

NOTICING THE DEDUCTIONS

My daughter has been working part-time for about six months now. She was naturally excited and proud when she received her first pay cheque. Something she did not pay close attention to in those first few months of employment were the deductions coming off her pay. Because she is only part-time, the employer only deducts amounts for C.P.P and EI off her pay but nothing for income tax. Depending on the number of hours she has worked during a two week pay period she is beginning to notice that at least \$25.00 is being deducted from each cheque. For her that amount represents an hour or more of work being deducted. She feels that amount of money would look better sitting in her bank account than in the government's coffers.

It is hard for me to remember if I felt the same way about deductions coming off my pay when I first started working at her age, but I probably did. When my daughter started ranting recently about the amount being deducted, I tried to comfort her by saying, "**Well the C.P.P. that is coming off your pay will help pay for dad's retirement one day!**" This came as no comfort to her at all. I wish I could tell her that these will be the only deductions she will encounter coming off her pay cheques in life.

I can just imagine the shock she will have when she starts working full-time in a career and seeing additional deductions come off her pay for income tax, a registered pension plan if offered, and maybe union dues depending on her profession. Who knows by that time if the government will have come up with a few more deductions to come off our cheques. In about another month I will begin to see notices come through from my national office sharing the increases in deductions that will start coming off my pay in 2025. I may begin to go on a rant of sorts myself when I see them. If I start ranting, I would not be surprised if Jesus stopped me in the midst of it to remind me about the time He was questioned in regards to paying taxes.

One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "**Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?**" They posed this question in hopes that Jesus could be arrested for something He said in His reply. The Jewish people at that time had to pay a tax to Rome. The Jewish people hated paying this tax because the money went directly to Caesar's treasury to support pagan temples, and the

extravagant lifestyle of the Roman aristocracy. Jesus was aware of the motives behind the question, so He asked them to show Him the coin used to pay the tax. The image stamped on the coin was that of Caesar, so Jesus said, "**Well, then, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.**" Jesus avoided the trap set by the Pharisees here by showing that we have dual citizenship as believers, not just to the nation in which we live but to God's Kingdom too.

My daughter's rants about deductions coming off her pay, and this story from Scripture about paying taxes, got me wondering if Jesus has been noticing any resentment or withholding on our parts when it comes to giving to Him. The fact is whether we are doing so consciously or subconsciously, we can sometimes withhold giving certain things back to Jesus. Examples of this may include:

- Whether we are still giving time on our Sabbaths to worship Him or have we deducted that from our weekly activity?
- Whether we are still obediently following our Heavenly Father's commandments or have we deducted some from His list?
- Whether we are still giving of our time and other offerings to Him or have we deducted that from our lives?
- Whether we are still giving Him our love or have we deducted Him from those we show faithful love toward?

Hopefully we are still giving to Jesus in these ways in order to show how important and special He is to us. If we have made deductions in any of these ways, may we take this opportunity to rectify this so that we can follow Jesus' words here by ensuring we are truly giving to our Heavenly Father what belongs to Him.

Keep safe and God Bless,

Pastor Dean