

Holy Week - Tuesday

Scripture Reading

19The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. 20So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. 21So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. 22Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" 23But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 24"Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." 25He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

Luke 20:19-26

Devotional

Throughout Holy Week, we find Jesus teaching in the Temple on a daily basis (Luke 19:47). The religious leaders respond to Jesus' teachings and actions during this week similarly to how they responded previously, with the desire to silence, discredit, and kill him. Now, while the religious leaders try to trap Jesus, they instead provide him an opportunity to expound on our identity. The religious leaders ask Jesus a loaded and divisive question about whether they are to pay taxes to Caesar or not. If Jesus answers yes, then he looks like a Roman sympathizer which will anger all the people. If Jesus answers no, then Jesus appears to be a political rebel looking to overthrow Rome. The religious leaders do not care which way Jesus answers, they just want to know which group to incite after Jesus responds. Jesus, however, sees through their trap and responds accordingly. Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar and give to God the things that belong to God.

The religious leader's question about taxes quickly becomes a teaching about identity. Jesus seems to be inviting a second question in his response. If we give a denarius to Caesar because it has his likeness on it, what has God's likeness on it? Jesus is pointing us back to the beginning of the world, to the creation of humanity, to Genesis 1:27 where we read that God created humans in God's image. We are made in God's image and for us to fully live into that image, our sins need to be reckoned with. Jesus is a couple of days away from his excruciating death on a cross, where our sins will be forgiven, and Jesus here sends a reminder of our original identity. We were made in the image of God and now because of the work of Jesus on the cross, we can live into that reality and give to God what is God's, our full selves.

Response

Take some time to think through these questions:

- What identity are you living out? Is it shaped by what you see on your social media feed, your work, or something else?
- What would it look like for you today to give God what is God's?
- Spend some time in prayer today thanking God for making you in God's image and for Jesus' death on a cross that forgives our sins and allows us to fully live out of being an image bearer of God.

