

Lutheran Confessions

Augsburg Confession, XXVIII.

The Power of Bishops, 8-18

8] This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to their calling either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, as eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. 9] These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, **Rom. 1, 16:** *The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.*

10] **Therefore, since the power of the Church grants eternal things, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government; no more than the art of singing interferes with civil government. 11] For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.**

12] Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission to teach the Gospel and 13] to administer the Sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the Commonwealth. 14] As Christ says, **John 18, 36:** *My kingdom is not of this world;* 15] also **Luke 12, 14:** *Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?* 16] Paul also says, **Phil. 3, 20:** *Our citizenship is in heaven;* 17] **2 Cor. 10, 4:** *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the casting down of imaginations.*

18] After this manner our teachers discriminate between the duties of both these powers, and command **that both be honored and acknowledged as gifts and blessings of God.**

(Bente, F., *Concordia Triglotta*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

Put it into Practice

These questions have been put together to help you as you extend and apply tonight's Scripture to your life.

Prayer

Absolve, we implore You, O Lord, Your people from their offenses, that from the bonds of our sins which by reason of our frailty we have brought upon us we may be delivered by Your bountiful goodness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN** (*Collect for Trinity 23*)

Word of God: St. Matthew 22:15-22 (on back)

Questions to Ponder in Prayer

Note: The Herodians were not a religious group, but a minor political one that supported the arranged rule of the Herodian dynasty in Jewish lands. Practically speaking, the Jews were given more freedom than if ruled by Caesar directly. The yearly poll tax was assessed on each person to support the Herodian governance.

- For what reason did the Pharisees send their disciples? (v. 15)
- According to the Pharisees, any rule by the heathen over God's people was to be opposed. Why did the Pharisees arrange for their opponents to go along?
- Note the flattery in verse 16. How are they setting him up? How do these disciples want Jesus to view them and their question?
- What do they expect him to say? If he doesn't respond that way, how will the common people view him?
- Does Teacher Jesus truly respond exactly as their false flattery suggested?
 - Jesus' question reveals that he knows their motive. What is the motive of the Pharisee's disciples? Does Jesus speak the truth about their motive?
 - Are they asking in order to learn from this Teacher?
 - Is Jesus swayed by their appearance? What does Jesus call them?
- A hypocrite is someone who says one thing, but does another. If the Pharisees were so opposed to the Roman government, then why do they use Roman coins?
- By producing the coin(which all them carried) and declaring it to belong to Caesar, what had they admitted? That is why in v.21 Jesus says, "Therefore..."
- "Is it lawful?" If you live in someone's land and enjoy the benefits of their rule, you are obligated to them what? (Romans 13:1-7) To refuse would be what?
- Jesus changes the "or" of verse 17's "Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" to the "and" of verse 21. How is that significant? What is the connection between obeying Caesar and obeying God?
- Whose image/likeness do we have? (Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:10, 1 Cor 15:49)
- And to whom do we belong? (Titus 3:5-7) What "signs" of the kingdom do we use?
- By their marveling they showed that they understood. Why did they go away?
- How do the church and the civil government relate? See Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-2

6:30 PM "Learn by Heart"

Through simple repetition those present will inwardly digest...

Hymn "**For Help, O Whither Shall I Flee?**" ASBH #61

Lord's Prayer, 2nd Petition and Meaning
1 Corinthians 4:3-4

7:00 PM "Catechesis"

+ Opening Verses

"O Lord, open my lips..." p.224

+ Ascription of Praise

"Praise to you, O Christ. Alleluia." p.225

Reading

St. Matthew 22:15-22 (back)

Hymn

"**For Help, O Whither Shall I Flee?**"
(Augustana Service #61)

Catechesis on...

St. Matthew 22:15-22 (back)
Liturgy
Catechism

+ The Suffrages insert

from ASBH Prayer Office Supplement

Kyrie

Lord's Prayer

Versicles

Psalm 130 or Psalm 51

Versicles

Collects

Collect for Peace

Benedicamus

Benediction

R. AMEN

Catechesis on St. Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. ¹⁶And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. ¹⁷Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”

¹⁸But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show Me the tax money.”

So they brought Him a denarius.

²⁰And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?”

²¹They said to Him, “Caesar’s.”

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ²²When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. (NKJV)

The Civil Government

⁶ Julian the Apostate, Celsus, and many others opposed the Christians on the grounds that their Gospel would destroy the commonwealth by its prohibition of legal redress and by other teachings that were not suited to civil relationships. These questions were very disturbing to Origen, Nazianzus, and others, though they are very easy to answer if we keep certain things in mind. **The Gospel does not legislate for the civil estate but is the forgiveness of sins and the beginning of eternal life in the hearts of believers. It not only approves governments but subjects us to them,** just as we are necessarily subjected to the laws of the seasons and to the change of winter and summer as ordinances of

God. ⁷ The Gospel forbids private revenge, and Christ stresses this so often lest the apostles think that they should usurp the government from those who hold it, as in the Jewish dream of the messianic kingdom; instead, he would have them know their duty to teach that the spiritual kingdom does not change the civil government. Thus private revenge is forbidden not as an evangelical counsel but as a command (Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:19). Public redress through a judge is not forbidden but expressly commanded, and it is a work of God according to Paul (Rom. 13:1ff.). Now the various kinds of public redress are court decisions, punishments, wars, military service. ⁸ How poor the judgment of many writers in these matters has been is evident from their erroneous view that the Gospel is something external, a new and monastic form of government. Thus they failed to see that the Gospel brings eternal righteousness to hearts, while it approves the civil government (Apology, XVI, 6-8)

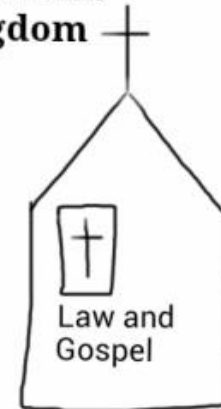
External Mask

“Therefore, we constantly teach that the sacraments and all the external things ordained and instituted by God should be regarded not according to the gross, external mask (as we see the shell of a nut) but as that in which God’s Word is enclosed. ²⁰ In the same way we speak about the parental estate and civil authority. If we regard these persons with reference to their noses, eyes, skin and hair, flesh and bones, they look no different from Turks and heathen. Someone might come and say, “Why should I think more of this person than of others?” But because the commandment is added, “You shall honor father and mother,” I see another man, adorned and clothed with the majesty and glory of God. The commandment, I say, is the golden chain about his neck, yes, the crown on his head, which shows me how and why I should honor this particular flesh and blood (LC IV, 19-20).

CATECHESIS ON ST. MATTHEW 22:15-22



Right Hand
Kingdom



Church

Left Hand
Kingdom



Civil Government

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