

Nurturing Faith... Every Day in Every Way

October 18, 2020

Isaiah 45:1-7
Psalm 96:1-9[10-13]
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22



20th Sunday after Pentecost

Hello friends! I'd like to ask you some questions today. How many aardvarks did Abraham bring on the ark? (none...it was Noah!) How many books are in the Bible? (66) How many Gospels are in the Old Testament? (none, they are in the New Testament) So, how did you do? What did you think about those trick questions I threw out there?

In our gospel message from Matthew, we hear about the Pharisees, who were a group of religious men who really didn't like Jesus very much because people were listening to Jesus, and not to them. They were always trying to trick Jesus with the questions that they asked him so that they could catch him off guard. So one day the Pharisees sent over a group of their friends, the Herodians to ask Jesus, "Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"

That might not sound like a trick question to us, but Jesus knew exactly what was going on. The imperial tax meant that the Romans forcefully took money from the Jews for themselves. The Romans could do almost anything they wanted, and the Jews had to do everything they said or they were heavily punished.

Now, let's look at our possible answers to this question. If Jesus said, "Yes, you should pay those taxes," then many of the Jews would get very angry. The Jews didn't like the Romans, and they didn't like anyone who supported them either, so they would easily turn away from Jesus if he showed support for them.

So what do you think? Would that have been a good answer? No, it wouldn't have been. Jesus's followers would stop following and gone back to the Pharisees.

Ok, so let's try the opposite. If Jesus said, "No, you should not pay those taxes," the Jews would have been VERY happy. They probably would have even thought Jesus could make Caesar and the Romans stop. However, this would have sent Jesus straight to jail.

So, what about this one? Would that have been a good answer? Nope, it wouldn't have been either. With Jesus in jail, the followers would have no one to follow, so they would go back to the Pharisees.

No matter what Jesus said, the Pharisees would win. Or so they thought. Jesus had a different answer for them. He didn't say "Yes", and he didn't say "No". He knew they were trying to trick him, and he had the perfect answer; one the Pharisees never even thought of.

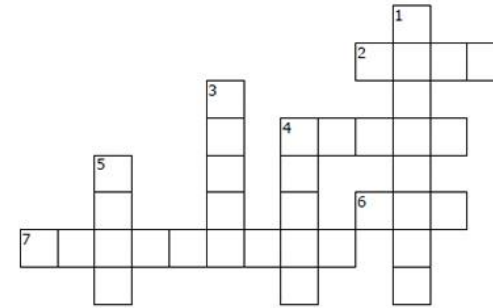
Jesus asked them to please show Him, and everyone around them, some money. They didn't really know what was going on, but they pulled out a coin. Just like our money, there was a picture of someone on the coin; and on this coin, it was a picture of Caesar, and it even had his name on it!

When you see something with some's name on it, what does that usually mean? That it belongs to that person. So Jesus's answer was simple. He instructed them give Caesar what is his, and to give God what was God's.

The trick question didn't work. It actually just made people listen to Jesus even more! Everyone was amazed with Jesus' wisdom, and his ability to provide the right answer when there wasn't one.

Sometimes there are questions we can't answer. Maybe the answer is too difficult for us to understand. Or maybe we think the wrong answer is the right one. And sometimes, we really just believe there is no right answer. But when we are faced with those tough questions, we just need to remember one thing; Jesus always knows the answer. Gracious God, you sent your Son, Jesus to show us the right and good way to live our lives. Help us to follow his lead. Amen.

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- A usually flat piece of metal used for money.
- A statement that agrees with fact or reality.
- To give someone money in return for something.
- A religious group who were strict followers of the law.

DOWN

- A picture of a person -- usually showing the face.
- The details of how something is going to be accomplished.
- Money paid to the government.
- A situation from which it is difficult or impossible to escape.

TAXES	TRAP	PORTRAIT	PLANS
TRUTH	PAY	PHARISEES	COIN

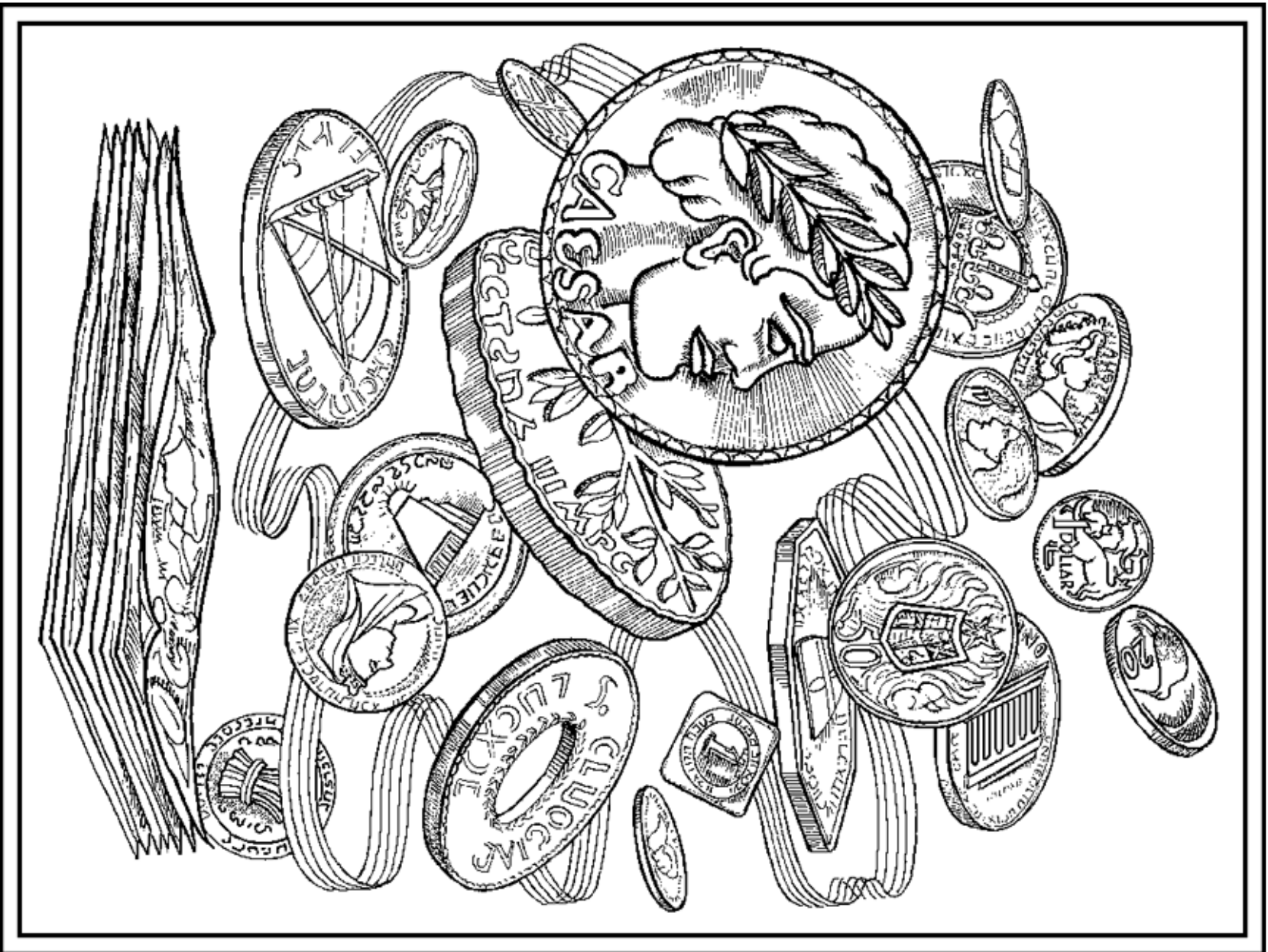
Activity: Make up a Trivia game to play based on your family. Ask questions like...What is your brother's middle name or What are your grown-ups' favorite colors or favorite foods. See who knows the family best!

Discussion Question: Jesus says "Give to God what is God's." What is it that belongs to God?

Family Table Prayer for October: October brings hoodies, pumpkins, and spooky fun. God, we are thankful for all that you have done.

With each happy thought we are reminded of the glory of our days and how you are with us in so many ways. Amen.

October Memory Verse: Psalm 19:1 The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the sky proclaims God's handiwork.



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