

The Methodist Church



Ripon and Lower Dales Circuit

Worship at Home

Brought today by Deacon Nigel Perrott

Week beginning Sunday 1st November
2020

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

An Opening Prayer

Creator God

You made this diverse, dangerous, dancing universe
Fireballs among planets, and glow-worms,
Whales and plankton
Ancient rocks and blades of grass
Infinite numbers of stars, snowflakes, grains of sands
The desert and the river running through
The withering wind and springs from deep in the earth
Why finds no answer and, words fail yet we praise you

Companion God

You are always with us, in good times and bad
Beside still waters, and in the barren wilderness
You are above, shielding us
Below, upholding us
Beside, encouraging us
Behind, challenging us
Before, guiding us

Caring God

you know our needs:

You feel our hunger and thirst
When we hunger to understand more
When we thirst for your spirit to flow
Through dry worship and dying hopes, you are there
Offering bread for the journey
Letting living water flow
Why finds no answer, words fail yet we praise you

...Yet as we praise you we come to ask your forgiveness
You have given us a world of beauty, and we have spoilt it.
A world to feed us, and so many go hungry.
A world of riches, and we are unwilling to share.

For times when we needed to speak up and yet stayed silent
For times when we needed to act and yet stayed still
For those times we have no thought for others, no cares but ours.
And loving God we thank you that through Jesus we can attain your forgiveness. We now bring our prayers to together by saying the prayer he taught
Our father...
Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Modern Form

Our Father, who is in heaven,
Hallowed be your name:
Your kingdom come;
Your will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
are yours,
now and for ever Amen.

We do give thanks to our awesome God, the great creator. We sing it now

STF 82 – Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

1 Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed :

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :

how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee :

how great thou art, how great thou art!

2 When through the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees ; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze :

3 And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin :

4 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home — what joy shall fill my heart ; then shall I bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim : my God, how great thou art :

Stuart K. Hine (1899–1989) vv. 1, 2, 4 based on *O store Gud* 1885 by Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859–1940)
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Reading: Matthew 22:15-22

Message

Matthew 22 (15-22) RENDER UNTO CAESAR

Jesus never gave an easy answer did he? Even in such difficult circumstances Jesus easily and skilfully evaded the tricks that were plotted against him.

So what is going on here?

Well we have two groups of people: The Herodian's, and the Pharisees. Now the Herodian's, as the name suggests, were supporters of King Herod, they were not a religious group and believed that the occupation of the Romans was a good thing and wanted better relationships with Rome and thought it was right to pay taxes to Caesar. On the other hand we have the

Pharisees who thought the opposite! They refused to pay taxes with coins that had Caesars head on them. They refused to pay their taxes and would only pay the Temple tax with a completely different currency, "The Sheckle"

It's amazing that these two groups ganged up on Jesus but that is exactly what they did! If Jesus had agreed that Taxes should be paid to Rome, he would have been seen to support the occupation and been disowned by the Jews who supported him. On the other hand, if he said don't pay, he could have been arrested for being against Rome. Both of these scenarios would have suited either side!

However, as we know, Jesus knew what was going on, and rather than say yes or no, he skilfully answered their question.

You see at that time, any item that bore the stamp or likeness of a person on it, belonged to that person. So this coin with Caesars head stamped on it was seen to belong to Caesar. What is really important here is not the first part of the Answer, give to Caesar, it was the second, give to God what is God's. Thinking about this idea of stamping things that belongs to us reminds me of my car. I have one of those personal plates, J40 NGP, I also used to own a briefcase that has my initials on it, it belongs to me. I do like my car but I don't necessarily cherish it! but putting our initials on something makes it our own doesn't it?

Now during the time of Caesar, if you had something of value, something you loved, you too would have it inscribed with your name on it, or in the case of Caesar you would have it made in your own image.

That sounds familiar doesn't it?

It's as if Jesus was taking us right back to the Book of Genesis:

So God created humankind his own image in the image of God he created them male and female he created them

So we can paraphrase what Jesus says, as: Give unto Caesar what is made in Caesars image and give to God what is made in God's image. So just as Caesar created those coins in his image, so God created us in his image, to show how much we are loved and cherished by him on a much deeper level than we could ever understand.

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you.

God loves us in way that is beyond our understanding. I am sure that if I asked people to define love, there would be a number of conditions that would be mentioned in order to love or be loved. God does not put any conditions on his love, it is poured out without conditions. God loves us, warts and all as children of God.

Again if we paraphrase what Jesus is saying in this passage we could say:

Give to Caesar what Caesar loves and give to God what he loves.

I am reminded hear of a passage in Romans: Paul writes,

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship In this passage today we hear that this is exactly what Jesus wants us to do, offer ourselves to God. That does not necessarily mean joining a religious order or becoming a Local Preacher! , it doesn't even mean you have to be in church every Sunday! It does mean that everything we do should be done with God in mind. We read in the Lord's Prayer: **Thy, will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

So another paraphrase from Jesus could be:
Sacrifice to Caesar what is Caesars and Sacrifice to God what is Gods.

There are passages and passages that we could use to sum up what Jesus was saying: For example Colossians 3:2 – “**Set your minds on things that are above not on earthly things**”, or another passage from **Mathew when he speaks of not storing up earthly treasure, “For where your treasure is there your heart will be also”.**

There are so many other bible passages that we could use in order to make this point, we could go on and on with lots of other examples. It worth remembering though that sometimes we don't need loads of words or a long sermon to convey a deep message of

love.

Sometimes the smallest of things can make a real difference. Jesus conveys an amazing message using just a small coin and a few words. Sometimes words are not needed at all and the smallest of our actions can be used to share the love of God with those around us.

But, all these passages say the same thing:

Give unto Caesar what is Caesars and give unto God what is Gods.

Give yourself to God

Amen

Well, Jesus certainly shone through in that account, Jesus Shone.

Our next hymn:

STF 59- Shine Jesus Shine!

1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining :
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us ;
set us free by the truth you now bring us

—
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory ;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and
mercy ;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light !*

2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance ;
by your blood I may enter your
brightness :
search me, try me, consume all my
darkness —
shine on me, shine on me.

3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory :
mirrored here, may our lives tell your
story —
shine on me, shine on me.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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STF 62 – Our God is an Awesome God

Our God is an awesome God,
who reigns from heaven above,
with wisdom, power and love,
our God is an awesome God !

Our God is an awesome God,
who reigns from heaven above,
with wisdom, power and love,
our God is an awesome God !

Rich Mullins Reproduced from *Singing the Faith*
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A Celtic Blessing

The Guarding of the God of life be on you

The guarding loving Christ be on you

The guarding of the Holy Spirit be on you

Every night of your lives

To aid you and enfold you

Each day and night of your lives

Amen

Prayers of intercession

Loving and creator God
we bring now our prayers for our world and
our communities.

We thank you that you have created a world
of abundance and pray you help us to use it
wisely.

We continue to pray for peace in areas of
conflict, for those caught up in war that they
are protected and cared for.

We remember those who are fleeing their
homes, in fear of their and risk their lives
trying to reach safety.

Here at home we thank you that yet again,
our communities have come together to help
those less fortunate, to be fed and cared for.
We pray for those in power to see the need
and act justly.

We pray for all in need, that they feel your
peace and know your presence. We thank
you Lord that you are an all knowing God,
and ask that your wisdom prevails to all those
in power.

We pray for all those in our church family who
are unable to return to a building at this time,
we pray they know your love reaches beyond
walls.

We pause in this moment and bring before
you, all those who are on our minds at this
time.

Loving God, we bring all our prayers to you
through Jesus Christ, our Lord and saviour
Amen.

Closing Hymn

As close our time of worship we continue to
remember the God is an awesome creator.