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Economics and the Bible: Was Jesus a Socialist? Part 1

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose define socialism, and contrast socialist policies with free market policies. We discuss why a growing number of people find socialism attractive. We discuss several Bible verses cited by socialists who argue that Jesus was a socialist or that Jesus taught socialism. This is the first episode of a three-part series.

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Transcript

(intro music) Welcome to the Knight & Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is, Was Jesus a Socialist? I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

Welcome, Rose. So I think before we get started, we can spare a quick break to talk about what we've been doing in the last few months, and why there haven't been as many episodes as we would like. Yeah, well, we took some time off for the holidays,

which was an intentional decision.

But then, as you know, both of us ended up getting sick. I think you were sick first, and then I was sick. And at different times, at least one of us did not have our voice and couldn't speak without coughing.

After that, ever since we've been healthy, I've had a lot of ministry commitments and work that I've been excited to work on. I'm speaking at several conferences this spring and summer. I've been working a lot on the keynote talks that I'm doing.

I've been working on continuing to create some online courses for a ministry I work with, and working with my church to get some curriculum going in the local church. So I have a lot of projects that I'm really excited about, but also kept me really busy. But I'm excited to be back to recording.

Yeah, hopefully we'll be able to deliver at least a few episodes for our audience. So let's begin. So in this episode, we're going to be discussing whether Jesus of Nazareth taught socialist economic principles.

Did Jesus describe himself as a socialist? Would he be a socialist today? We'll start by discussing what socialism is, why this topic is important, and why socialism is so attractive to people today, especially young people. Then we'll close this episode by looking at some of the Bible teachings that people use to defend the idea that Jesus was a socialist. And this is going to be one of a series of podcasts.

So let's get started with the first one. Sounds good. So Rose, you have some qualifications in this area, a bachelor's degree, and some work experience in public policy and economics.

So what is the definition of socialism? Socialism is a political system characterized by community ownership of the means of production rather than private ownership. In practice, this means a centralized government plans and controls the economy. In other words, individuals, families, shareholders don't own the businesses or the equipment for producing goods and services.

Now, in theory, everyone is an equal owner of things like health care clinics, farms, markets, grocery stores, any businesses. But in practice, no one voluntarily gives up their property or their business, their livelihood to just anyone who wants to do with it as they wish. Plus, even business owners who do surrender their businesses to the community as a whole, whatever that means, end up with no one responsible to maintain or run the business.

So someone has to step in and that ends up being a centralized government. They step in, they take the businesses from people by force. Yes.

So we have a lot of experiences of that in different countries at different times. So we'll probably be looking at that later in the show or maybe in another one. So this what you described there is different from the free market system, the free enterprise system, where free individuals decide what they need and then they make trades, free trades with other people to acquire goods and produce and purchase services.

Yeah, exactly. And so without supply and demand, which is what you just described, without supply and demand to determine how much of each good and service is needed, how much good and service is produced and how much they cost, the government makes these decisions. That'll work out great.

We'll find out how it works out. So why is this topic of socialism important today? Well, one reason it's important is that a lot of people in the US today like socialism and would like to see it adopted in the US. According to a Ugov poll in 2019, 70% of millennials, that's ages 27 to 42 approximately, say they would vote for a socialist.

70%, 7-0. Yeah. Also as of 2019, about four in 10 Americans think favorably of socialism, four in 10 Americans of all ages.

47% would vote for a socialist for president of the US. That's 2019. All indications are that those numbers are even higher today in 2023.

Also, according to the Gallup poll of 2021, 65% of Democrats of all ages think positively of socialism. So these are big, big numbers. Yeah.

Another reason it's important is that socialism has implications for every area of life, including the ability to create and purchase Christian materials, to support missions, publish Bibles, run a business according to Christian ethics, and even the ability to hear the gospel. It's a very important topic. Yeah, I think the mystifying thing about these numbers for me is what is the record of socialism in other countries and other times? And are the people who are in favor of it aware of what happens when it gets tried? Or do they just have some magical idea of some fairy land where all of this works and makes people more wealthy and have more leisure time or whatever? So let me ask you this.

What problems do you see with socialism just on the face of it without looking at the evidence just in the definition itself? Should we expect socialism to work? No, I wouldn't expect it to work at all. Then some of the reasons are, first of all, socialism assumes that people are going to give their best without any incentives, that they're going to take risks, they're going to innovate, they're going to be honest, as they do in the free market where there are incentives. But when government owns the businesses, there is no incentive to work harder or to innovate.

So think, for example, of the Department of Motor Vehicles. This is a government

monopoly. There is no other option for people who need those services.

You're going down to the DMV office, whether you want to or not, and you ask anybody in the US if they want to, including the people who work there, and they're going to say no. Don't want to be there. The people who work there cannot grow the business by working harder, by innovating, by providing better customer service.

So under socialism, individual workers have nothing to gain by doing the extra work to attract customers, just as they don't in any sort of government monopoly that we can look at today. Right. So let me just try to give an example of this so people sort of understand what we're talking about.

The issue of public schools is really popular right now. If you follow Twitter accounts like Libs of TikTok or Moms for Liberty, you see a lot of videos of public school teachers talking about how they don't care what parents want. They want to keep what they're teaching in the classroom secret from parents.

They basically want to virtue signal to the students and kind of pass on their values. But that's not what parents want. Parents want schools to produce educated children who can work and earn money and move out of house, which is increasingly difficult.

But teachers know that they are a monopoly. I mean, the money that goes to pay the teachers is automatically deducted in mandatory taxes. So they've already been paid.

So they're not being paid based on performance. They're paid first. And then the performance is kind of what they decide they're going to deliver that day.

Right, exactly. It's a great example. And another reason that I wouldn't expect socialism to work problem that I see on the face of it is since the production of goods and services under socialism isn't based on the free market indicators of supply and demand, like we mentioned, someone has to decide what is produced and how much of it is produced.

No one person or group of elites can predict how much of every good and every service is needed or wanted by every family in the country. And so historically, there are always massive shortages of many goods. And yet there is an overproduction of other goods, because this is what happens when a very few people are in charge of deciding how much of everything to produce rather than allowing the free decisions of individuals to dictate what and how much is produced.

Right. So in a free market, basically people who want to make money entrepreneurs, they monitor closely what kinds of goods and services customers want. And then they innovate, they develop products and services that customers will pay for.

So for example, if customers want clean energy, then energy companies will invent fracking to recover natural gas so that they can sell it, or they'll invent nuclear power,

you know, which both of these are zero emission. So they're both good for clean air. But in some countries and states, global warming alarmists will try to get to the government to stop that kind of development, because they something about fracking and nuclear power sounds bad to them.

And so that was a big push for renewable energy. And they've decided that that's what you know, that's what they want. But the costs on those energy forms is very high.

So it's not clear that letting the government restrict the development of energy sources is such a good idea. And you can actually see that you can look in countries that are more socialist where the government is more in control of the energy production, like Canada, Germany, and even states like California. So the first thing that happens is really high electricity prices for consumers and businesses.

And then the next thing you see is rolling blackouts. I actually want to do an entire show on South Africa, because they have basically, they are not their socialism on stilts. They're actually destroyed.

Well, their entire society is crumbling, but really, they're having massive blackouts because the power company, I think it's called s com is like, I don't know how you'd say this, it's like a government run organization or a hybrid. And they're basically there's so much corruption inefficiency that they can no longer produce power for their people. Wow.

Wow. Yeah, we should definitely do an episode on that. Yeah.

But another problem with socialism is that socialists seem to think that the world's wealth is some fixed amount, which cannot be increased. They think in order for someone to gain more wealth, someone else must lose wealth. But this is not how it works in the real world.

Global wealth has grown exponentially over the past couple of hundred years. If we had stopped incentivizing the creation of new wealth 200 years ago, and instead just divided up the wealth that existed at that time, we would all be poor today. You don't fight poverty by dividing up the wealth that currently exists.

You fight poverty by training and equipping and incentivizing the creation of new wealth. Yeah, this is really important. I don't know that people really understand like young people, old people.

Yes. But young people, I don't know that they really understand the genius. The genius of the free enterprise system.

So let me give an example. So everybody pick up their smartphone and look at it. So if we lived in a socialist society and we were pursuing equality, you know, income equality

and wealth equality, why we might be tempted to just smash up all of these devices and make sure that everyone has an equal amount of plastic, copper, glass, all the component materials.

But that wouldn't be worth very much to each person and it wouldn't help each person to be more efficient and productive. Okay. But when an engineer can go to people who have capital, banks or investors and say, hey, I have an idea for a smartphone.

I cannot afford everything I need to be able to develop a prototype. But if you guys lend me the money, I'll give you a percentage of what I make when I start selling these things. And the investors agree to this and they give him all this capital, right? Which is where we get capitalism from.

And he goes and hires people creating jobs and develops a prototype and then they like it and they go forward with manufacturing this. This is how we got smartphones. We did not get our smartphones from the post office or from the DMV or from the public school unions to teacher unions.

That comes from innovators and the incentive that these guys have to develop these things that make us all more productive and give us all more leisure time is that they're going to be able to keep a percentage of the profits that they get from taking this risk. If they fail, they have to pay the penalty. So they're taking a risk with all this money.

And if they succeed, they should be allowed to keep it. Well, in a socialist economy, they frown on all of this. They're like, make everyone equal.

Don't allow people to invest. Don't allow people to innovate. It's all about redistributing the pie as it is instead of making the pie bigger.

Exactly. Yep, exactly. So yeah, so before we talk about whether Jesus was a socialist, do you have any thoughts on why socialism is so appealing to people? Yeah, so I was alluding to this earlier.

I really maybe it's just me having fled from a more of very left leaning country to come to the United States legally. It's my experience just of deciding where to live. Like I live in one of the reddest states in the union that has the most amazing policies that makes my toes curl every time I read the news.

I brag about, you know, them all the time. It's something that's important to me, like looking at policy and deciding what's going to work for me from a Christian point of view, which place to live is going to allow me to do the best as a Christian. So because of that, I've looked at different countries and looked at different times.

I read Thomas Sowell, who talks about India and all of these different places where they have different policies and they're trying them out. And if you look at socialism, it's

actually been tried over and over to varying degrees in places like the Soviet Union or Communist China. And we actually know what happens when the government takes over the private sector and starts doing what you said that they would do, you know, determine who's going to produce what, how much of everything is going to be produced, a command economy, you know, fixing prices, an outlying free trade and private property.

When that happens, what happens is there are massive shortages and there's also a lot of people who object to having all their wealth confiscated and their freedoms taken away. So there's a good book that's published by Harvard University Press called The Black Book of Communism. Yeah, I have that book.

Yeah, it's excellent. Excellent. Yeah.

So a very good press. And what they find in that book is that over 100 million people were killed by socialists and communist policies, basically the kinds of policies we're talking about. And so you were in the 20th century.

Thank you. Yes. And you really have to wonder, you know, who would want that.

And when you look at how socialism is adopted, like I said, it typically has to be carried out with confiscation of wealth and by force. So private companies are nationalized and then run into the ground by government bureaucrats. You can see this in Venezuela, but you can really see it in South Africa right now.

Why would anybody want a system that's responsible for so much evil that takes away all their freedoms? Doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't make sense. But I have a few thoughts on this as well.

For one thing, as you pointed out, there's so much historical evidence that it doesn't work. But in my experience, most people who say they want socialism are not informed about modern history or about economics. They don't know the unspeakable damage and horrors it has caused or why it's caused it.

Another thought is those who do know something of the history of socialism either believe they can do socialism better than anyone else has ever done it before, or they believe that they will be among the very few elites who will have all the power and authority. I've had many, many conversations with people who want socialism and they say, "Oh, it's never really been done before." I mean, we could do it much better than that. They just failed for this reason or that reason.

But as a matter of fact, it has been tried over and over and over by much of the world. And the results are consistently disastrous. I also think that when people don't know the true savior, they begin to look to government to save them and to save society, to give them everything they want.

And they keep giving over more and more power and authority to the government until they've lost all their freedom and all their possessions, even their lives. Yeah, they're looking to be saved by the government. They're looking at their neighbor and they're saying, "Oh, how come he has more than me? I need someone to step in who's powerful and take away his money and give it to me." Or, "I'm so scared that my neighbor is driving their car too much and the world's going to overheat.

I need government to stop my neighbor from driving his car." "My neighbor said that my decisions to abort unwanted children is selfish. That hurt my feelings. I need government to stop them from saying that." "I need government to bail me out of my student loans." You know, they're looking to government as a savior and that's why they give away freedom in exchange for what they perceive to be vindication and rewards from the government.

But of course, it never works. Right, exactly. Yeah, and people talk about socialism as a way to make sure the workers on the bottom of the totem pole get their "fair share of the wealth." And they sell it as a system in which everyone owns everything.

But as I mentioned, people don't voluntarily give up their businesses that they sacrificed and sweat and bled to create and to make successful. Someone has to come in and take it from them by force. And in order for everyone to share equally in the wealth of a business, someone is going to have to take charge and distribute that wealth.

Right. And when this happens, you've got socialism. So, of course, there is a spectrum of fully capitalist to fully socialist.

So if the government owns, for example, the healthcare system and the pensions, then you've got a degree of socialism in that country, even if there's still quite a bit of wealth coming in through capitalism. Right. It's about how much the government owns in the economy, how much is under their control.

Right. I think part of the problem is that people make decisions when they're young that kind of limit their ability to make money. This is where some of this, "Oh, my neighbor has more than me" is coming from, you know, this envy, this coveting.

So people choose easy majors because they think, "Oh, I'll just do what feels good to me." You know, they, a lot of people in college choose to party. They're going out. They're having hookups with, you know, people based on, you know, needing validation.

We're producing a large number of these college educated people who are not oriented towards making money and being independent. And then they graduate, they've got a pack of student loans and they're looking at surgeons and engineers who are making a lot more money than they do. And they think, "Hey, I should have that too." They don't understand that salaries are paid based on supply and demand.

Like the reason that surgeons and engineers make more money is because they solve big problems like heart transplants and transmitting data all across the world that's, you know, securely encrypted and arise without error. These are real problems. So they want to take this easy path and get the goodies that are reserved for the hard path when it doesn't work out.

And they say, "This hasn't gotten me what I expected." You know, "I went to school. I did three degrees in English and all I can do is earn \$35,000 teaching grade four students." They say, "Well, I believe that what I'm doing is significant. I think I should be paid the same as a software engineer or a petroleum engineer." And so they're looking to government to redistribute wealth so that they can kind of have their cake and eat it too.

And we as Christians, we need to recognize that that's a motive. This envy, this covetousness, this recklessness and irresponsibility, this kind of comparing yourself to other people. This is what causes us to live under a government that takes away our freedoms.

Because we're not speaking to these people. Yeah, exactly. I was at CrossFit a few months ago and there was a new person.

And so the coach was asking her what she's doing these days. And she said, "Oh, I'm an undergraduate student. I'm studying music." And the coach said, "Oh, wow.

How fun. That's amazing." No, don't affirm that. Don't affirm that.

And I said, "Well, if you want to major in music, that's your decision. But as long as it doesn't result in you voting for the government to take away the money from those who chose to major in computer science or engineering or accounting or something else." And they both kind of stopped and thought about that. Like, "Oh, interesting perspective." Music is wonderful.

But when you're spending \$25,000 a year for four years, you could have been earning \$60,000 a year working as an electrician or a welder in that time. So it's not just the money you're paying. It's the money you've lost in income.

Exactly. And if everybody does this, and then the thing is they come out with this attitude of saying, "It's a surprise that I'm not earning software engineer money. I need somebody to fix this.

Somebody powerful needs to fix this." Right. That's where socialism comes from. It is all about bad character and the greed for your neighbor's money that they've earned.

You know, people talk about greed. My goodness. There's no more greed than looking at what someone else has earned and saying, "I want that." Right.

Yeah. All right. Let's shift gears a bit now that we've laid a foundation for what socialism is and get back to our main topic.

So you and I both know people who claim to be Christians, but who advocate for socialist policies and even claim that Jesus was a socialist. So what support do these kinds of, do these people provide when they make this claim? The passage in scripture that I hear people refer to most is Acts 2, verses 42 to 47, where the believers had everything in common. Oh, yes.

And so what it says though is, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." That sounds a little bit like socialism, but it's also different from socialism of today. So what are some of the differences? Yes, it's very, very different from socialism. So first of all, this was voluntary.

It was not government imposed. That is the difference between a free market, society and socialism. It's voluntary for a free market.

It's by force with socialism. One is based on free trade. The other is imposed by force.

If you want the freedom to sell your possessions and give the money to other Christians, then you want a free market. But if you're more concerned about what others are doing with their money and you want the government to dictate their financial decisions, then you may be tempted more by socialism. That's definitely a big difference.

So what are some of the other differences? Well, this passage also assumes that people owned private property and that they kept their earned income and were free to share it with whomever they wanted, whether fellow believers or keep it for themselves or they're even free to give it to the government if they want to. But they had the freedom. They had the private property that they owned.

They had their own income that they earned. And then also giving to other Christians means that there was accountability for the recipient of the donation. OK, the text says that the Christians met together daily.

They knew the details of one another's lives. There was a ton of accountability in how

they were living. Christians were not giving their money to people who were sleeping around, having children outside of marriage, doing drugs, promoting unbiblical beliefs, choosing not to work because they didn't feel like it.

This was a community of committed followers of Jesus. Right. The Apostle Paul wrote to Christians, "If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat." That's in 2 Thessalonians 3.10. An excellent verse.

Everyone looked that up. Yeah. In the early church, there was church discipline.

OK, so those who disregarded the commands of the Lord were not rewarded. In fact, those who willfully put their sexual preferences above the Lord's commands were told to leave. We see that in 1 Corinthians 5 among other places.

Interesting. Yeah, I have seen this. Like one of my friends who I mentored a while back, she was enjoying being mentored by me and she wanted someone of her own to mentor.

So she met a single mom in her church who was just kind of trying to turn her life around. And the church was doing a great job of kind of helping her out and also giving her accountability, like kind of disapproving of some of her decisions and kind of showing her a path to independence, you know, where she would be able to make her own way rather than be dependent on them. And that's what happens when Christians give you charity.

It comes with a worldview attached. So everything was going wonderfully well and she was cleaning up her life and making much better decisions and getting well on the path to independence when all of a sudden the government approved her request for welfare. And as soon as that welfare money arrived, yep, she left the church.

She stopped going to church. She went right back to sleeping around with the hottest guys that would have her, you know, people who were not interested in commitment, went back to doing drugs. Wow.

Yep. And they lost track of her and nobody knows what happened. But I think that's a pretty significant difference.

Private charity comes with a worldview attached. Government redistribution of wealth doesn't come with any disapproval and any leadership. It's just, here's your check.

Keep doing what you're doing. And oftentimes it comes with a message of be more reckless, be more irresponsible. We will pay you more the more mistakes you make, you know, like the student loan thing.

And I would say voluntary making fatherless children out of wedlock. These are things where the government says not taking out loans as bad. We're not helping you.

We're going to take the money from you and getting married and raising your own kids to have a father in the home with a father in the home. That's bad. We're going to take the money from you.

So it's it's a very dangerous thing to let government redistribute wealth. Exactly. Yeah.

And since our government doesn't provide that accountability that's needed that you were talking about, our government is actually using our tax money, our hard earned money to perpetuate poverty, not to solve it. Right. So instead of just shuffling money here and there, you know, to kind of smooth out the bumps and make everyone feel better, it'd probably be a better idea to just teach young people how to not be poor.

And that's actually really easy to do in America. Just to just to sum up this, you know, well known formula. Here's how to not be poor in America.

Well, number one, graduate from high school. Number two, get a job, any job, even a minimum wage job. It doesn't matter because you're going to move up.

Number three, don't commit any crimes. Don't go to jail. And number four, don't have children until you're married first.

Yep. So if our government promoted good decision making rather than incentivizing single motherhood, paying women basically to have children out of marriage with guys who haven't committed to them first, you know, paying people to do degrees that cannot possibly pan out in terms of paying for the costs that you've that you've incurred. Like, you know, if you go to a private bank and you ask for a loan for your college education, they're going to say, what are you studying? And if you say underwater basket weaving, they're going to go, yeah, you can take that and get out of here.

You know, we're not going to give you the money for that. At least historically in the US, when this has been a thriving economic country, I think now they just ask you what the color of your skin is. That's a good point.

Well, you know what? We have banks failing who have been a little bit too focused on woke and less focused on customers. So maybe there's an end to that. Maybe we're running out.

Yeah. So yeah, you just want to be careful about paying people to produce more recklessness, more responsibility. Eventually, we're going to run out of money to pay for all of these mistakes.

And so we really do need we really do need money. People who get it to be accountable to the people who are giving it to them. Anyway, how about another example of Jesus apparently supporting socialism? Well, we see in Matthew 19 verses 16 through 30, and there's a parallel account in Mark 10.

We see this story of the rich man coming up to Jesus and asking him, Jesus or teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life? And Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The young man asked which ones, and Jesus named several of them. And the man said that he had kept these and he wants to know what he still lacked.

And Jesus replied, if you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me. Again, we don't see Jesus ordering the secular government to go in and take this man's money by force.

We see Jesus challenging the man to voluntarily sell his possessions and follow him. Yep, exactly. So, I think that, you know, Christians who are tempted to think this passage support socialism should understand that if the government is, you know, confiscating their money, it's almost never the case that they're going to spend that that money on the priorities that a Christian would want that spent on.

They're going to spend it on things like taxpayer funded abortions and taxpayer funded transgender surgeries. I was just reading an article about how Canada is now offering up to \$75,000 for each federal employee to get sex changes. Right.

So are you a Christian? I mean, do you want your money to be taken away and given to that? The government is never going to take money from you by taxation and hand it to William Link Craig for research and debate. It's just not going to happen that way. Exactly.

Which is why they shouldn't get any of our money. Right. And I'll say as well that it's not just in Canada.

San Francisco has a bill in process to pay people to be transgender. So, right. Anyway, yeah, I do want to say I think that this account from Jesus ought to challenge every Christian to consider whether their wealth is keeping them from going all in to follow him.

And if it is, you you're probably someone Jesus would tell to give it away to give your wealth away. But Jesus didn't order everyone to give all their money away. And yet he did have a lot to say about money and he he taught radical generosity.

But he always taught a voluntary generosity and that's really important. He never commanded government forces to seize people's property or possessions on threat of imprisonment, like in socialism. He praised those who voluntarily gave generously.

And for those who refused, like this rich young ruler, he allowed them to walk away. Right. So are there any other teachings that people use to make the claim that Jesus was really teaching socialism? Well, in Matthew 21, Jesus drove the money changers away from the temple.

And I've heard this used a few times too. So Matthew 21 12 and 13 says Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.

It is written, he said to them, my house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers. So is Jesus opposing private property and free trade in this passage? Absolutely not. No.

So Jesus is condemning the religious elite as robbers. He's upset that people in power who didn't earn this money are using deception to steal from those who did earn that money. Okay.

Explain to me how this passage is condemning elites who are stealing money from ordinary people. Well, it has to do with currency exchange. The leaders were deceiving the people with regard to the exchange rate, and they were overcharging those who came to exchange money in order to buy animals to sacrifice at the temple.

So sacrificing at the temple was required to be in good standing with God in Israel. And so here we have another monopoly situation. There was nowhere else that people could go to purchase the animals they needed to sacrifice at the temple.

And by the way, Matthew specifically mentions Jesus's anger toward those who were selling doves. Doves were purchased by the poorest people for sacrifice because they couldn't afford the more expensive animals. And so Jesus was upset at this deceit overcharging, but he also specifically pointed out the elites who were deceiving and cheating the poorest people in that society.

Interesting. So it's almost like he's supportive of people who are working to earn money, but he's not supportive of people who are kind of not doing the work to produce anything but like cheating or confiscating the wealth of other people. Right.

Yep, exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

So this indicates to me that Jesus would absolutely be opposed to socialism. He seemed to affirm in quite a few ways a free market economy. He told people to voluntarily be generous and be joyful about it.

And we just don't see any indication that he would have supported socialism. I have one more question for you before we move on from this episode. So what do you think about the passage in Scripture where Jesus holds up a Roman coin and he says he's he's asked, is it lawful to pay taxes? And he says, yes, render to Caesar the things that are Caesars and the things of God render those to God.

So isn't he praising paying taxes there? Well, I think two things are going on here. First of all, I think he would have stated up front if there was something wrong, evil, bad about

all taxes for any reason whatsoever. He was very forthright in calling out evil for what it is.

And he didn't do that here. He said, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. And so I think that we have to read a little bit into it, but I do think that we can assume from this that there there may be an occasion for raising taxes for things like defense or some very clear common good that benefits everybody.

Well, in America, the things that are specified in the Constitution, we can support paying taxes for things that are constitutional. That doesn't mean that we have to support paying taxes for redistribution of wealth, equalization of life, outcome, forgiveness of student loans, bailouts of banks, you know, of woke banks that should have known better. Exactly.

There is absolutely no warrant for government to be involved in all of those different personal decisions, what should be personal decisions. And so another thing that's going on here is that there were two different parties here who Jesus would offend depending on what side he took. If he said, if he supported the government and giving away taxes, he would upset the people who were basically being shortchanged and deceived and stolen from by the government.

If he said, don't pay taxes, they're using it for evil and that sort of thing, he would have given the Pharisees reason to take him out right away. And it was not his time. So he actually gives this very brilliant answer.

Well, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. We also know from other passages that, you know, everything is God's. But, but yeah, I do agree with you that especially with a constitution that gives the government very minimal authority and responsibility as ours does to protect people's basic inherent freedoms and not get into things like taking money from one family and giving to another.

You know, there is warrant for that here. All right. That's that's excellent.

Thank you so much for that explanation. And that actually sounds like a good place for us to end. We'll definitely be coming back to this topic in the next one or two episodes.

I think we have planned. Yes. Yeah.

There are plenty more passages that I want to look at or at least a few more passages. I want to look at. We talked a lot here about passages that socialists use to say Jesus would have been a socialist.

But there are also passages that they never bring up that indicate quite straightforwardly that Jesus was not a socialist. Excellent. And so I want to look at those next time.

That sounds great. So I just want to urge our listeners to listen carefully to the last part of the podcast here because we really need your help in getting the podcast to be heard by more people. And there are ways that you can help us.

So if you did enjoy this episode, then you can help us out by sharing this podcast with your friends, giving us a five star review on Apple or Spotify, subscribing to our channel on YouTube or leaving comments on the videos on YouTube and hitting the like button wherever you listen to the podcast. Excellent. We appreciate you taking the time to listen and we'll see you again in the next episode.

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