

DEATH AND TAXES

"There are two things for certain in life, death and taxes. Too bad they don't come in that order." I'm sure many of you have heard this statement many times. Most of us don't like paying taxes and we figure the only way to get, out of it is to be "six feet under." But there is another aspect of that statement that deserves our attention. And that is, death and taxes are important, and important in that order.

The judgment of Christ on the final day, when all mankind will be around the throne of God is based on our works (Rom. 14:12; 2Cor. 5:10). As we have done and not done during our life will determine where we spend eternity. Therefore, death is important to us. It is not only the end of living but the beginning of eternity. Death becomes a doorway from this life to the life hereafter.

When we recognize that death is an important step in our existence, we begin to put things in their proper perspective. This is why taxes are down the list of those things which are really important. We must prepare for death more so, than we prepare to pay our taxes.

It is wrong according to the Scriptures, not, to pay taxes. Jesus told us to "render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Mt. 22:21). We must obey the civil government in which we find ourselves under. We may not agree with the man in office, but we must respect the office. Romans, chapter 13 makes it clear that any government which is in power, because God has allowed it to be. Therefore, to disobey the civil government is to indirectly disobey God. The only line that can be drawn is that the Scriptures also teach that we must obey God rather than men (Ac. 5:29). When man's laws contradict God laws, our obligation is to God. Therefore, according to Christ's example in the gospels and Paul's instructions in Romans we are to pay taxes.

Once we have physically died there is no second chance by coming back from the dead. The Hebrews writer tells us that once we die then comes the judgment (9:27). This promise shows us the finality of death itself. It makes us keenly aware that we must prepare for that event. Death is not a welcome subject, because we have lost family, friends, and brethren in Christ to its everlasting clutches, and we would rather think about something else. Man, by himself, does not have an answer for death, he can only speak of the unknown mysteries that lie beyond the grave. The Scriptures are the only answer to knowing what lies "on the other side." But by the same token we dare not "bury our head in the sand" and live like we will never die. Just because we may not be up in years, have good health, and a freezer full of food, doesn't give us the right, to ignore death. We must prepare for it.

"There are two things for certain in life, death and taxes." Prepare for them in that order.