

Sunday 18th October 2020 WORSHIP AT HOME: GOSPEL Matthew 22.15-22

Welcome to our act of Worship

Call to worship (Psalm 96.1-3)

Sing to the Lord a new song.
Sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.
Sing to the Lord and bless his name;
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day
to day.
Declare his glory among the nations
and wonders among all the peoples.

A Prayer of Approach

HYMN

The Lord is King! lift up your voice, T Niagara
O earth, and all ye heavens, rejoice!
From world to world the joy shall ring:
The Lord Omnipotent is King.

The Lord is King! who then shall dare
Resist His will, distrust His care,
Or murmur at His wise decrees,
Or doubt His royal promises?

The Lord is King! child of the dust,
The Judge of the all the earth is just.
Holy and true are all His ways:
Let every creature speak His praise.

He reigns! ye saints, exalt your strains:
Your God is King, your Father reigns.
And He is at the Father's side,
The Man of love, the Crucified.

Alike pervaded by His eye,
All parts of His dominion lie;
This world of ours, and worlds unseen,
And thin the boundary between.

One Lord, one empire, all secures:
He reigns— and life and death are yours.
Through earth and heaven one song shall ring,
The Lord Omnipotent is King.

HP58, MP656, RS, STF

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the
Wiltshire United Area)

Prayers of Praise

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. (Psalm
96)

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we praise and
adore you; we celebrate your mighty power and
your love.

You have guided and preserved us in all our ways;
you are worthy of all praise and honour and love.

Your glory is beyond all thought: you are alpha and
omega, the first and the last; you are beyond all
letters and all words, beyond all that we can say or
think.

Accept our praise and adoration, we pray, through
the merits of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ
Amen.

Prayer of Confession

**Forgive us, dear Lord,
when we have short-changed you and those
around us:
when the world's values have been imprinted on
our lives
and not the face of your Son.
Forgive us and challenge us to live with integrity
and to serve you in humility and trust.
We pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.**

HYMN

T Tetherdown

The kingdom of God
is justice and joy;
for Jesus restores
what sin would destroy.
God's power and glory
in Jesus we know
and here and hereafter
the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God
is mercy and grace;
the captives are freed,
the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share;
and hope is awakened
in place of despair.

The kingdom of God
is challenge and choice:
believe the good news,
repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
brought Christ to his cross:
our crisis of judgement
for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come,

the gift and the goal;
in Jesus begun,
in heaven made whole.
The heirs of the kingdom
shall answer his call
and all things cry 'Glory!'
to God all in all.

HP139, MP651, RS 200, STF255

Ministry of the Word of God

RCL Proper 24 Year A

Isaiah 45.1-7; Psalm 96.1-9,(10-13);

1 Thessalonians 1.1-10; **Matthew 22.15-22**

The Question about Paying Taxes

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, 'Whose head is this, and whose title?' ²¹They answered, 'The emperor's.' Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.' ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Reflection

"The hardest thing in the world to understand is the income tax." So said Albert Einstein. I think of those words when each April my accountant April showers me with a host of forms which include asking how many cups of tea I have provided for visitors at the clergy house, how much I've spent on window cleaning, or on plants for the garden and a whole host more.

Finance and Faith come into play in our Gospel reading, those "taxing" words about the legality of paying taxes.

Then he said to them, 'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'(v21)

Location in the Bible is often significant and the Temple setting hugely so. This is where heaven and earth fuse. This is where Old Testament kings were anointed. Indeed the opening words of Matthew's Gospel state this is an account of 'Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David' (1.1). So the question about taxes is far more than a cunning trick; it is actually about power and identity. It asks Jesus, 'Who are you?' It is a passage that asks similar questions of us! There are no spectators in this passage, we are all participants!

It begins with almost a soft whisper of flattery before the crescendo **'Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?' (v17b)**

The first thing Jesus does is ask for a coin and then someone - possibly a Pharisee - hands him one. And the coin has Caesar's face on it and an inscription which in-effect declares Caesar as God. This was hugely offensive to the Jews - breaking the first of the Ten Commandments. If it was a Pharisee who was found to have such a coin then Jesus will have revealed the hypocrisy of those who were giving a false impression of religious purity.

But what does Jesus actually mean by **'Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'**(v21) I struggle with this passage because Jesus was ambiguous. He did not say either Yes or No, rather left it for us to work it out for ourselves.

Personally, the nub of the issue is not about paying taxes. It is about the struggles and tensions of living with and between God and *our emperors*, because if we are truly honest we all have our *own emperors*. We are confronted to examine our lives, reflecting on who I am, what I do, and whose image and title I bear?

We need to ask ourselves how we live a life that is faithful to God in a world that barely knows him. It is about us trying to relate our faith to the whole of our lives. Graham Kendrick's *'Shine, Jesus shine'* includes the verse,
*"As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
So our faces display your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here, may our lives tell your story..."*

Recall Genesis 1:26: Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness..."

As I said earlier there are no spectators in this passage we are all participants. At the end of the day the question is - Whose image do you bear?

Prayer of Response

(to be silently repeated as many times as you feel comfortable)

Lord Jesus Christ,
image of the living God,
fill me with your living presence.

Amen.

HYMN

Be still for the presence of the Lord

The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

HP, MP50, RS, STF20

Our Prayers

Out of the limitless riches of your grace and love do we make these our prayers:

God of all, we pray for those who have too little money: for those who are hungry, those denied healthcare especially during this time of Covid,

those unable to provide for their families, those in debt.

May they be enriched and enabled and may they know your love.

We pray for those for whom too much money brings loneliness, apathy and a sense of superiority.

May they be cherished and challenged and may they know your love.

We pray for those who worship money, for those tempted to steal or to deceive.

May they be transformed and trusted and may they know your love.

We pray for those reluctant to share their money, for those who avoid paying taxes, for those tempted not to declare their earnings.

May they be mindful and ministered to and may they know your love.

We pray for our churches, and for ourselves, that we may live, give and share in your name and to your glory.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HYMN

T Meine Hoffnung

All my hope on God is founded;
God does still my trust renew.
On through change and chance God guides me,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he does build,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness so endures,
deep in wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springing out of naught.
Evermore from God's store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily does the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our souls delight,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love does stand at his hand;
joy does wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ does call one and all:
They who follow shall not fall.

HP63, MP16, RS586, STF455

Blessing

Lord, take our minds and think through them;
Take our lips and speak through them;
Take our hearts and set them on fire with love for
Christ and his Kingdom. **Amen.**

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire
United Area
Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

***Our churches may not all be open, but the Church is
active and alive.***

*This service is offered to any and all, with love
and prayers.*

The Gospel for Little People

The leaders gave Jesus a coin.

Make circle with finger and thumb.

They said, 'Should we pay tax money to the
Romans?'

Hold out hands.

Jesus pointed out the picture of the Roman
emperor on the coin.

Make circle and point with other hand.

Jesus said, 'This belongs to the Romans –
give it back to them

Mime giving.

and give God the things that are God's.'

Point upwards.

Repeat so children can join in.

Through the Week

Carry a piece of paper, with the words: '*I am
stamped with God's image.*'

From time to time, read the words and reflect
prayerfully on them.

*Open your purse or wallet and pray the following
prayer.*

Fill up the purse of my life, loving God,
with the currency of your kingdom:

the pennies of prayer,
the pounds of kindness,
the notes of grace,
the cheques of truth,

**That I may give that which is truly of value
to those I encounter day by day, after the
example of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Prayer for the week

Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

SUNDAY 25TH OCTOBER Please note:

For the first time since February 2nd I will be
taking a Sunday off. The service next week will
come from the one of our partner national
websites and will be forwarded in the normal way.