

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

A Setback for a Setup

October 18, 2020

Countless times during Christ's mission in human flesh for the sins of the world, the Pharisees and others tried to test, trap, and trick Jesus, thinking He would suffer a setback to His ministry. Time and time again, Jesus in His divine wisdom and teaching would instead turn those times into a setup for teaching about many things regarding life on earth and the kingdom of heaven. We, too, face times of testing, trapping, and tricking, though not from Pharisees, but from this world, the devil, and our own sinful flesh, and often we face setbacks. We are wise to turn to the one who has set us up for forgiveness, mercy, and a new life through His own life, death, and rising. Rejoicing in His grace, in response to His love, we faithfully, "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

"Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us" [LSB 851]

1 Lord of Glory, You have bought us, With Your life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones, That tremendous sacrifice;
And with that have freely given, Blessings countless as the sand
To the unthankful and the evil, With Your own unsparing hand.

2 Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give You, Gladly, freely of Your own.
With the sunshine of Your goodness, Melt our thankless hearts of stone
Till our cold and selfish natures, Warmed by You, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed, 'Tis to give than to receive.

3 Wondrous honor You have given, To our humblest charity
In Your own mysterious sentence, "You have done it all to Me."
Can it be, O gracious Master, That You deign for alms to sue,
Saying by Your poor and needy, "Give as I have giv'n to you"?

4 Lord of glory, You have bought us, With Your life-blood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones, That tremendous sacrifice.
Give us faith to trust You boldly, Hope, to stay our souls on You;
But, oh, best of all Your graces, With Your love our love renew.

PRAYER

O God, as there is no other like You, help us to give to You the things that are Yours, that we serve only You. Govern all things in this world so Your Church will serve You with conviction in confidence and peace, and that faith, hope, and love be known and shown in our earthly journeys as Your kingdom comes; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 45:1-7*

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him and to loose the belts of kings, to open doors before him that gates may not be closed:
² "I will go before you and level the exalted places, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze and cut through the bars of iron, ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name, I name you, though you do not know me. ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, ⁶ that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form light

and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these things.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 22:15–22*

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. ¹⁶ And 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. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, “Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin for the tax.” And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” ²¹ They 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.” ²² When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

The Pharisees would have known the words from Isaiah, “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God,” however they certainly did not act like it. The question about paying taxes was a trick question intended to discredit Jesus. You would think they would have learned by now after so many attempts to discredit Him that this time would not work either. What does continued attempts indicate? The Pharisees did not see God as their Lord as they continued to deny Jesus. However, the Lord will not be denied. Jesus’ coming is one of love not the selfish self-centeredness of the Pharisees. We can easily make the same mistake ourselves. This is why God’s love is key for us as well. It was because of love that Jesus came to live the life we could never live. In love Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and to rise from the dead to prove the victory there is over sin, death, and Satan’s power. The Lord is determined to share His love freely. It is because of His love that we can look beyond ourselves and respond in the same kind of love and be free of our own self-centeredness at the same time. The Gospel is all about God’s love for us. Having received His forgiveness by faith in Jesus’ death and resurrection, we have been filled with His love so that we can in turn love others as He has loved us.

LORD’S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

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.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace. Amen.