Sermon: **Pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and pay God what belongs to God** (Matthew 22.21)

We have a new government! The rich will fear more tax for them; they’ll find new ways of avoidance!

I do not mind rich people being rich but it irritates me that they [1] let you know they are rich, [2] spend it on themselves lavishly, and [3] avoid paying tax. In Victorian times the great benefactors were rich – hospitals, libraries, schools, communities. Today we use taxes, but the responsibility of the rich remains.

Who likes taxes? Do we all hate them?

Yet the money goes towards the things we need together, and to those in need. What is wrong with that?

What we object to is that we have no real say in its distribution, and thus it could easily be misspent.

Life is like that. In family life, money goes towards things together – rates, mortgage/rent, electricity, food.

But some might go unequally, even misspent – school fees, lots of things for a new baby.

In a church, money for Connexional Budget and Synod as well as maintaining property, and helping those in need. It is always a mixture of payments we are happy about and those we are unhappy about.

Matthew reading – Jesus, taxes & coinage. The Pharisees hoped Jesus would say either [1] do not pay taxes – a threat to Rome, or [2] do pay taxes – supporting a hated government. Jesus recognised that there was a responsibility to honour taxes, and a responsibility to honour God too.

So in our money we honour various things. Nationally through taxes we honour the poor, medical care, safety, education, law and order, etc (or at least we should do).

In our families and churches we honour the various needs involved.

We can honour God in the same way – money given, effort, time, skills, presence.

Imagine Lilly wants to go to a party, but you say “we are honouring Charlotte today, so tough!”

It is not a case of one or the other – you can honour Lilly and Charlotte at the same time.

Similarly we can honour the government, family, church and God all at the same time – hence TEXT.

At a baptism we celebrate God in life, seeking to honour God along with all else. *How* Brady and Jennifer do that is their responsibility, just as who’s honoured most with our taxes is now Jacinda’s responsibility.