

The Rendering of Life

Matthew 22:15-22

MPS Jesus is worthy for your whole life to be rendered for His glory.

OBJ Every person should trust in Jesus because of four exchanges by the gospel.

READ Matthew 22:15-22

*Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. ¹⁶And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" ²¹They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away. **Matthew 22:15-22***

This section begins "exam week", four encounters of testing between the religious leaders and Jesus. Matthew shows how, in the first three encounters, the religious leaders try to trap Jesus but fail. The fourth "exam" is given by Jesus to the religious leaders, to which they fail miserably again. In the first exam, the Pharisees begin by trying to trap Jesus between treason and blasphemy.

The Pharisees intentionally plotted to entangle Jesus in His words. They took a little different approach this time from before, sending their disciples in their place. They were probably trying to catch him with his defenses lowered, but they could have been protecting their wounded pride too. They also sent him with the Herodians. This is a group of people we really do not know much about, except that they were what we would consider a "Super PAC" to advance the Herod family in all their political endeavors. What we do know is that the Herodians and the religious leaders were adversaries, arch enemies in all matters except this one. And as it has been said through the ages, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."¹ That's all the information we need, though, to be able to say that this mixture of religious leaders partnering with political advocates always creates a toxic cocktail.

To take their words at face value, one can say that they all believed that Jesus was a man of integrity. (.16) Even today, we can understand how shocking this is, to have all your enemies agree and testify to this level of character about you. So in the midst of their hate and disdain, they claim they still respect Him because He was "sincere, faithful to the truth, fearless, and no respecter of persons."² Then they pose their question to Jesus and ask, "*Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?*"

Jesus is not fooled. "They are not genuinely seeking an opinion from Jesus; they speak flattering words and proceed to ask a question aimed at destroying him. That is not the action of honest men but of hypocrites."³ He is aware of their malice. The question itself, coming from this combination of people, is enough to reveal ulterior motives. And Jesus, being true to the qualities that they identified, lets them know that He knows they are trying to test Him. He then provides a character witness about them when He calls them "hypocrites" based on the evidence of their words and actions. His response proves the truthfulness and accuracy of their words about Him. But it also tells us that Jesus was not interested in de-escalating the situation. **To Jesus, telling the truth was always more valuable than maintaining a false peace.**

Jesus tells them to show Him one of their coins for the tax. They brought a denarius and He asks whose likeness and inscription is on the coin. They respond, "Caesar's". Jesus tells them, "*Therefore render to Caesar the things that are*

¹ Original author unknown.

² Leon Morris, [The Gospel according to Matthew](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 555.

³ Leon Morris, [The Gospel according to Matthew](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 557.



Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And with that, Matthew records that they marveled at Him and went away.

They went away because their plan did not work. If He had only said, "Yes", then they would have accused him of blasphemy against God, because the Jews hated the Romans and having to serve them in any way, especially giving money with their ruler's inscription on it. And if he had said, "To God", they were confident the Herodians would have made reports to have charges of treason brought against Jesus. But Jesus committed neither treason against the State nor blasphemy of God in His answer. [What Jesus DID do in His answer was rebuke them for their hypocrisy and malice toward God.](#)

Jesus issues two indictments against this group, hypocrisy and malice. We are not unfamiliar with these today. Hypocrisy is when one claims some pretense of moral character or belief that that does not match their actions or life. And as painful as it can be to acknowledge it, sin ensures that it is true of all of us at some time. Jesus called them "hypocrites" because they hid their true motive for asking their question, and because they claimed to represent God but knew nothing of Him. Jesus was also aware of their malice. Malice is the evil intent to inflict harm on another person. And while He does not yet reveal what He knows of them nor does He explain why He calls them hypocrites, His answer identifies both. When Jesus replies, "*Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*", he confronts both their hypocrisy and their malice. He proves that they are guilty of the two options between which they are trying to trap him, treason and blasphemy. Their hypocrisy makes them guilty of treason because the Jews loathe Caesar and the Herodians wrongly idolize Him. And they are guilty of blasphemy because the Herodians wrongly worship Caesar as god and the Jewish leaders claim but do not really know God, who is before them in Jesus Christ.

Consider the basis for Jesus' answer. He asked, "*Whose likeness and inscription is this?*" The hypocrisy of the Jews denied what they knew to be true from the Scriptures, that they were created in God's image. And their malice forsook the inscription of God given to them in the Scriptures and written on their heart, to know and love Him. [The one to whom something should be rendered to is determined by its identifying likeness and inscription.](#)

[Jesus is worthy for your whole life to be rendered for His glory.](#)

TRANS Paul teaches this in Romans 2.

READ Romans 2:1-6a, 11, 12-24

"Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

He will render to each one according to his works:... For God shows no partiality.

*For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. **Romans 2:1-6a, 11, 12-16***

Hypocrisy mars the image of God by valuing a created image above the image of God. It makes a self-claim of one thing as true, while knowing something other is true. It causes one to act or live in ways that we know to be false, wrong, or simply counter to the truth or reality. In this way, all sin is hypocrisy toward God. And, hypocrisy always produces malice, because it causes one to live in contradiction to their own conscience. But malice toward God is most often expressed by malice toward other people; surely not all people, but at least those that are not self-serving or remind one of their conscience's condemnation. While it may not be explicit nor intentional, all malice toward other people IS ultimately malice toward God,



because He declares that every person has dignity, worth, and value as created in His image. When we live in the hypocrisy that sin produces and hold malice toward others, any others at any time, we indict ourselves as we fail to live in the image of the One in which we were created and the inscription of God He has written on our hearts. **Sin makes us all guilty of blasphemy against God and treason against the King of Kings. And the malice sin creates justifies our hypocrisy, to excuse self while we condemn others.**

What and how we “render” to God reveals what we believe He is worthy of. Each one of us is “rendering” our life to something. The question is, “what is it?”, and “Is what you render it to true to what God created and redeemed you for?” Without Christ we are both helpless and hopeless to render any measure of honor to God. But by the gospel, when we trust in Christ, He redeems us from sin to bring honor and glory to His Name **The question each of us must ask is this: “How is my life being rendered; am I walking by faith in Jesus to bear the image of the One in whose Name I claim?”**

OBJ Four Exchanges of the gospel to RENDER one's life faithfully unto God.

1. Exchange hypocrisy for sincerity – “you are true”

When we trust in Christ, we throw off the hypocrisy of the “image” we create by His forgiveness and cleansing, to take on His righteousness and walk by faith in His command, in obedience to the light of His Word. This doesn't make one perfect, by any means, and sin continues to thwart our steps, but it can never hinder our transformation into Christ's likeness because that is the work God is doing in us. By the gospel, we repent to throw off every sin that so easily entangles to walk in the good works He has prepared for us (Hebrews 12:1; Ephesians 2:12). **Sincerity means that we walk in the authenticity of life by faith that God has prepared for us in Jesus Christ; a life that is true to His revealed will and purpose.**

Sincerity is not as we sometimes think of it today, as we refer to one's intent of the heart. Rather, the word (*true*: 16) indicates truth or correctness in terms of reality, as opposed to intention. “Sincerity” in the way most often used today makes it determined by the one using it. Matthew uses it in reference to Jesus in its truest sense, meaning in reference to truth, or outside of oneself. Sincerity as is used here is not in accordance to one's feeling or intentions, but in accordance to truth and reality. So, the quality by which one renders their life unto God is not by what they intended or claimed to have wanted, but measured by and in accordance with truth. **Jesus lived by truth, and those who follow Him render their life for God's glory by sincerity according to His truth. Is your life one of sincerity according to God's truth?**

2. Exchange unrighteousness for Faithfulness to truth – “teach the way of God truthfully”

When we trust in Jesus, we not only walk in sincerity to His truth, but we teach and share His Word faithfully. Faith in Jesus means we look to God's Word as the Source for our whole life. There is NO rightness in anything outside of God's revealed truth. He IS truth! And to claim or try to create a standard of source of truth outside of God is blasphemy.

The “Information Age” has created a world replete with “pseudo-sources” and false information. There is an abundance in the church too. We often cloak it in explanations of “helping you know God better”, which is no different than what the religious leaders did in the First Century. Anything that does not align and submit to God's Word repeats this same fallacy. Most prevalent today, we are told we must know and care for self in order to know God, which get the order completely wrong. This is why in the Bible, Jesus tells us over and over again to remember the gospel, remember “Christ die for you”, and He gave us a means for that remembrance in the Lord's Supper. **Following Jesus by faith means we bear a faithful testimony to His Name by holding fast to His truth as revealed in God's Word, the Bible.** (Luke 8:15; Romans 12:9) **Are you holding fast to God's Word? Is there any area of your life where you need to repent and trust to obey His Word?**

3. Exchange fear of man for Fearlessness by God – “you do not care about anyone's opinion”

Can you imagine a world where you never once wondered what someone else thought of you? No, we cannot. Matthew is not recording that Jesus did not care about people, but that He was unhindered by their opinions. There was no “fear of man” in the heart of Jesus because He was consumed by honoring the Father, what we know of as fear of God. When there is no fear of God first in your life, the fear of man will be a primary motivator in all things about your life. You will either live to honor God, or you will live to appease and for the applause of people. People will always push you to exhaustion and hopelessness; God will only fuel you with more strength and increasing glory. **Faith in Jesus sets the fear of God as first in**



the heart to motivate all things by His Word and command, to live fearless for the glory of His Name. Is the fear of God the defining direction of your life, or are you managing your fears and simply trying to survive?

TRANS And if we do not kill our fear of man in the heart, we will suffer from its corresponding fever, our fear of missing out.

4. Exchange malice for true love of people - *"you are not swayed by appearances."*

We think of FOMO in reference to activity, but in fact its really in reference to relationship. We desperately want to be loved, every one of us. FOMO exploits this desperation into an exhausting chase that never satisfies. In the gospel, Jesus shows and tells us that we are loved and accepted by God. Therefore, we can rest in His provision and in relationships as they are centered on Jesus Christ. We do not have to strive after acceptance, but only trust to rest in His acceptance for us. Then, whatever people may think or say about us we are free to set it against what God has said of us. And, we are free not to chase that ideal image that the world says is most glorious, but to trust for us the One in whose image we were created and redeemed for. Trusting in Jesus to rest in God's will for your life sets you free to love others selflessly and sacrificially to show them the love of God, regardless of how they treat or respond to you.

Have you rested from living for the applause of other people, or do what you perceive them to think of you determine how you live?

Jesus is worthy for your whole life to be rendered for His glory.

CLOSE Trusting in Jesus brings an exchange to your life by the power of God that sources eternal life with Him. Render your life for Jesus today!

