



Prayers of confession and assurance of forgiveness

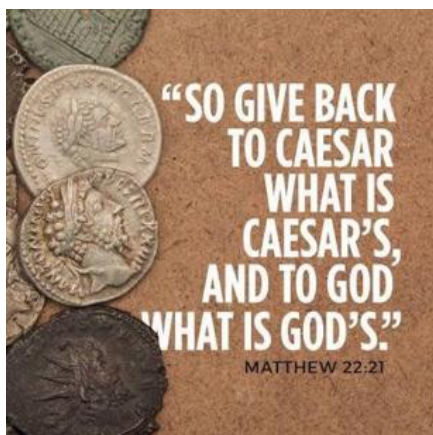
Faithful God, forgive us when we mar your image and others don't see your compassion mirrored in our lives. Forgive us when the mark we leave on the lives of those we encounter is a negative one. Forgive us when we seek only to identify with the powerful and not the vulnerable. Forgive us when we give our allegiance to that which is not healthy. Forgive us when we are reluctant to identify as your disciples. In Jesus' name we pray. Dear God, we thank you for your gift of forgiveness, and that you remain loyal to us, even when our loyalties drift elsewhere; that, in spite of our mistakes, your grace ensures your imprint on our lives isn't fully erased; that, because of your love we can be confident in belonging, and begin again with your blessing. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer – Our Father

Reflection

This is a very familiar reading, with ideas and themes that we all wonder about. What does our faith have to do with the secular world, how important is it that we are good citizens? When do we need to stand up, or protest, or act in ways that seem disruptive? What are we supposed to do about money, its accumulation and distribution?

Jesus is having this conversation with people who are trying to trip him up, in the context of all that he has said about "the Kingdom of God". In Galilee at this time the Romans have invaded, put a collaborator in charge and are telling the people they need to pay more taxes to fund this invasion.



Call to Worship

Come let us worship the creator God who calls us by name and loves us unconditionally

Singing the faith 21 – Born in Song

Born in song! God's people have always been singing. Born in song! Hearts and voices raised. So today we worship together; God alone is worthy to be praised.

Praise to God! For he is the one who has made us. Praise to God! We his image bear. Heaven and earth are full of his glory; let creation praise him everywhere

Christ is King! He left all the glory of heaven. Christ is King! Born to share in our pain; crucified for sinners atoning, risen, exalted, soon to come again.

Sing the song! God's spirit is poured out among us. Sing the song! He has made us anew. Ev'ry member part of the body; given his power, his will to seek and do.

Tell the world! All power to Jesus is given, Tell the world! He is with us always. Spread the word, that all may receive him; every tongue confess and sing his praise.

Then the end! Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory. Then the end of all earthly days. Yet above the song will continue; all his people still shall sing his praise.

Reading Matthew 22 v 15-22

Of course everyone is unhappy about this, but to say so would get you into massive trouble; already many people have been crucified and their bodies left visible to the population, as a deterrent for further protest. Jesus asks for a coin from his questioners, this shows that they already have these Roman coins in their possession, they are handling the coins with images of the ruler on them, something that was forbidden to Jews. Jesus looks at the image and inscription, which gives Ceasar the title of God, and says that this coin needs to go back to Ceasar, but that God deserves His own coin given to him. What belongs to God? – we all do; made in his image and loved by him since creation.

What is our response to this? Do we live as if we are made in the image of God? Do we think about all the people we see as children of God? Sometimes this is a very difficult exercise, but a necessary one.

StF 446 – I will offer up my life

I will offer up my life in spirit and truth, pouring out the oil of love as my worship to you. I surrender I must give my every part; Lord, receive the sacrifice of a broken heart.

Chorus *Jesus what can I give, what can I bring to so faithful a friend, to so loving a King? Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung as a praise of your name for the things you have done? O my words could not tell, not even in part of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.*

You deserve my every breath for you've paid the great cost; giving up your life to death, even death on a cross. You took all my shame away, there defeated my sin, opened up the gates of heaven and have beckoned me in.

Chorus

Prayers

Gracious God, we reflect on the words of Jesus and ask that you will help us to live as if we truly belong to you. Loving God, we bring you your children whatever their age; whatever their background; whatever their gender. We come in the knowledge that you love and care for each one; that you are aware of our needs and opportunities; that you will offer comfort and challenge; that you will hear our prayer and respond. Thank you that we are yours. We live in times of conflict across your world, this gives us pain, help us to be people who love generously, who think of ways to be peacemakers and who attempt to live in ways that empowers others. We offer our prayers, spoken, thought and felt, in the name of Jesus and the power of the Spirit.

With our hands open in offering

Lord this day, may we allow your love to flow in and through us. May we be generous with our time and resources, for the glory of your name. **Amen**

