

Year A - 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 22:15-21

Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and to God the things that are God's.



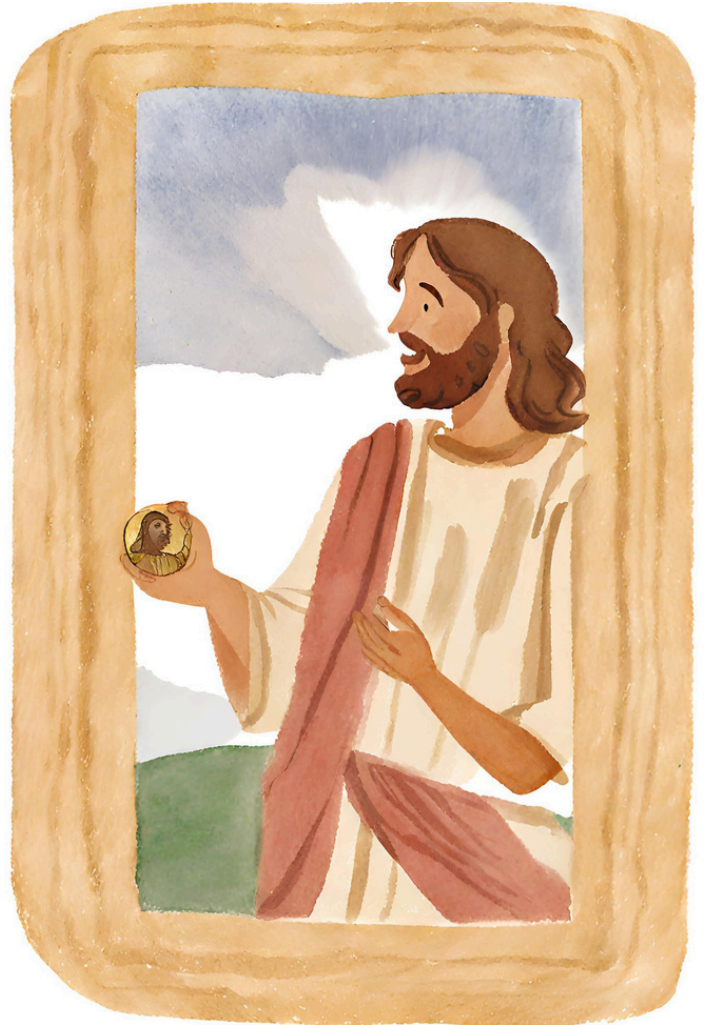
The Pharisees got together and planned how they could trick Jesus into saying something wrong. They sent some of their followers and some of Herod's followers to say to him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. Tell us what you think! Should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?"

Jesus knew their evil thoughts and said, "Why are you trying to test me? You showoffs! Let me see one of the coins used for paying taxes."

They brought him a silver coin, and he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

Then Jesus told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God."



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You Belong to God



Introduction • In this world, we have leaders and structures and things we have to do to help the community we live in operate smoothly. These things are important but there are other things that are even MORE important to God.

Message

- In today's gospel, the Pharisees are trying to trick Jesus by asking him about whether the people should pay tax to the government or not.
- But what is 'tax'? Tax is the money that everyone had to pay to the government. It was used to pay for things like roads to be built or wells to be dug. Things that all the people would share (we still have tax today).
- In the time of Jesus, this meant paying money to the Romans who were occupying the Israel. The Jewish people did not like the Romans because of this.
- So, if Jesus answered 'yes' the Jewish people would get angry with him and if he said 'no' then the Pharisees would report him to the Romans.
- But Jesus knew they were trying to trick him. He also knew that there are other things that matter way more to God, than money and taxes.
- That's why he said, 'give to God what is God's and give to Caesar (the Roman king) what is Caesar's.
- So, what does belong to God? What matters to God?
- The thing that matters more than anything else to God is us.
- God wants us to give him our love. God wants us to give him our hearts.

Discussion

- How do you think we can give God our love - our heart? Discuss this. Here are some ideas:
 - By praying
 - By saying 'I love you God'
 - By learning more about God
 - By following Jesus and doing the things he taught us
 - By loving and caring for others
 - others?

