



# MORNING PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020

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*Readings: Exodus 23:1-13, 18-30; Matthew 22:133; Psalm 37:1-17*

“Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21b).

The Pharisees and the Herodians (v 15) plotted to trick Jesus. They wanted to trip Him up on paying taxes to Caesar, most likely, the hated poll tax. If Jesus said it was proper to pay the tax, He would alienate Himself from the people; if He said it was not right to pay the tax, the Herodians would jump Him for treason. This was the classic “gotcha.”

Jesus perceived their malice (v 18), and asked for a coin. He asks the simple question, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” (v 20b). The answer was so obvious the Herodians had to say, “Caesar’s.” Then Jesus traps them in their own deceit: “Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Jesus begins His retort with “therefore.” His previous words set the stage: if the coin has Caesar’s image on it, and therefore belongs to him, what bears God’s image?

The image is a view of the sunset from our property we call “Near Heaven” in the North Carolina mountains. What a view! It is what I call “God’s cathedral.”

No architect can match its majesty, no contractor can build its beauty, no artist can replicate its glory. It indeed bears the imprint of its Creator.

And so do we. You and I are made in the image of God and are therefore reflections of God’s glory. We are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 134:19) and the pinnacle of God’s creative hand, the crown of creation. No wonder God went to such lengths to redeem us from sin and death!

So give Caesar his coin. Put it in perspective. The glory and majesty of earthly leaders, be they kings, tyrants or presidents, fade away when compared to God and all that He is and all that is His. The great and glorious poll tax is but a trinket compared to the wonder of our God!

For Satisfaction in Christ – Julian of Norwich  
(*ACNA Book of Common Prayer*, page 673)

O God, of your goodness, give me yourself, for you are enough for me. I can ask for nothing less that is completely to your honor, and if I do ask anything less, I shall always be in want. Only in you I have all. Amen.



Sunset view from “Near Heaven” photo credit Marc Robertson.