

“If I Got My Ticket Lord...”

Inspired by themes of faithful citizenship, respect for authority, and sincere love for others, using Mark 12:17; Romans 13:1, 6–8; and 1 Peter 2:13–17.



Raymond balanced a paper cup of coffee on the roof of his car while digging through his pockets.

“Tell me you’ve got the receipt,” Emmet said, leaning against the passenger door, arms crossed.

Raymond laughed. “Man, I’ve got receipts older than my phone. Just not the one I need.”

Emmet shook his head. “Only you could lose proof of paying a parking ticket you paid three weeks early.”

They stood in front of City Hall, the broad glass windows reflecting a cloudy sky and two middle-aged men who’d rushed out of work on their lunch breaks. Inside, a clerk waited behind a counter, expression neutral.

Raymond finally shrugged. “Guess we’ll just go in and explain it.”

Emmet raised an eyebrow. “Explain what? That you’re responsible but disorganized?”

“That’s a spiritual gift,” Raymond said, grinning.

Inside, the clerk typed briskly as Raymond explained the situation.

“I understand your concern,” she said, not looking up, “but without proof of payment, the system still shows a balance.”

Emmet leaned forward. “So, what happens now?”

“Well,” she replied, matter-of-fact, “you can contest it-takes about six weeks-or you can pay it today and close it out.”



Raymond exhaled slowly.

“That doesn’t seem fair,” Emmitt muttered under his breath.

Raymond caught it. “Maybe not. But it is the process.”

They stepped aside to talk.

“You’re really going to pay it again?” Emmitt asked. “You already did your part.”

Raymond stared at the seal on the floor-*City of Service and Order*.

“My dad used to say,” Raymond began, “that respect isn’t about whether authority gets everything right. It’s about whether *we* do.”

Emmitt tilted his head. “That sounds like a sermon.”

Raymond chuckled. “Doesn’t mean it’s wrong.”

After a beat, Raymond walked back to the counter.

“I’ll take care of it today,” he said calmly.

When they returned outside, Emmitt finally asked, “Okay. Explain that to me. Because I’m struggling with it.”

Raymond took a sip of now-lukewarm coffee. “Look, if every responsibility I have; taxes, fees, and rules were based on whether I fully agreed with them, I’d spend my life fighting instead of living.”

Emmitt nodded slowly. “So, you’re saying faith isn’t just what we believe... it’s how we show up?”

“Exactly,” Raymond said. “Even when it costs us a little.”

They drove in silence for a moment before Emmitt spoke again.

Emmit smiled. “You realize you just summed up half the New Testament, right?”

Raymond raised his cup. “No receipts required.”

They clinked mugs, the day settled into peace not because everything was fair, but because they had chosen faithfulness anyway.