

so that I can more and more spot the devil's lies, the false dilemmas he wants me arguing with you over.

Is that Jesus' image, arguing, division, hurt feelings? No way, we're one in Christ, we're not opponents. I am reconciled to God, who is now my heavenly Father in Christ Jesus, who is my Lord and Saviour. We're on the same side.

Jesus now invites us to live his victory in our lives; live loving one another, caring for one another, forgiving one another, serving one another, bearing one another's burdens. Jesus sends the Spirit that we live victorious, that we live as bearers of his image in what we say and do. That we live victorious with his inscription; that's his

name, the power and authority we draw on to live out his supernatural love, naturally.

We draw on his name, Jesus' power and authority, in prayer. That's why we can have confidence that we can and do hear him speaking, so we can speak. That we see what he does; getting that image, impression, person's name, feeling, dream, seeing what Jesus does in his power and authority we can go and do likewise.

This is what Jesus gave his life for, was crucified for, so you can be sure he won't change his mind. You are reborn in his image. You bear his inscription; in other words you live by his power and authority. And in that power and authority we have the wonderful

opportunity to extend his kingdom. To extend his kingdom to the people he'll bring across our paths this week.

I pray you grow to ever greater maturity in bearing Jesus' image, living life by his power and authority, following him as king, depending on Jesus. What a precious gift we have from God, sealed in Jesus crucifixion. I pray that Jesus fills us this week with the Spirit that we live radiating his image, proclaiming his kingdom, in his power and authority. Go out this week and celebrate life with Jesus, living the victory, enjoying his presence, doing and saying what he does and says.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

18 October 2020

BEARING JESUS IMAGE & INSCRIPTION

Matthew 22:15-22



Today's Gospel reading is part of the ongoing dispute between Jesus and his opponents. Jesus humiliated the establishment with his parables about the 'Evil Tenants' who wanted to keep the goods for themselves. And the parable about the 'Wedding Feast' where people turn down the king's wedding invitation, only to be replaced by those they would have thought not worthy.

What would you do to your enemies?

The establishment now tries to trap Jesus seeking to either destroy his reputation among the people, or get him seriously off side with the Roman government. No government is in

favour of people not paying taxes.

I think they would have got me with this question because my initial reaction would be to debate the two options; pay taxes to the Roman occupying force or not. I would have entered the debate arguing for one side or the other, and totally missed what was going on.

Actually I've done that often; I've ended up taking sides, totally missing what was going on. I've done that often when talking with people, I hear one side of the story and side with them, then hear the other side of the story and realise I might have totally missed what the real issue is.

For Jesus the real issue in personal

conflict is and always will be; reconciliation. It's not about who's right and who's wrong, it is about Jesus grace and mercy winning through. Jesus' goal is reconciliation.

In our reading for today Jesus sees what is going on, and it has nothing to do with paying taxes to Caesar. What is going on is a power struggle; it is more than who is right. It is who has the power and authority to rule. Who is king? Whose king of your life?

The establishment are seeking to discredit Jesus. They definitely don't want him as king. That's why they crucify him in the end. They didn't just kill Jesus, they crucified him to totally discredit him. To be crucified meant

to the people of Jesus day, that you were cursed of God. Who's going to follow someone cursed of God? Their thinking; no-one.

They try to discredit Jesus; if he sides with the hated Roman occupying force, the people will leave him. If he goes against Rome, they will dispose of him. What a clever dilemma they have presented.

But Jesus answer puts them in a dilemma.

The coin to pay the tax has Caesars image on it, so it belongs to Caesar. The question being asked of the establishment is whose image do you bear? Who do you belong to?

The nation of Israel was created to bear God's image to the world. The nation of Israel was created to belong to God with

him as their heavenly Father. Sadly by the time Jesus is born they have become preservers of their traditions, not there to shine God's image to the world.

This leads me to ask; who's image do I bear? Who do I belong to?

Whose image do I bear?
Who do I belong to?

I know I want to bear Jesus' image. I want to belong to Jesus. But have I become a preserver of Jesus and not one who shines his image to the people around me.

I know as a community we want to bear Jesus' image. We want to belong to Jesus. But, like Israel we can become preservers of our traditions, not there to shine Jesus' image to our community, that they might be

drawn to him. That they might be saved and come into Jesus kingdom. Whose image do we bear? Who do we belong to?

If a person was to look at you, who's image and what inscription would they see?

That is a lot easier to determine when you look at a coin. I know we all seek to bear Jesus image with

his inscription of our heavenly Father's grace and mercy. We bear the inscription of 'Citizens of Heaven'. Jesus is our king. It is his will that we follow.

I seek to bear Jesus' image. Jesus said he only said and did what he heard and saw his Father saying and doing. Likewise I seek to only say and do what I hear and see Jesus saying and doing.

For that to happen I certainly need to be

able to hear and see Jesus. As 'Citizens of Heaven'; as people Jesus has given his life for, hearing and seeing Jesus is open to me and you.

We call it prayer. That's where I stop and ask Jesus what he thinks and then listen. I grab that first thought, image, idea, picture, impression and seek to live it out. Seek to enter conversation and then speak it out, live it out.

I'm not a preserver of the traditions, for I'm in a living, vibrant, intimate relationship of love and affection with Jesus. I'm in a conversational relationship with Jesus. I bear Jesus' image, and so I can live out his supernatural love, quit naturally when following the Spirit.

For years the church has been engaged in what has been labelled; worship wars. Who's right and

who's wrong. Notice how we get sucked in by our opponent, the devil, into taking sides, when there aren't sides. Do I worship Jesus with my life? Thank God I get to worship Jesus with my life as I am gifted living in his kingdom. Thank God I get to follow Jesus as king, as a citizen

Is Jesus worth listening to?

of his kingdom.

I get to bear Jesus image every day of the week. I get to talk with him about how I fill in my tax return, so that I reflect his image there. So that as people read my tax return they can see Jesus at work. What a privilege we have, our lives, to the smallest degree, can bear Jesus' image, because we can talk with him about it and get his direction.

Is Jesus worth listening to, even on the little matters like your tax return? Of course he is, he's worth it. That's the heartbeat of worship; a life of trust in Jesus, saying and doing what you hear and see Jesus saying and doing.

So we can be asking ourselves; who's image, who's inscription am I presenting to the people I meet this week. Not to make ourselves

guilty, but to help keep us where we want to be. I want to reflect Jesus living, vibrant, personal image, not some impersonal tradition. I want to be a bearer of Jesus inscription; 'Loved Child of God, in whom he delights.' 'Forgiven child of the heavenly Father.' 'In Jesus, a Citizen of Heaven'.

Jesus graciously has empowered me to look at life through his eyes so that I don't drift of course,