

Matthew 21-06-27a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. Today is the 27th of June, 2021, and we continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew. We're starting a new chapter after we review the end of the last chapter briefly.

So we're right at the intersection or the junction or the interface between chapter 17 and chapter 18. Remember Peter caught that fish with the gold in its mouth? So we're going to make sure we don't forget what that meant and then move on to chapter 18. This is Jesus with a little child in his lap talking about entering the kingdom.

Very fascinating passage ahead of us here. But let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and we'll get started. Father, how grateful we are for another opportunity to spend this time together being nourished in our souls through the strength, power, and truth that is in your Word, ministered to by the Holy Spirit, receiving the benefit of the blessings that come from the gifts that you've given to each one of us.

And when we are together, we are blessed in many ways, both visible and invisible, those that are noticeable and those that are more subtle. But we're grateful because we know that the source of every good and perfect gift comes from you. We pray that as we look at this portion of your Word together this morning, that your Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, impress it on our minds and our memories, so that as we resume the tasks and challenges of our day-to-day lives, we will be strengthened and guided and enabled in a supernatural way to live our lives in a way that pleases you and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray it in his name. Amen. Resuming where we left off in chapter 17, remember that Jesus and his disciples are in Capernaum.

Actually, not all of them are there yet. They're on their way to Capernaum. Evidently, Peter and Jesus get there ahead of some of the rest of the group.

It tells us they did not always travel together. And I think they had some personal business to attend to from time to time. They were human beings and they didn't just move around in a glow-in-the-dark glorified group of 13 at all times.

So Peter and Jesus get to Capernaum. It's possible that Jesus had his own house in Capernaum. Remember, that is where he finished growing up, Nazareth and Capernaum.

And so some think that when the scriptures talk about the house, that this may have been Jesus' own house. It may be that his mother Mary lived there, that there were other visitors from his physical family, his brothers and maybe their children and so on. It is

often assumed that this is Peter's house where his mother-in-law and his wife lived and that there may have been some children running around there.

Children are going to be important when we start chapter 18. So we're trying to figure out where did these children come from because they are in the house. So when they had come to Capernaum, this is verse 24 of chapter 17, those who received the tax came to Peter and said, does your teacher not pay the tax? And this is the didrachma, the temple tax.

And we saw last time that this was a biblical requirement in Israel. It's the half shekel tax. But over time, and we learned by comparing scripture with scripture and looking at the Septuagint translation, they had inflated this tax because they used a little technicality that said, according to the shekel of the temple.

And they said, well, we can make this temple shekel anything we want. So the temple shekel required more Greek money. And this ended up being double what it was biblically designed to be.

It was twice as much. So it's an unfair tax. This is one of the reasons Jesus turns over the tables of the money changers because the whole temple system of exchange, payment for sacrifice, payment of these taxes was corrupt.

And they were taking this money that was supposed to be for the maintenance of the temple and saying, well, I work for the temple, so it should maintain me. And they inflated it to double what it was supposed to be. So when Jesus performs this miracle so that Peter's tax and his own are paid, he has met the requirement that is double what it was supposed to be.

And he doesn't really technically even need to pay it for the reasons that he gives Peter. We saw that last time. But I'm interested particularly in the last verse, because Jesus says, nevertheless, lest we offend them.

So Jesus is going to enable the tax to be paid for Peter and himself, not the entire bunch. The rest of them evidently are not there yet, but he's going to do it even though it's unfair. And even though technically he does not owe it, why? And this has pertinence for us because sometimes we do things that we really shouldn't have to do, don't need to do.

And in some cases we could justify biblically that we should not do just as Jesus said about this tax. But what is the overriding principle? We could find a passage and say, look, your tax is unfair. I'm only going to pay half of it.

Or I am in fact, the Messiah. I don't need to pay the tax. Does the King and his family have to pay the tax? And Peter says, well, no.

And he says, well, you understand that we, when you said I pay this tax, I actually don't owe it. And it's not technically biblically correct, but he pays it anyway. And I find this very interesting because Jesus didn't do what so many of us do, which is find a passage or find a verse and say, I will go to the death for this point of doctrine or this point of interpretation because I'm right.

And you are these people over here are wrong. What does he say here in verse 27? Nevertheless, lest we offend them. Scandalizo is the word we get scandal from it.

It means cause to stumble. So in Jesus view, it is more important to avoid causing others to stumble than it is to be technically correct about biblical application. In other words, now he's not going to justify a sin.

He's not going to engage in sin or sponsor sin, but you could make a case. Suppose there was a critic and said, well, you know, that temple tax system is all corrupt. And by paying that tax, you're actually enabling these unfair people.

So we have to figure out who is them here. Jesus says in order that we not offend them, who's them? Is it the Pharisees and scribes in Jerusalem? These scenes take place up in Capernaum. So who is the them that would be offended? The men who are going around collecting this tax, they're just doing their job.

They didn't invent the system. They didn't set the rate, but they believe that they are serving and their function is completely legitimate. It is right and proper to collect this temple tax, but it's an unfair tax.

So it's kind of like a policeman enforcing a bad law. Do you cause the policeman to stumble? Do you throw vegetables at the people who are just doing their job? They're not in control of the system. The them here are faithful men.

They're not corrupt. They're not cheating. They're not skimming.

They're not doing anything other than their job. They are enmeshed in a kind of evil that is greater than themselves. But Jesus says, I don't want them to stumble.

So this has application. You've heard news reports of people who work at a pharmacy and the pharmacy provides the morning after pill or whatever, and a pharmacist says, well, I don't want to fill this prescription because I believe that I'm implicit in killing babies. Is that the same thing or is it different? It's a fruitful question to ask because if someone in their own conscience says, I'm part of something I don't want to be a part of, I am engaging in and facilitating and enabling an evil.

And my conscience tells me I should not do this. That's a different thing, isn't it? That these temple tax guys aren't questioning their function. They don't probably even know that the tax is unfair.

So lest we cause them. So Jesus evaluates the people who are observing in his immediate periphery to decide what to do. And he says, this is if, if I stand on principle here, these men are going to be confused.

They're going to talk to others who are going to be confused. Remember how much trouble Paul, the apostle had when, when people said, well, you're, you're unlawful. You, you don't respect the law of Moses.

They accused Jesus of breaking the law. And in fact, Jesus said, I didn't come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. And he observed the feasts.

He observed the ritual portions of the law and he did not break them. Now, because people have corrupted and twisted them. If Jesus stands on principle and says, technically, I don't owe this.

It is going to create a false issue. What is the real issue? And this is the question we ask ourselves when it comes for us to try to apply what we see here. We have to ask ourselves, what is the real issue? Is it important for these tax collectors and the people in Capernaum to understand that I don't owe this particular tax, or is it important for them to focus on the nearness of the kingdom of heaven on the identity of Jesus as the Christ and the means of salvation, deliverance, fulfillment of old Testament promise.

Do you really want them to get hung up on a side issue? Something we often have to determine is what is essential and what is non-essential. Someone in a particular denomination might believe that you should pray to the Holy Spirit. I happen to know from studying the word of God that we are not to pray to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the means by which our prayers are conveyed to their, which is the Father. Paul tells us in Romans that the Holy Spirit translates, improves, and makes acceptable our prayers as they are conveyed before the throne of grace. But we do not pray to the Holy Spirit any more than we would talk to our telephone.

Of course, you can't say that now with Siri and Bixby and all these other things where you actually allegedly talk to your phone, but you are really talking to a service or a piece of software. But the conveyance itself is just that. So what are we saying here? What is essential? What is non-essential? Am I going to break fellowship with a believer who thinks it's okay to pray to the Holy Spirit or who does pray to the Holy Spirit or who wants to pray to the Holy Spirit right before we eat a lunch or have a cup of coffee or something? Do I want to die on that battlefield and cause that believer to stumble when there is a more central and important issue at stake? If I am uncomfortable, made uncomfortable by people who have a misunderstanding, what is our fundamental definition of love? What's our working definition of love for us here? How do we define it? Love is sacrificial to self and beneficial to others.

When it comes to the point of how do I live my Christian life? How can I represent Jesus Christ on this earth? He was here with his body. His body was crucified. He died.

He rose. He ascended and went to heaven, and he replaced himself with us. We are the body of Christ now.

We represent him on this earth. How can I best do that when it comes to these issues? Well, here's a classic example of Jesus being sacrificial in the sense that he is giving up an occasion to claim his kingship, to claim his royalty, to claim his rightful deference. Does any tax collector walk into the throne room and go up to the king and say, excuse me, king, but I think it's income tax time.

What have you got there in the treasury? Jesus could stand on that principle, but he sacrifices that. And he also sacrifices making that point not only for his own sake, but for Peter who spoke in haste. Does your teacher pay the tax? And Peter says yes, when Jesus actually doesn't and probably has not in the past paid that tax.

But someone made an issue out of it. Peter said, yes, he does. And now it's going to also make an issue out of Peter if he goes back and says, oh, I misspoke.

Well, it is a distraction in the interest of not causing others to stumble. Jesus says, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook and take the fish that comes up first. Go to the sea.

What is the sea universally represented in scripture? When you see the troubled sea, what is it metaphorically speaking of? We go back to our old Testament passage, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked. They're like the troubled sea.

The sea is the dwelling place of Leviathan and behemoth and these representative entities for what cannot be controlled, what is more powerful than man, chaotic forces of darkness. If you can stay afloat on top of the sea, that's good, but there's ever constant danger. The disciples who are fishermen, not all of them are, but those who are make their living by pulling things out of the sea.

Many of us make our living by providing goods and services or working for companies or entities that serve the public at large. They're not all Christian ministries. We don't refuse to serve anyone but a believer.

So it's like the fish coming out of the sea and producing a living and there's nothing wrong with that. These disciples go out in boats on the sea. Jesus directs them to go on the sea and go across, but Jesus is in control of it as we saw in the stilling of the storm.

It's a wonderful thing to reflect on in terms of our relationship to the world with its storms, with its mire and dirt, with its chaotic, uncontrollable nature, and with the

denizens that lurk just below the surface. All we're trying to do is fish. We're trying to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, but we have a complex interaction with both other believers and unbelievers.

So when Jesus says, go to the sea, in order to pay this tax, Jesus could have said, wait until Judas gets here. He's got the money box. We've got donations in there.

We'll pull out a few coins and we'll pay this tax. That would be one option, right? They do have some traveling funds that have been donated. He could have said, Peter, go cast in a net, catch some fish, sell the fish, and use that money to pay the tax.

And I ask myself, because I like to ask questions like this, why didn't he just do that? Why didn't he say, well, look, do a little extra work, earn some extra money, use that to pay the tax for you and for me? Instead, Jesus predicts a miracle. You will notice, as so often is the case in scripture, one of the ways we know that it's divinely inspired and written under the ministry of the Holy Spirit is if people were writing this, we would have the story of Peter going out, casting in his hook, nothing happening for a while. Then suddenly a tug on the line.

We would have the whole scene played out. We never see this miracle. It's never detailed or described.

We only have Jesus' prediction that it's going to happen. We have the promise to Peter and the provision made for Peter described by Jesus himself. But Matthew does not go on to say, lo and behold, Peter left.

He went out, he got in a boat, he cast in a line. None of that. All we have is Jesus saying, go to the sea, cast in a hook, not a net, just a hook.

So what is this? What does it tell us? Why would we care that it's a hook and not a net? Suppose Jesus has said, Peter, you said we pay the tax. You got to go earn the money and pay it. I'm not on the hook for this.

I'm royalty. You're the one that said it. You go fix it.

So he casts in a net. He gets some fish. Maybe he gets none.

Maybe he gets an abundance of fish. Generally, when Jesus tells Peter to fish, he gets more than he expected. So he could have sold it.

He got the money left over and said, well, this turned out to be a good thing. I paid the tax for me and Jesus. And look, I've got leftover.

All of that is beside the point. This very story does the same thing that Jesus says to not cause us to stumble or make a bad application or misunderstand what's happening. Jesus tells Peter, cast in a hook.

How many fish do you typically catch with a hook? One fish. One fish is not going to be enough to pay the half shekel tax for two men, especially when it's been doubled so that it's going to be a stater, which is for drachma twice as much as you need. So one fish, the one fish is something that Peter deals with all the time.

Peter knows how to fish. This is something that he's capable of doing, but he's going to do this one thing at Jesus behest, and it is going to be supernaturally blessed. Cast in a hook, take the fish that comes up first.

He's only going to catch one fish. He's not going to catch them seriatim. Take the first fish you catch.

When you have opened its mouth, probably to remove the hook, you will find a piece of money. And the piece of money in Greek is the stater. This is for drachma.

It's the didrachma, which is the two drachma tax. Should have only been a drachma, but it's two drachma in Jesus day because they've inflated it. But a stater is exactly four drachma in value.

It's one coin and it is enough. Take and give it to them for me and you. The same them that we do not cause to stumble.

Take that coin. So what would we, what would we learn from this? How would we make application ourselves for this? This is a specific kind of need. This is not, we don't have food for today.

We've got guests coming in. We need extra groceries. This is a very specific need and requirement.

What kind is it? How would you classify this particular sort of, it's not exactly a crisis, but it's, it's a problem, a problem that requires money to solve. It's in the realm of religious understanding, spiritual understanding, right? This is not causing them to stumble for some other reason. It's not a difference of opinion about what's happening on the news.

It's not who to vote for or what party has a better platform or a better policy. It's not some abstraction. Oh, this thing happened over halfway across the country.

What do you think about that? This is specifically a question of personal spiritual practice. These men come and ask Peter, does your master obey the law of Moses in this particular area? Yes or no. In this particular area, the law does not apply to Jesus and his disciples, but that's a pretty fine point and would be difficult to make.

So Jesus says, we're not going to have that discussion right now. That's a conversation for another time. If you've been watching the chosen, you know why I smile when I say that it's a discussion for another time.

It is not always time for us to make finer points from scripture. We may understand them. They may benefit us and really charge our batteries and get our lights glowing.

And we think, wow, this is fantastic. I want to tell you about this. It's not always the time.

Sometimes trying to make some of the more, not quite so primal and central and essential points from scripture. There's a reason why those can be discussed in some quarters and not in others, because there is a foundation or lack thereof. If someone's not learned their way forward enough to understand distinctions between the law of Moses and the age of grace that we live in, trying to say, well, I don't have to comport with that particular part of the commandments because I'm in the age of grace and you can cause someone to stumble.

Maybe they're not at that point. So back to our, one of our earlier observations, Jesus evaluates the observers and decides he does not want them to stumble. If they don't pay this tax, these collector men will be caused to stumble and it's not worth it.

It's not worth it for Jesus to avoid paying a tax and these men to be confused in the spiritual realm. This is our criteria. This is what we should do.

We should try to do what Jesus did and figure out, is my practice going to cause someone to stumble? Paul makes this very same point, remember, about if I eat meat that has laid in front of a rock down at the pagan temple for an hour, it's perfectly good meat. There's nothing wrong with it. I don't believe that idols represent gods.

The fact that it's meat that laid before idols, I don't really care because idols are nothing to me. But if someone sees me buy that meat and bring it home and eat it and it causes them to stumble, then I should not do that. Sacrificial, I miss one of these prime cuts of meat that you get at a discount because it sat out or whatever the attraction was, but I avoid causing a fellow believer to stumble.

So if it's going to confuse, confound or irritate or otherwise tangle the feet of someone near me, someone who's observing my life, let's take something more pertinent. Let's say you like an occasional glass of wine. Is wine biblically forbidden for Christians? That's going to be a huge problem when you go to the upper room and Jesus passes around a cup of wine to his disciples and says, drink this.

This is the new covenant in my blood. That was not grape juice. That was wine.

You're going to have a problem when you go to John and the wedding feast at Cana in chapter two and Jesus turns 12 giant jugs of water into real wine, good wine, wine that the guy that's in charge of the party says, wow, you saved the best stuff for last. No, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with drinking wine. In fact, it was a common table beverage, uh, throughout the Middle East for a long time because the slight alcohol content in it kept bugs and, and, uh, things that you try drinking the water, some places

in the Middle East, uh, and you can get in real trouble.

And some of us have, have been there and seen that happen. And, uh, so there were some practical considerations as well, but here's the thing. All things should be done in moderation.

If you have trouble with moderation in that area, then that would be a thing to not get near. If you pulling out a box or a bottle or a glass or a jug of wine is going to cause a fellow believer to stumble, someone who's in a denomination that thinks that alcohol is the devil's own means, which it often is of, uh, breaking up homes and marriages and careers and so on. Alcoholism is a huge problem has been for decades and if not centuries in this country.

Um, if it causes me or anyone near me to stumble, that would be a thing to stay away from to avoid. Uh, if you make a promise or take a pledge as some of us have, uh, there are, uh, seminaries, there are institutions who say, here's one of the requirements that we have for our students. If you voluntarily go to that school and sign up to take their courses and, and, uh, get handed their degree, then you play by their rules.

And if they've got a no alcohol rule, then it's no alcohol for you, buddy. Um, so not causing others to stumble, even though you could go to the scriptures and say, look, Jesus came to upper room. Uh, look, Timothy, take a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Uh, it's medicinal. It's it's moderate. I'm not sinning.

You're causing someone to stumble. You have now entered into sin, not by partaking, but by ignoring the better interests of a fellow believer. That's what's going on here.

And what's interesting to me is that when Jesus uses a miracle to meet this need, God will give us in a sense, miraculous grace to be a blessing to our fellow believers in our self-sacrifice in denying ourselves. As Jesus said in the previous passage here, if anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. Paul says, I have the right to lead about a wife just like the other apostles, but I do not do so for the sake of those Jesus sent me to minister to.

So I could claim rights. I could claim support from the churches. Paul says, I could demand that you all send me money every month, but instead I get out a needle and some stiff cord and a material.

And I make tents. I sit down with others and I make my own living, even though technically I could demand support from all of you churches, but it would cause you to stumble. You're not strong enough to understand that principle.

You would see me as some gadabout that's just living off the hard-earned money of

others. Many of you are poor. I don't want to put that burden on you.

I'll make my own way. And that's what he does. Sacrifice to self benefit to others.

So as we begin to think about this, it really clarifies a lot of situations, doesn't it? Where I could do a thing, but it isn't going to contribute to the cause of Christ. It's not going to focus people on the Lord Jesus Christ and the grace of God in sending him and in giving us the scriptures, giving us the Holy spirit, giving us hope for the future and the opportunity to live for the things that count. So supernatural grace.

I think the reason that Jesus says cast in a hook, you're going to do something. Nobody is going to notice anything unusual about a fisherman taking a line and going to the sea and casting in a hook. Nobody is going to know.

Nobody's going to see this miracle. The coin doesn't fly out of the water and land on Peter's nose. Does it? It's invisible.

The grace to meet this need is invisible to everyone. Anybody watching Peter just says, Oh, there goes a fisherman with his line. Oh, look, he caught a fish.

Peter's going to open up the mouth and inside is going to be this coin that he's going to slip into his pocket, probably bring the fish home for breakfast. I would, especially the way we've been having it lately. Boy, we've been having some great breaded catfish here of late, but he gets a little bonus.

Peter gets this fish, which he knows what to do with, but he can take this coin to the collectors and say, here you go. Issue is over. Nobody's the wiser.

Nobody has stumbled. There's not a false issue or a distraction raised. There's not a crowd that says your master defies the laws of Moses and without understanding, it's just not worth it.

But there is what, what intrigues me here is there is supernatural grace in private that meets this need and fills in for Peter's seeming momentary stumble in saying, yes, my master pays the tax. Who knows? It might've been worse if he had said, no, my master does not pay the tax that could have created an issue. But Jesus resolves this in a beautiful, gracious, and supernatural way, just dealing with and through Peter.

So that brings us to chapter 18. And in my Bible, it is labeled, who is the greatest? At that time, the disciples came to Jesus saying, now we know from Mark. And if you keep your finger here and turn over to Mark chapter nine, uh, what I mentioned earlier about not everyone arriving at the same time is detailed.

This is the very same, uh, time and place. But in, uh, verse 30 of Mark nine, we have the very same intro we have in Matthew. Then they departed from there and passed through

Galilee.

He did not want anyone to know it. And once again, over and over again, in this gospel, we have seen that Jesus doesn't always want people to tell the gospel. There's a thought in the church that you can't go wrong.

Given somebody to the gospel, any place, any time, anywhere is a good where anytime is a good time. Preach the gospel to every creature. Um, here's, here's somebody here.

There's somebody there. Here's someone you're at the drive up window, getting something, see if they know Jesus and want the gospel. It's not always the time.

There is a time. There is a occasion. There is an opportunity.

How do we know when it's the right time? I can tell you, I don't know that it's the right time or the wrong time, but I know someone who does and that's God's Holy Spirit. Evangelism is the realm of the Holy Spirit. And it, he will guide us to the time, the place, he will give us the words to say or to not say.

But there are times when it is not God's will that the good news of Jesus Christ be told. We're just not always supposed to tell everything we know. And this is one of those occasions.

He's passing through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it. He taught his disciples and said, the son of man is being betrayed into the hands of men and they will kill him.

After he's killed, he will rise the third day. They did not understand this saying, and they were afraid to ask him. Now, this is fruitful in my mind, because there is many times I don't understand what scripture is saying.

I don't always understand what Jesus is saying or what an apostle is saying or what a prophet is saying or what any particular passage of scripture is saying. But given the confidence of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and security in my salvation, I am not afraid to ask. Scripture says, come boldly to the throne of grace for help in time of need.

Well, if I'm confused, I shouldn't sit there and say, well, or let's say I've failed and I've sinned and I've fallen short of the glory of God. Should I hesitate and say, well, I know God doesn't want to see me right now because I'm a rascal and I've given into the corruption of my nature and this, that, and the other. It's not always a good time to talk to people.

There's a time and a place to share what you know about Jesus and his whereabouts and his grace, his goodness, his salvation. It's not always time to talk to people, but I will say this, it is always time to talk to God. There is never a time we should be afraid to approach, ashamed to approach.

Your shame is pride. What are you worried about? Are you worried about people thinking badly of you or angels thinking badly of you or God thinking badly of you because you've decided that this is the time to pray, this is the time to acknowledge, this is the time to get back in God's good grace. If there's shame, if there's hesitation, you just put a label on it.

It's pride. It's self-interest. In some cases, it's self-gratification.

I kind of feel good punishing myself for something, holding myself out of the light of God's presence and not entering back into the wonderful blessings. I'll punish myself for my failure. That's just stupid.

It's a waste of time. Do you think God wants us wasting time in darkness, in lack of productivity, lack of guidance from the Holy Spirit, lack of the fruit of the Spirit, lack of the power that comes after we are cleansed from our sin by confession, by acknowledgement, by turning? It's a waste of time. And us thinking that this is a good thing to wallow in badness, it's really a mistake.

So here, Jesus has told his disciples something. It's an important something. He wouldn't have told it to them at this time and in this place if it wasn't important.

They don't get it. They don't understand it, but they're afraid to ask. Why would they be afraid to ask? Why do kids who don't understand what's being told by the teacher or the professor in a classroom not stick up their hand and say, excuse me, but when you say, you know, the square root of the hypotenuse, what exactly is a hypotenuse? What is that? What are you talking about? That's one too many syllables for me.

Square of the hypotenuse. What is that? Why would somebody not ask when they don't know? Same thing. It's pride.

I don't want people to know that I'm sitting here without a clue. And if I ask my question, observers are going to scorn me. I'd rather get a low grade on the assignment.

I'd rather, you know, come close to failing the test than ask my question. They were afraid to ask. Now who's observing? Who's in the group here? Well, it's each other, right? They're not amongst the crowds.

They're traveling on the road. Jesus tells them this. He tells the 12 this.

He tells them in confidence. We know that because he says, don't even tell people we're here. I don't want others to hear what I am telling you.

I'm about to be betrayed into the hands of men and crucified. I will rise again the third day. Don't tell anyone.

Don't tell anyone we're even here. And they don't understand what he means because

Jesus does speak metaphorically. Eat my flesh, drink my blood.

I am a door. You know, there are things Jesus says and they don't get it. They think, well, he's mad at us because we didn't bring bread or whatever.

So they don't want to risk embarrassment in their own fellowship, the fellowship of the 12. And there's another important message there for us. If we see something in scripture and we don't understand it, we have someone we can ask.

And it can be a fellow believer. Wives, ask your husbands at home. You can email the pastor.

But especially when it comes to pertinence and application in our own lives, if I say, wow, I spent nearly an hour in Bible class the other day looking at this passage, but I don't quite understand it. Therefore, I don't see what effect it should have on my life, my thinking, what I should now do. Or I think it pertains, but I'm not sure how.

I'm kind of confused on, you know, well, should I, you know, give up wine? Should I catch fish? Should I not pay my taxes? What should I do now? I don't, it's not clear. Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find.

Knock and the door will be opened. Sometimes the reason the presentation wasn't quite clear enough or quite understandable enough is God waiting for us to go to him and to ask, could God have supernaturally kept these tax takers from finding Peter and asking him the question and the issue would have never arose, but it arose so that we can learn from it. And sometimes we see something in scripture.

We hear it in Bible class or whatever. We come across it in our devotions or our reflections and meditations. And I just don't get that at all.

Why doesn't God just give us instant understanding? Well, the reason is because sometimes he wants us to go to him and ask to exercise the privilege of prayer to come boldly to the throne of grace. And if we don't understand something, don't be like the disciples. Ask, do not be afraid to ask for any reason.

God is our heavenly father. If we ask for bread, he's not going to give us a rock or a snake or a scorpion, right? And we need to know these disciples, if they had asked the question would have been much better prepared for the events that are about to take place in Jerusalem with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the most shocking thing in human history. And certainly the most shocking thing in their lives, they would have been better prepared if they had not been afraid to ask, what do you mean? Why is this happening? I don't get it.

Peter, probably the reason they didn't want to ask is Peter's already been rebuked for saying, Oh Lord, far be it from you. This shouldn't happen. And Jesus says, get thee

behind me, Satan.

Well, none of the other guys say, well, you know, he's our scapegoat. He's the one that's, you know, in league with Satan. I don't want to ask any questions and be rebuked or whatever.

So it's important to observe. They did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him. Then he came to Capernaum.

He was in the house and asked them, what was it you disputed among yourselves on the road? So Jesus was not with them when they had this conversation, but they kept silent for on the road. They had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. Oh my.

So first they don't speak up because they are afraid to be embarrassed, asking a question. What do you mean? Now they don't speak up because they know very well the answer to the question and they don't want to because it's embarrassing. This is a good criteria, by the way, there's a verse, I don't remember the reference, but it says, let your moderation be known unto all.

Let your moderate balanced lifestyle be known to all. And then it says in the King James, let your moderation be known to all the Lord is at hand. And it sounds like, Oh, the rapture is about to happen.

But it means is let your moderation be known to all the Lord is in the room. The Lord is next to you. They didn't mind talking about this on the road because Jesus was out of earshot, maybe not even in the group.

But when Jesus says, what was it y'all were talking about? Oh, well, I don't want to talk about that with you here. Well, this would be a great criteria for all of our activities and our conversations and our thoughts. The Lord is near.

So where is our balance? Where is our moderation? Where is our humility? And this question and its answer, its unspoken answer are going to lead to Jesus saying something that's really important for us. We're going to see it when we come back from the break.