

Morning Prayer
20th Sunday after Pentecost

October 18, 2020

Render to Caesar
the things that are Caesar's,



Matthew 22:21

And to God
the things that are God's.

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Morning Prayer for Proper 24

Opening Sentence

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Phillipians 1:2*

The Invitatory and Psalter

V: Lord, open our lips.

R: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Alleluia

Venite *Psalms 95:1-7*

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *
let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving *
and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, *
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it, *
and his hands have molded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. *
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

Psalm 148 *Laudate Dominum*

- 1 Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; *
praise him in the heights.
- 2 Praise him, all you angels of his; *
praise him, all his host.
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon; *
praise him, all you shining stars.
- 4 Praise him, heaven of heavens, *
and you waters above the heavens.
- 5 Let them praise the Name of the LORD; *
for he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He made them stand fast for ever and ever; *
he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
- 7 Praise the LORD from the earth, *
you sea-monsters and all deeps;
- 8 Fire and hail, snow and fog, *
tempestuous wind, doing his will;
- 9 Mountains and all hills, *
fruit trees and all cedars;
- 10 Wild beasts and all cattle, *
creeping things and wingèd birds;
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples, *
princes and all rulers of the world;
- 12 Young men and maidens, *
old and young together.
- 13 Let them praise the Name of the LORD, *
for his Name only is exalted, his splendor is over earth and heaven.
- 14 He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his loyal servants, *
the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Hallelujah!

Psalm 149 *Cantate Domino*

- 1 Hallelujah! Sing to the LORD a new song; *
sing his praise in the congregation of the faithful.
- 2 Let Israel rejoice in his Maker; *
let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
- 3 Let them praise his Name in the dance; *
let them sing praise to him with timbrel and harp.
- 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people *
and adorns the poor with victory.
- 5 Let the faithful rejoice in triumph; *

let them be joyful on their beds.

⁶ Let the praises of God be in their throat *
and a two-edged sword in their hand;
⁷ To wreak vengeance on the nations *
and punishment on the peoples;
⁸ To bind their kings in chains *
and their nobles with links of iron;
⁹ To inflict on them the judgment decreed; *
this is glory for all his faithful people. Hallelujah!

Psalm 150 *Laudate Dominum*

¹ Hallelujah! Praise God in his holy temple; *
praise him in the firmament of his power.
² Praise him for his mighty acts; *
praise him for his excellent greatness.
³ Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; *
Praise him with lyre and harp.
⁴ Praise him with timbrel and dance; *
praise him with strings and pipe.
⁵ Praise him with resounding cymbals; *
praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.
⁶ Let everything that has breath *
praise the Lord. Hallelujah!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

Old Testament:

Exodus 33:12-23

¹² Moses said to the Lord, 'See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people"; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found favour in my sight." ¹³Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.' ¹⁴He said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' ¹⁵And he said to him, 'If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. ¹⁶For how shall it be known that I have found favour in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.'

¹⁷ The Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name.' ¹⁸ Moses said, 'Show me your glory, I pray.' ¹⁹ And he said, 'I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, "The Lord"; and I will be gracious

to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰But', he said, 'you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.' ²¹And the Lord continued, 'See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; ²²and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; ²³then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.'

Here ends the Reading.

Psalm 99

- ¹The Lord is King;
let the people tremble; *
he is enthroned upon the cherubim;
let the earth shake.
- ²The Lord is great in Zion; *
he is high above all peoples.
- ³Let them confess his Name, which is great and awesome; *
he is the Holy One.
- ⁴"O mighty King, lover of justice,
you have established equity; *
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob."
- ⁵Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and fall down before his footstool; *
he is the Holy One.
- ⁶Moses and Aaron among his priests,
and Samuel among those who call upon his Name, *
they called upon the Lord, and he answered them.
- ⁷He spoke to them out of the pillar of cloud; *
they kept his testimonies and the decree that he gave them.
- ⁸O Lord our God, you answered them indeed; *
you were a God who forgave them,
yet punished them for their evil deeds.
- ⁹Proclaim the greatness of the Lord our God
and worship him upon his holy hill; *
for the Lord our God is the Holy One.

Epistle:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

²We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord

Jesus Christ. ⁴For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of people we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

Here ends the Reading.

You are God *Te Deum laudamus*

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord; we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you;
Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
you did not shun the Virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

Gospel

Matthew 22:15-22

1Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." 5But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." 10Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. 13Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 14For many are called, but few are chosen.'

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

A Reflection

[RCL] Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

Render Unto God What Is God's

The Rt. Rev. Frank Logue

"Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." These words of Jesus have become a sort of proverb, and those who know little of scripture may still have heard "Render unto Caesar." Yet, digging beneath the surface of this short encounter helps uncover some of the deeper currents in the exchange.

First, the combination of people approaching Jesus is intriguing. Matthew tells us that the Pharisees come together with the Herodians. The Pharisees did not want to give money to their pagan oppressors and so were opposed to paying taxes to Rome. On the other hand, King Herod's position of power came courtesy of the Romans, so even though the taxes were widely considered to be oppressive, the Herodians had a vested interest in keeping the Roman taxes paid. Therefore, the Pharisees and the Herodians each reflected one of the horns of the dilemma.

Then came the question, “Is it lawful to pay taxes to the Emperor or not?” This reference is obviously to Jewish Law, also called the Law of Moses. Clearly, it was lawful to pay the tax by Rome’s standards; the question was whether it was proper for a Jew to do so.

It would seem that they have presented Jesus with no way out. He can’t speak against the tax, for that would anger the Herodians and lead to a charge of treason against Rome. He could not speak in favor of the tax without alienating most of the crowds that followed him.

Jesus asks for one of the coins used in paying the tax. This is Jesus’ own trap, for it proves at least one among the questioners to be a hypocrite. For the coin used for the tax was a silver Denarius with the image of Caesar on one side, and on the reverse, the image of a woman named Pax or personified peace. The coins were against Jewish Law, which prohibited graven images.

You will recall the incident when Jesus chased moneychangers from the outer courts of the Temple. These moneychangers had a business because one was required to exchange pagan currency for Temple coins before going to do business in the Temple. Carrying the image of Caesar into the Temple was considered sinful. But note that when Jesus asks for a Denarius, one is quickly located and handed to Jesus.

Jesus then asks the question that everyone in Israel could have answered without a coin in hand. In our reading for this morning, we used the New Revised Standard Version, which said, “Whose head is this and whose title?” That translation misses the point of his argument. The word they translate as “head” is “icon,” a Greek word better translated as “image.” The word “title” is better translated as “likeness.” When they answer Jesus’ question, saying that the image and likeness are “Caesar’s,” Jesus replies that they are to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s. Again, the translation covers something better revealed. It could also be translated as “give back” rather than “give” or “render.” Give Caesar back those things that are Caesar’s. It is his coin anyway, who cares if you give Caesar back his coin for the tax?

Then Jesus gives the most amazing line of the short encounter when he continues by saying that we are to “give back to God the things that are God’s.” It leaves everyone calculating what exactly is God’s that we are supposed to give back. And in case you were wondering, the clue was the word “icon” or “image” and the word “likeness.”

Jesus’ answer came from Genesis 1:26-27, which says, “And God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness,’” and goes on to state “God created humankind in his Image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

The principle is this: Just as the coin has Caesar’s icon on it, so it is Caesar’s, we were made in the image and likeness of God, so we are God’s. Jesus affirmed the tax while making it all but irrelevant. Jesus implies that, though we do owe the state, there are limits to what we owe. Yet, Jesus places no limits regarding what we owe to God.

This text is often used to talk about stewardship in terms of what you give to the church. But this is no passage on the tithe. For if giving 10 percent of our income is all we do, we would fall well more than 90 percent shy of the mark. Jesus says that everything you have and everything you are is God's already.

While this would certainly apply to the money you make, the formula is not that you give 100 percent of your income to God, for God knows you need the money for the necessities of life. The teaching is that once you have given God some of the money you earn, don't feel that you have bought off an obligation. God wants to share in some of your time and energy, so the 100 percent formula relates to your calendar as well as your wallet.

What God wants is nothing less than to come and abide in your heart. The point is that you have been made in the image and likeness of God. God loves you. God keeps your picture in the divine wallet and on the heavenly refrigerator. Jesus did not care about the tax, for his real concern was that you live into the image and likeness of the God who lovingly created you.

You begin to live into the image and likeness of God by conforming your life to be more like Jesus' life. Giving back to God through the church does matter, but merely giving money to the government, to this church or anywhere else is only part of the picture.

To live more fully into that image and likeness of God that is in you, give back your heart to God – for it is God's anyway. When the time comes for communion in just a little while, I would encourage everyone, no matter what your denominational background, to come forward to receive the bread and wine of communion. And if you have not yet been baptized, then come forward for a blessing. For at this altar, we can meet Jesus anew every time we worship. For in answer to the question, "What are the things that are God's which we are to give back to God?" the answer is, "You."

This sermon, written by the Rt. Rev. Frank Logue, originally ran for Proper 24A in 2014.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

V: The Lord be with you.

R: *And also with you.*

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Suffrages B

V. Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;

R. Govern them and uphold them, now and always.

V. Day by day we bless you;

R. We praise your name for ever.

V. Lord, keep us from all sin today;

R. Have mercy upon us, Lord, have mercy.

V. Lord, show us your love and mercy;

R. For we put our trust in you.

V. In you, Lord, is our hope;

R. And we shall never hope in vain.

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, who inspired your servant Luke the physician to set forth in the Gospel the love and healing power of your Son: Graciously continue in your Church this love and power to heal, to the praise and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Collect for Sundays

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Mission

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

Here may be sung a hymn.

Authorized intercessions and thanksgivings may follow.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen. 2 Corinthians 13:14*

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