

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Exodus 33:12-23

Moses successfully interceded with God to accompany Israel to the promised land after their sin with the golden calf. In response to a request to display the divine glory, God recites a sentence that appears frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." Moses is not allowed to see God's face, but only God's back.

¹²Moses said to the LORD, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people'; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' ¹³Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. ¹⁶For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray."

¹⁹And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." ²¹And the LORD continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; ²²and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; ²³then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

Psalm 99

¹The LORD is king; let the | people tremble.

The LORD is enthroned upon the cherubim; let | the earth shake.

²**The LORD, | great in Zion,
is high a- | bove all peoples.**

³Let them confess God's name, which is | great and awesome;
God is the | Holy One.

⁴**O mighty king, lover of justice, you have es- | tablished equity;
you have executed justice and righteous- | ness in Jacob.**

⁵Proclaim the greatness of the LORD and fall down be- | fore God's footstool;
God is the | Holy One.

⁶**Moses and Aaron among your priests, and Samuel among those who call upon your | name,
O LORD,
they called upon you, and you | answered them,**

⁷you spoke to them out of the pil- | lar of cloud;
they kept your testimonies and the decree | that you gave them.

⁸**O LORD our God, you answered | them indeed;
you were a God who forgave them, yet punished them for their | evil deeds.**

⁹Proclaim the greatness of the LORD and worship upon God's | holy hill;
for the LORD our God is the | Holy One.

Matthew 22:15-22

After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" ²¹They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray...

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, saying "God in your mercy," and responding, "hear our prayer."

A brief silence.

Gracious God, you call us by name and invite us to share your good news. Send your Holy Spirit among preachers, missionaries, and evangelists. We give thanks for the witness of your servant Luke, the evangelist, whom the church commemorates today. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of praise, the heavens and all creation declare your salvation. From the rising of the sun to its setting, may the whole universe show forth your goodness. Raise up devoted stewards of all that you have made. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all, may your word of justice sound forth in every place. Restore divided nations and communities with reconciling truth. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of light, we pray for those living with pain, illness, isolation, grief, anger, or doubt (*especially those who we name now, aloud or silently on our hearts...* [pause]). Join their voices in a new song, assuring them that you call them each by name. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of truth, you show no partiality. May your spirit guide the work of justices, magistrates, court officials, and all vocations of the law, that your promise of restoration may be known. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Living God, as you raised Jesus from the dead, so raise up those who have died in you. We give thanks for their witness, confident of your rescuing welcome for all. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Gloria Dei
LUTHERAN CHURCH

A reflection for this Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost...

Income Tax Day

Walter Brueggemann

On this day of internal revenue
some of us are paid up,
some of us owe,
some of us await a refund,
some of us have no income to tax.

But all of us are taxed,
by war,
by violence,
by anxiety,
by deathliness.

And Caesar never gives any deep tax relief.

We render to Caesar. . .
to some it feels like a grab,
to some it is clearly a war tax,
to some — some few —
it is a way to contribute to the common good.

In any case we are haunted
by what we render to Caesar,
by what we might render to you,
by the way we invest our wealth and our lives,
when what you ask is an “easy yoke”:
to do justice
to love mercy
to walk humbly with you.

Give us courage for your easy burden, so to live untaxed lives.

(From *Prayers for a Privileged People* by Walter Brueggemann.)