



Daily Prayer For Individuals and Families

Adopted from *The Lutheran Service Book* (p. 294)

The 18th of October 2020 A.D. – Stewardship Sunday

This brief service is intended as a simple form of daily prayer for individuals and families. When more than one person is present, the Psalm and other parts of the service may be spoken responsively, with one person reading the words in regular type and the others responding with the words in bold type. The Creed and Prayers that are in bold type are to be said by all.

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Opening Psalm *From Psalm 121*

The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.
I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.

For those with access to the internet, you may now play today's worship video, located on Bethany's website (www.bethanycr.org) under the Worship Resources tab and then continue with the Nicene Creed. Everyone else may continue the service as printed....

Holy Gospel

(Matthew 22:15-22)

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle [Jesus] in his talk. ¹⁶And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the

coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” ²¹They said, “Caesar’s.” Then he said to them, “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ²²When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

Sermon – † *An Answer without an Answer* †

The Nicene’ Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life † of the world to come. Amen.**



The Lord’s Prayer



**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;
ive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
; the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Bethany's Prayer List

Those suffering after the storm and during the pandemic
The homeless & the unemployed
Dee Rose- hospice care at Meth-Wick nursing facility
Workers in the Church, here at Bethany and throughout the world

Thanksgiving

Ian Stevens & Bailey Bowman- wedding 10/17
Brent & Rachel (grandchildren of Bonnie Breiholz)- recovering after COVID-19

Healing

Nancy LaFratta (mother of Carolyn Sternowski)- recovering after broken hip
Kristi Montague- second eye surgery on 10/19
Darrel Peterson (father of Janet Hoech)- life sustaining cancer treatment
Kent Zenor- recovering after second eye surgery
Darlene Eckert- recovering after broken leg
Aaron Moffett- recovering after eye surgery
Jeff, Angela & Wes Keslar- recovering after COVID-19
Dave Christian - recovering after surgery
Kris Dunn - health issues

Shut-Ins

Wayne Schilling- at home

Mourning

Deetz family- mourning the death of Rollis on 10/14
Crow family- mourning the death of their uncle, Harold

Serving Our Country

Taylor & Charlie (grandsons of Kim Neuhaus) – serving in the U.S. Armed Forces

Collect of the Day

Let us pray... O God, the protector of all who trust in You, have mercy on us that with You as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Concluding Prayers

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that you would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



✠ *An Answer without an Answer* ✠

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In our text for today, Matthew tells us that the Pharisees came up with a plan to trap or entangle Jesus in His own words. Sound familiar? On October 13th and 14th the Senate Judiciary Committee held confirmation hearings for Judge Amy Coney Barrett’s appointment to the Supreme Court where senators were able to ask her questions. And regardless of what you think of this process or of Judge Barrett’s nomination, it quickly became evident to all that some senators, like the Pharisees and Herodians in our text, were trying to trap her in her own words. There was, of course, a lot of lecturing and political grand standing during the process, but there were also questions that seemed intended to put Judge Barrett into a corner that she would not be able to get out of. Whether or not they succeeded, is up to you. But as I watched the highlights of the proceedings, I realized that as wonderful as our senators are, they are mere amateurs when it comes to laying traps with their questions.

They could have learned a thing or two from the Pharisees and the Herodians in our text this weekend. You see, the Pharisees were religious leaders in Israel and the Herodians, thanks to the Romans, were the political leaders of the day. While they may have had differing interests overall, they both disliked Jesus, whom they both believed threatened their power. So, they laid a trap for Him – a political and religious trap that there seemed to be no way out of. They asked Jesus if it was lawful, that is – if it is pleasing to God – to pay taxes to the emperor whose legions were occupying their land. It was the perfect trap, so they thought. For if Jesus said that it was lawful, then the people of Israel would have been furious that Jesus seemed to support the Roman occupiers. If Jesus said that it was not lawful to pay the tax, the Romans would have quickly moved in to silence this perceived insurrectionist. For the enemies of Jesus, it seemed like a win-win situation. But what we learn in our text this morning is that when it comes to those who oppose Jesus; when it comes to those who are evil; they can never win.

Jesus does not answer their question - He will not play their game. Instead, He goes on the offensive. Knowing their intentions, He asks, “*Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.*” When they produce a denarius, (a small Roman coin worth about a day’s wage), Jesus asks whose picture is on it. As was common at the time, the emperor’s image adorned the coin. So Jesus, avoiding the trap and convicting the evil against Him all at the same time as only He could do, tells them, “*...render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the*

things that are God's". We are then told that those who tried to trap Him marveled at His answer as they went away.

Now, being that this Sunday is Stewardship Sunday here at Bethany, you might believe that Jesus' answer is a teaching on how Christians should live and support both the religious and secular worlds with their time, talent, and treasure. But looking at what Jesus says a little more closely, we can see that Jesus' answer is really no answer at all – at least to the question given to Him. After all, Jesus says give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. Think about that for a moment...does that even make sense? What does Caesar (or anyone for that matter) have that doesn't belong to God? If we take what Jesus says as a real answer, then we are left with the conclusion that we shouldn't give anything to our governing authorities or that God doesn't want Christians to pay their taxes. But that's not true. Paul writes in Romans 13:7, "*Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.*" Just like Judge Barrett dodged and avoided answering many of the questions posed to her this last week, Jesus gives an answer without giving an answer to the Pharisees' and Herodian's question, and they are amazed at how He did it. So, what does this all mean, especially as we have Stewardship Sunday this Sunday here at Bethany? What do we do with Jesus' "non-answer" today?

First, we remember what makes Jesus' answer not really an answer in the first place – there is nothing that doesn't belong to God. Of course, God gives to people, both good and bad, things that they need to survive and in many cases to enjoy the creation He has made. But being that all of this comes only from God, this really only makes us managers or stewards of what He has given to us. Therefore, we use all that we have, (be it our money, our skills, our knowledge, even our bodies!) for His purposes and for His glory. If we use anything we have for something that is contrary to His will, then whatever that is has become an idol in our lives and we have sinned against our Lord. Of course, we all have done this, which is why we need to remember the second reason we hear this text today.

Matthew goes out of his way in our reading for this Sunday to show that the Pharisees' and the Herodians' resistance to Jesus was nothing but evil. Not only did they not believe Him, but they tried to stop Him – even have Him killed! Matthew says things like: the Pharisees *plotted to entangle* Jesus; that Jesus was *aware of their malice*; and that He called them *hypocrites*. Can you come away from this thinking that these are nice people? This resistance to Jesus is real, powerful, scheming evil. And yet, as we see, it doesn't even touch Jesus. He is able to overcome it. He defeats it – and not just here, but all throughout His ministry. Every time His enemies try to trap Him, He gets away or beats them with His authoritative teaching or power.

However, some may say, "Look at Him on the cross!" It looks like they finally got Him. But then we remember what Jesus Himself says in John 10, "*I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.*" Jesus has always defeated evil, especially when He died on the cross to forgive us our sins.

It goes without saying that we're all sinners. There have been times in all of lives where we have used some gift of God for purposes other than His own. It also goes without saying this Stewardship Sunday that the last seven months have been unlike any we have ever seen in our lives. And therefore, we need to remember that Christ is our conquering Victor over all our enemies. Not only has He beat His earthly enemies, but He has also conquered all evil on our behalf. He did this when He died on the cross and rose again. Therefore, there is no doubt that

Christ has defeated sin, death, and the devil once and for all. And He has done this so that we may eternal life and live as His people – using all of the gifts He give to us for His purposes.

These are the reasons that Christians practice good Stewardship! God has given us everything that we have, so that we can use it to His glory. But when we fall into the sinful traps of Satan and use God’s blessing for evil, God is always ready to forgive because His Son has defeated all evil for us. Knowing that we’re forgiven and that all of the glory of God’s Kingdom belongs to us through Christ’s victory over evil, let us throw off everything that might hinder us from loving Him and one another and be Good Stewards of all that He has given. Amen.