

20th Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We judge others before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before the needs of our neighbors. Humble us, have mercy on us, and turn us again to life in you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen.**

WORSHIP SONG

Is He Worthy?

Worship Team

1 Do you feel the world is broken, We do
Do you feel the shadows deepen, We do
But do you know that all the dark
Won't stop the light from getting through, We do
Do you wish that you could see it all made new
We do

2 Is all creation groaning, It is
Is a new creation coming, It is
Is the glory of the Lord
To be the light within our midst, It is
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this
It is

Chorus Is anyone worthy, Is anyone whole
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's Root
And the Lamb who died to ransom the slave
Is He worthy, Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory
Is He worthy of this, He is

3 Does the Father truly love us, He does
Does the Spirit move among us, He does
And does Jesus our Messiah
Hold forever those He loves, He does
Does our God intend to dwell again with us, He does

Chorus Is anyone worthy
Is anyone whole
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's Root
And the Lamb who died to ransom the slave
From ev'ry people and tribe every nation and tongue
He has made us a kingdom and priests
To God to reign with the Son
Is He worthy, Is He worthy
Of all blessing and honor and glory
Is He worthy, Is He worthy, Is He worthy of this, He is
Is He worthy, Is He worthy, He is, He is

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

SONG OF PRAISE

Revelation Song

Worship Team

1 Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain
Holy holy is He
Sing a new song to Him Who sits on
Heaven's mercy seat

Chorus Holy holy holy
Is the Lord God Almighty
Who was and is and is to come
With all creation I sing
Praise to the King of kings
You are my ev'rything
And I will adore You

2 Clothed in rainbows of living color
Flashes of lightning rolls of thunder
Blessing and honor strength and glory
And power be to You the only wise King

3 Filled with wonder awestruck wonder
At the mention of Your name
Jesus Your name is power breath and living water
Such a marv'lous mystery yeah

PRAYER OF THE DAY The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray . . . **God of all the earth, created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; freed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

READING: Exodus 33:12-23

¹²Moses 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 favor in my sight.' ¹³Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor 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 favor 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."

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found

favor in my sight, and I know you by name.” ¹⁸Moses said, “Show me your glory, I pray.” ¹⁹And 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.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

Keith Williams

GOSPEL: Matthew 22:15-22

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] 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.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor Ali Tranvik

I was at Target the other day and suddenly found myself among Christmas decorations—Santa Claus statues, Christmas tree skirts, candy canes. If this sounds odd to you, you’re right. We haven’t even gotten to Halloween. Despite this over-aggressive, mid-October marketing, I do have to admit: all of this Christmas stuff did make me start thinking about...Advent.

I love Advent. It’s a time when the church reflects on what it means to have a God who seeks to be known by us. A God who wants to get close to us. A God who loves us so much that he takes on a human body so that he can be touched and heard and felt and seen by us. Perhaps even more this year than usual, with all that has happened, I yearn to know this God.

Moses did too. In today’s story from Exodus, Moses says to God, “Show me your glory” (33:18). God does not let Moses see God’s face directly, but God does let Moses get a glimpse as God passes by. God may not be able to be seen, but God wants to be known (Claiborne).

It is the *opposite* with Caesar. If we fast-forward in our Gospel story from Matthew, we see Caesar’s image on a coin. Caesar seemed less concerned with being intimately known, but “like most politicians, Caesar wanted to be seen” (Claiborne). So he put his face everywhere, he stamped his image on everything, so that everyone could see his image.

The question at hand in this story has to do with paying taxes. The Herodians and Pharisees (two groups that were enemies until they found a common enemy in Jesus) confront Jesus, saying: “Rabbi, we know you teach the ways of God. Tell us then: Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not” (22:16-17)? Now, the Herodians and Pharisees have no intent of actually listening to or learning from Jesus. They’re playing “gotcha.” The question is a set-up. You see, to not pay taxes would be to commit a crime; they could be arrested. But to pay taxes would be to commit a sin. Why it would be a sin becomes clearer if we take a look at a Roman coin. A denarius, it’s

called, is printed with the image of the emperor Caesar on one side, and the other side was the inscribed phrase "Pontifex Maximus," meaning "high priest," a claim asserting that Caesar is not only emperor, but that he's also *Lord*. So to pay taxes would essentially be to pay tribute to—to worship—a false god. It would be idolatry. So the Herodians and the Pharisees had Jesus trapped (or at least, so they thought): he answers one way, he encourages breaking Roman law, he answers the other way, he encourages breaking Jewish law (Waskow). Either way would be warrant for his arrest (and as we've seen in stories in Matthew in recent weeks, Jesus is increasingly seen as a threat to the powers-that-be).

So presented with this trick question, Jesus (as we've *also* seen in many recent stories) isn't particularly keen on answering questions directly. Instead, Jesus responds with a question of his own. After asking them for a coin (his own pockets were empty), Jesus asks: "Whose head is this, and whose title?" (22:20). Good rabbis, I've been told, always answer questions with questions. There's a Jewish legend about a rabbi who was asked, "Why do you answer questions with questions?" and the rabbi answered, "Why not" (Waskow, Claiborne)?

So "whose image is on this coin?" Jesus asks, turning the question back on his opponents. "The emperor's," they reply. And then Jesus responds with a line as vague and perplexing as it is well-known: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

What is Jesus saying here? What is this whole exchange all about? What was Jesus trying to tell the Herodians and Pharisees? What might he be trying to tell *us*?

In an effort to get at some of these questions, we often tend to focus on what belongs to Caesar, making Caesar the center of the story. But I want to suggest that the story is actually not about Caesar, but about God. It's that *second* part of what Jesus says—"but give to God what is God's"—that I want us to look at today. What belongs to God?

Lance Pape, a seminary teacher, invites us to use our imaginations a bit here as we ponder what is God's. He invites us to first imagine "Jesus flipping that coin [that bears Caesar's image] in his hand a few times, and then tossing it casually aside." Then he invites us to imagine "Jesus' eyes rising to meet those of his opponents, confronting each of them with an unspoken question hanging in the air: "And *you*, my friend: Whose image do *you* bear?"

If what has the image of Caesar belongs to Caesar, then what has the image of God belongs to God. So what bears the image of God? Genesis tells us that *we* do, that we are made in God's image, according to God's likeness (1:26). This means that the Herodians bear the image of God. That the Pharisees bear the image of God. That Caesar himself bears the image of God. That I bear the image of God (shocking, I know). That *you* bear the image of God.

And if we keep looking around, we find that there is no-body and no-thing that *doesn't* have God's image imprinted on it! I did a bit of research this week and learned that there are 300,000 different kinds of plant species, over 1.25 million kind of animals, 900,000 kinds of insects (which is 900,000 too many in my book), 29,000 kinds of fish, 40,000 different kinds of *rice* (Claiborne). The image of God is imprinted on people of different religions, people of different ages, people of different ethnicities and races, people of different sexualities and gender identities, people of different physical and mental abilities. It's imprinted on our family and friends, of course, but also on our enemies. The image of God is imprinted all throughout the world around us...on everyone and everything.

If Jesus is saying "whatever bears Caesar's image belongs to Caesar, but whatever bears God's image belongs to God," then there isn't anything left to give to anyone else. It's all God's (Anderson)! Meaning even that which we give to Caesar is God's. We may hold coins that bear the image of modern-day Ceasars in our hands, but God holds us (and, well, you know how it goes: the whole world) in his hands...

Today's passage is often used to justify the lines drawn between church and state. Jesus' words are used by many American Protestants to assert two different realms with two different rulers, and it's our job to divvy up what belongs to who—some stuff to Caesar, some stuff to God. But again, I want to draw our attention to God and God's stuff, as so often becomes story about Caesar and Caesar's stuff. To be clear, the church is not the state; trying to baptize our political party or platform or country means we've conflated Caesar's rule by sword with Jesus' rule by

love that ended on a cross. Conflating Caesar and God, we forget that how we live out our faith is not by conquering but by loving. That we worship a *very different* kind of king. That what is God's is too big and too glorious to be contained on a coin or represented in a flag or captured in a face.

But, this passage is *not* saying that faith can be *separated* from our shared social world (which includes, of course, partisan politics). It's not saying that faith is something we can simply "set down" once we leave church. It's not saying that "life can be neatly divided into pigeonholes of sacred and secular, public and private...this does not work in a world where everything belongs to God" (Anderson). In a world where everything belongs to God, everything becomes a site where we can live out our faith, including the realm of partisan politics. Including the economic sphere. Mark Tranvik (who I've heard used to be a pastor here?) talks about faith as a *lens* through which we can see all of life. A lens through which we see all our vocations—as family members, church members, employees, neighbors, as people called to be in relationship with others (not for our own sake but for theirs), perhaps especially with others who we disagree with, especially with others who are most different from us...

To conclude...if everything belongs to God, then what, at the end of the day, belongs to Caesar? Anything? Does Caesar truly get nothing? Well, he gets the coin, right? The coin with his own image on it. But as one person in our Bible Study suggested this week, Caesar gets the coin, but Jesus seems to be saying that coins don't have the value we think they do anyway. And that's the twist! The Herodians and Pharisees may have tried to get Jesus twisted with a "trick" question, but Jesus reframes the question completely.

My friends, as we head into the days ahead, I invite you to think about, in your own lives, what it means that everything—including us!—belongs to God. I invite you to think about what it means to live as people who bear God's image in our world today. Today's story gives us a place to start. Our call is to wake up each morning, as Luther suggests, and mark our foreheads again with the cross of Christ that has been imprinted on us at our births and in our baptisms. Our call, as people imprinted with God's image, is to pledge allegiance to no one or nothing (not to a flag or a country or a government, not to a ruler or a political party, not to our job, our bank account, our home, not to our family, not even to our church), but to God, who is Lord of everyone and everything. Our call, as people imprinted with God's image, is to see God's image in ourselves (which can be incredibly hard), and to see God's image in everyone else (which can be incredibly hard). Our call, as people imprinted with God's image, is to *live* this image of God, which is love, and to share it boldly with our neighbors.

In *this* way we give to God what is God's. Amen!

Sources:

- Arthur Waskow, "God and Caesar: The Image on the Coin," *The Shalom Center*, Oct 6, 2004.
- Lance Pape, "Commentary on Matthew 22:15-22," *Working Preacher*, Oct 19, 2014.
- Luke Powery, "Pledging Allegiance," sermon preached at Duke University Chapel, Oct 22, 2017.
- Mary Anderson, "Sunday, October 16: Matthew 22:15-22," *Christian Century*, Oct 4, 2011.
- Shane Claiborne, "God's Image and Caesar's Counterfeit," sermon preached at Duke University Chapel, Oct 19, 2014.

HYMN OF THE DAY #793 Be Thou My Vision

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art:
thou my best thought both by day and by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.</p> | <p>2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my
pow'r.</p> |
| <p>3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.</p> | <p>4 Light of my soul, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.</p> |

CONFESSION OF FAITH Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

OFFERTORY

Thank you for continuing to support and sustain the work of Cross of Glory during this time. Please send your offering to the church (5929 Brooklyn Blvd, Brooklyn Center, MN 55429), or contact Sue in the office to learn more about how to set up automatic, online giving. We are grateful for your generosity!

OFFERTORY RESPONSE O God Who Made Us in Your Likeness

O God who made us in your likeness and
gave the world into our care that we might love and serve creation,
we come before you with this prayer:
Restore in us your image, O God.

To bear your image gives us freedom to love, to care for, and to choose;
Yet we fail short of your intention and our creative pow'rs abuse.
Restore in us your image, O God.

We have misused our given freedom, rebelled and followed our own schemes
in place of God we have invented vain idols spun from fears and dreams
Restore in us your image, O God

Where shall we turn when our ways fail us?
We have no help but God alone.
Teach us, O God, your truth; reclaim us, till in our lives your will is known.
Restore in us your image, O God

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have given us the gifts of your good creation. Nourish us at the tables we find ourselves today, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through Jesus Christ, the bread of life. Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE

Trusting that God holds the whole world in his hands, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need..

God of all, you imprint your image on all of us and on all of creation. We give you thanks for your image in each person here at Cross of Glory. Empower us to live into this image in all we do, and equip us with the vision to see your image in each other, in the other. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of creation, your glory extends throughout the heavens and the earth, land, and sea. As we splash ourselves with the waters you created, may we be reminded of our baptismal callings. Marked with the cross of Christ, empower us to rise anew each morning in a daily baptism, dying to our sins of greed, fear, and selfishness, and rising to the fullness of the life you offer in Christ Jesus. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of belonging, just as we belong to you, help us to belong to one another. Help us tend especially to those who are without shelter, hungry, lonely, or suffering in mind, body, or spirit. We pray especially for Gil Hartlage, Terry Stejskal, Don Custer, Vicky Jacobson, Keith William's uncle, Chet and Marcia Janasz's daughter, and Gary Jacobsen's father and sister. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of abundance, by your Spirit, help us live lives of generosity, freely and joyfully sharing our time, our talents, and our treasure. As we approach this stewardship season, guide us give to you what is yours. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of life, as you raised Jesus from the dead, so raise up those who have died in you. Today, we especially remember Bev Hoiium, Arlys Puls, and Dorothy Retotar, the family of Marian Priest at the death of her brother, and the family of Sue and Bruce Vukelich at the death of Bruce's cousin. We give thanks for their witness, O God, and we pray that you surround these families with your loving presence as they grieve. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Like the hearers of your words in today's Gospel, let us too be amazed by your words and by your works in our lives, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us...

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, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into life. **Amen.**

SENDING FORTH SONG #655 Son of God, Eternal Savior

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Son of God, eternal Savior,
source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
hallows all our human race,
you our head, who, throned in glory,
for your own will ever plead:
fill us with your love and pity,
heal our wrong, and help our need.</p> | <p>2 As you, Lord, have lived for others,
so may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted;
freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
yours the wealth of land and sea;
we but stewards of your bounty
held in solemn trust will be.</p> |
| <p>3 Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of peace;
hush the storm of strife and passion,
bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
by your silent hours of pain,
quench our fevered thirst of pleasure,
stem our selfish greed of gain.</p> | <p>4 Son of God, eternal Savior,
source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
hallows all our human race:
by your praying, by your willing
that your people should be one,
grant, oh, grant our hope's fruition:
here on earth your will be done.</p> |

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Give to God What is God's.
Thanks be to God.

The Order of Service is from Evangelical Lutheran Worship which is commended for use in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
Sundays and Seasons © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #024779. All rights reserved.
Offertory Response: Words: Carl P. Daw Jr., © 1994 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Music: Alfred V. Fedak, © 1994 Selah Publishing Co. Inc, Kingston, NY 12401. All rights reserved.
Used by permission

<p style="text-align: center;">Congregational Support as of 8/31/2020 Annual Budget: \$225,000.00 Year to Date Budgeted: \$150,166.68 Year to Date Received: \$147,842.03 Difference: \$-2,324,65</p>
--

Community Announcements

- Following the Zoom worship service, you're invited to Virtual Coffee Hour, an opportunity to connect with one another for a brief time of small-group fellowship. Friends, family, and first-timers are warmly welcome!
- Join us for Bible Study on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am on Zoom as we explore the texts for the upcoming week.
- Third quarter giving statements were sent out this past week. If you have questions about your 2020 pledge or giving history, contact Sue in the office (svukelich@crossofglory.us).
- Following Zoom worship next Sunday, Oct 25, all are welcome to take part in Table Talks, our monthly Adult Ed Sunday School. This month will serve as an introductory session to Table Talks. We will discuss particular topics in the months to follow. Contact Pastor Ali with any questions.
- Please reach out to Pastor Ali with any other announcements or pastoral concerns and needs. You can reach her by email (atranvik@crossofglory.us) or phone (763-533-8602).