted and grounded in Him. I pray for all of us today, that even a simple subject on Christianity and politics would began to be applied to other areas of our lives, maybe be all like Jesus.

Maybe today you are here for the first time, let me tell you something, Jesus died and there is no more fear of death, because Jesus rose again, He tells us, they who believe in Jesus shall have life because I am the resurrection and the life. Do you come today, as a sinner, knowing that you have sinned against God, knowing that you cannot face God on the day of your death. It can all be removed, the fears and the guilt, that condemnation can all be removed because Jesus died on the cross for your sins and if you repent and believe in Jesus, you will be saved, you will have life. What a joy it is, for us to preach Jesus today. Is not about taxes, it's about Jesus.

Father, thank You, that we can trust You to work in our hearts, mold and shape our minds, to have the mind of Christ and may our lives be characterized by the beauty of Jesus. So I want to commit Your church to You, bless each one of us, that we may live out that Christian life, more and more, that You will be glorified in Your church, we thank You, we pray all this now in Jesus name, amen.