

4JULY10 Text: Luke 20:25 ***“[Jesus] said to them, ‘Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’”*** Gal. 6:10, 18 ***“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith...The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.”***

I remember when I was first learning how to drive a manual transmission car. The car happened to be my parents’ powder blue 1964 Mustang that was about 7 years old by the time I got around to learning how to drive a stick shift. My Mom had tried unsuccessfully on a couple of different occasions to teach me in my aunt and uncle’s large farmyard/driveway. I just could not get the hang of releasing the clutch and depressing the gas pedal. I could not understand what I was supposed to be doing and Mom was having a hard time explaining it to me as we jerked along and stalled repeatedly. Next time we went out to the farm to practice, Dad took me. I did my usual jerk and stall routine until Dad described what I should be feeling as I let the clutch out and then simultaneously depress the gas pedal. The key word was *simultaneously*. As I was letting out the clutch and would feel it start to grab, I was to then depress the accelerator. I don’t know if it was Dad’s explanation or exactly what it was, but suddenly the light went on in my brain and I finally understood that **my two feet must be working together**. Each had its own function to perform: my left foot working the clutch; my right foot working the accelerator and brake. My left foot was to steer clear of the brake...the right foot would be handling two pedals while the left foot just had to worry about one.

We as Christians, as we live our lives, have two feet that need to work together. **One foot** stands planted in this world, as a citizen of the United States; the **other foot** stands planted in the Church, as a member of the Body of Christ. Luther understood the Christian’s life as one that is **lived in two kingdoms**. He said our life in the world made us a citizen of “the kingdom of the left hand.” In “the kingdom of the left,” our lives are governed by the laws of the land. Luther our life in Church as heirs of heaven made us a citizen of “the kingdom of the right hand.” In “the kingdom of the right,” our lives are ruled by our Lord’s grace revealed in the Gospel. **Two feet. Two kingdoms. ONE FOOT IN EACH KINGDOM.**

Jesus talked about two different kingdoms when the Pharisees approached Him and sought to discredit Him. They asked Him if it was lawful or not for them to pay tribute to Caesar. Jesus asked that a coin be brought forward and He pointed to Caesar’s image on the coin. In response to the evil intent of the Pharisees, Jesus said, ***“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”*** **Two kingdoms:** Caesar’s and God’s. Two

kingdoms: government and the Church. We are to render to each kingdom what is due in that kingdom. Two **feet**. Two **kingdoms**. **ONE FOOT IN EACH KINGDOM.**

Let's start by thinking about our left foot, the foot that is planted in this world as a citizen of the United States in **the kingdom of the left** where the laws of the land govern our lives. In the kingdom of the left, we are to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and according to our epistle lesson today, **we are to do good to everyone as we have opportunity to do so**. What are some of the things we are to render to Caesar? **Obedience** to the laws of the land. The payment of taxes. **Honoring** those whom God has placed in authority over us at the national, state, and local levels. St Paul writes in **Romans 13** these words to the Christians living under the rule of the **pagan emperor** Caesar in Rome: *"Everyone must **submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."*** (Romans 13:1-10) **One foot, our left foot, is firmly planted in the left kingdom, rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's: obedience to law, honor to those in authority, taxes for government and loving our neighbor as our self...which is really just another way of saying what our epistle says: *doing good to everyone as we have opportunity.***

Now let's think about our right foot, the foot that is planted in the Church as a citizen of heaven in **the kingdom of the right** where our lives are ruled by the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Savior. In the kingdom of the right, we are to render to God the things that are God's, and again, according to our epistle lesson today, **we are to do good to everyone as we have**

opportunity to do so, but especially are we to do good to those who are of the household of faith, which means our brothers and sisters in Christ in the body of Christ **here** in this place and **elsewhere**. What are some of the things we are to render to God? **1.** Fear, love and trust in Him above all else, **2.** holding His name holy and not using it in vain, **3.** worshiping Him and regarding His holy Word as something precious in our lives...these are ways we show our love for God just according to the First Table of the Law. Doing good to everyone and to those in the Church means that we **4.** honor all those in authority within the Church, **5.** doing no harm to others, **6.** leading chaste lives, **7.** safeguarding the property of others, **8.** defending reputations and speaking well of our brothers and sisters in Christ and **9. & 10.** being content with what God has given us. All of this means that as we live our lives within the Church, the kingdom of the right, **the demands of God's Law** revealed in the Ten Commandments (that are applicable in the kingdom of the left as well) are *especially* to be seen and shown to those in the household of faith. **For the fulfillment of the Law is nothing other than love for others and love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

How else do we live in the kingdom of the right? Take a look at our epistle once again. Many things are listed for us: **gently restoring** a brother who is caught in transgression, **bearing** one another's burdens, an attitude of **humility** that does not think of oneself too highly, **testing our works** against God's Word, **sharing support** for our teachers in the faith, **sowing to the Spirit** so that we are reaping eternal life and doing good without getting weary in doing so. That's just a few verses! *One might be tempted to think that the kingdom of the left, ruled by laws as we live under the government is no different than the kingdom of the right, with all of the things just mentioned that speak to us about what we are to do according to God's Word.* Yet, whenever we hear the Law, either as a citizen of the USA or as a citizen of heaven, the Law shows us our failures and points out our shortcomings. In the kingdom of the left hand, who of us **happily renders obedience** to the laws of the land and **joyfully pays our taxes** or **honors** and speaks well of all those in authority? In the kingdom of the right, who of us **keeps God #1**, always **treats God's Name as a holy** thing, joyfully **takes every opportunity** to hear and study His Word? Are we **gentle** with those who have sinned or do we treat them harshly? Do we gladly **bear** one another's burdens...and that with humility? Do we joyfully render support for teachers of the faith and never grow weary in doing good? Honestly, we must all confess "no" again and again. Without a doubt, the Law condemns us for our begrudged obedience and our shallow commitment and our half-hearted love.

Praise God for the glorious Gospel message that is heard only in the kingdom of the right: the joyful good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came and took on our

human flesh, took our place under the Law and bore in His own body the weight of all our sins and disobedience. In the kingdom of the right, the Gospel sets us free from the Law's condemnation, both civil law and moral Law and all the things we are to do to love God and our neighbor. Christ has set us free from the curse of the Law by having become a curse for us.

The two feet of Christ climbed the hill of Calvary and on the tree of the cross, Christ has paid in full the penalty for all our waywardness and self-centeredness. "It is finished" and the debt has been paid in full by His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death!

All who are baptized into the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ are His new creations. God the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the heart of the believer, teaching us how to walk as people of God with both our feet...ONE IN EACH KINGDOM. Now the Spirit of God is in the driver's seat, teaching our left and right foot to work together each empowered by Him as we live out our lives in each kingdom. With the Spirit in the driver's seat, we are able to joyfully do good to everyone, but especially those who are of the household of faith. With the Spirit in the driver's seat, we are able to faithfully render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. **Two feet. Two kingdoms. ONE FOOT IN EACH**

KINGDOM. Both feet **guided** and **empowered** by the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word and who strengthens us in the Sacrament, so that we walk in the light of God's Word and driven not by the passions of our flesh but rather fueled by the grace of God shining for us in the face of Jesus Christ. And when we fail to live up to all that God calls us to be in His Word, **which is time and time again**, we can turn in confidence to our loving heavenly Father and His grace so richly revealed for us and for all in the Gospel, which speaks to us the peace that passes all understanding in Christ Jesus our Savior.

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The **kingdom of the left**...governed by the laws of the land. The **kingdom of the right**... ruled by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and empowered by His Spirit. We have two feet...ONE FOOT IN EACH KINGDOM. Let us render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Let us render to God the things that are God's. Let us do good to all, especially those who are of the household of faith. Let us know that **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with us so that we are able to accomplish His will for the world and for His Church to the glory of His name.** Amen.