

Sunday, October 22, 2023

## Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:15-22

*You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.*  
—Amy Carmichael

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The Bible reading for today tells the story of some religious leaders asking Jesus if it was okay to pay taxes to the emperor. Jesus wondered if they had a coin of the realm. They dug into their robes and produced one, whereupon Jesus noted that the image on the coin was of Caesar. Then he said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

Speaking of coins, without looking, can you list the human faces on our coins and paper money? While you are thinking about that, let me suggest that it is the *first part of Jesus’ comment* that gets the most attention. We’re told that paying our taxes is the proper thing to do, and the implication is that taxation of individuals is necessary for the good of the whole.

But, we don’t dwell as much on the *second half* of Jesus’ comment: “Render to God the things that are God’s.”

Back to U.S. coins and currency. Our coins are stamped with images of Lincoln, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Washington and Kennedy. Our bills feature the images of Washington, Lincoln, Hamilton, Jackson, Grant and Franklin. These face shots represent our “Caesar,” and every year, Americans dig into their pockets and shell out a portion of their annual income to provide for the common good, including the benefits we enjoy as seniors.

But there is never a time when God expects us to “retire” from rendering to God. God expects us to give to God the things that belong to God.

The big question is, “What?” What belongs to God? What does God expect that we should give to the Creator of the universe, the God who reigns supreme in the heavens? We don’t have much money. We can’t sing and speak like we used to. Teaching Sunday school is out of the question. Even visiting our neighbors can be troublesome. What does God expect us to render unto him?

Everything. That is to say, “Ourselves.” All that we are in our present condition. We are God’s. We belong to God. We are in God’s hands. And that is a good place to be —Timothy Merrill.

*Prayer: I freely give my all — money, time, possessions and my gratitude. It is yours. Amen.*

*Blessings,  
Lisa & Pastor Ben Motz*

**Daily Bible Readings**
**Sunday:** Acts 19:11-41,  
2 Corinthians 1-3

**Monday:** Ezra 5-7

**Tuesday:** Ezra 8-10

**Wednesday:** Nehemiah 1-3

**Thursday:** Nehemiah 4-6

**Friday:** Nehemiah 7-9

**Saturday:** Psalms 124-126

*Verse to Remember*

*May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.  
Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves.*

—Psalm 126:5-6

# MYSTERY WORD!

	A	B	C	D	E
1	J	O	X	V	N
2	T	L	W	U	D
3	A	N	S	T	G
4	F	I	K	C	B
5	E	M	P	O	R

- Use the box to the left to fill in the letters in the grid below.
- There are 7 letters in the mystery word corresponding to the 7 columns in the grid below.
- In the grid, the correct letter may be the bottom one or the top one. Hint: Fill out all the boxes. Then see if you can find the word.

**What is the word?**


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B5	D2	C3	B1	D5	D4	E2
A1	A5	E5	D3	B4	A3	A5

**RIDDLE:** I am round on both ends and high in the middle. I have two friends that have the same first initial. What U.S. state am I?

**Answer to  
Mystery  
Word:** Justice.  
**Answer to  
Riddle:** Ohio.