



WEEKLY STUDY

Jesus on Money - Week Four

You probably already know this, but...Jesus doesn't mess around. In this week's passage, Jesus knew he was being set up. His adversaries had stealthily laid a trap by asking him about allegiance to Caesar. While it looked like Jesus was backed into a corner, he turned the tables like only he could do. Using a Roman coin (his questioners' Roman coin), he put kingdoms in perspective. Yes, there are earthly kingdoms that we can not ignore, and yes, there is only one Kingdom that reigns above them all. May *that* Kingdom become increasingly visible to you in the days ahead.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

So they watched him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. ²¹So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach rightly, and show no partiality but truly teach the way of God. ²²Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" ²³But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, ²⁴"Show me a denarius. Whose likeness and inscription does it have?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ²⁶And they were not able in the presence of the people to catch him in what he said, but marveling at his answer they became silent.

- The spies were pretending to be sincere. The term for *insincerity* is related to the word for *hypocritical*. They were pretending to be genuinely interested in Jesus and his teachings, when really they were trying to bring him down with an unanswerable question. Sincerity is at a premium in our time. How can we know when someone is being sincere? What do we do when we

realize we are being tricked? How can the insincerity of another person impact our faith? How do we combat insincerity?

- **Prayer Prompt: “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7.15-16a)**
- *God, I have come to know that this world will let me down. I participate in its imperfection. So I lean on you as the only one who is 100% reliable and authentic. Make me more like you. Amen.*

TUESDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

- *The spies were being deceitful, but they were not stupid. They knew how to set up the question and to craft the question in a specific way. Jesus was not thrown by their compliments. His self-awareness and value came from his Heavenly Father, not from the crowd. That fact prepared him to handle the question that was posed to him. Can you think of a time when you responded out of your own need for an ego boost rather than out of your core identity as a child of God?*

- **Prayer Prompt: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3.1)**
- *Jesus, in your mercy, hear my prayer. Help me to get out of your way today. Use me as you will or lay me aside if that is your will. For my worth comes from you alone. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

- Sometimes the best answer to a question is a question. In a courtroom, the one asking the questions will attempt to gain the upperhand. Someone who is good at asking questions is typically in control of the narrative. The one being questioned in a trial is supposed to just answer the questions. But Jesus was not yet on trial (and when he was, he bucked the system!). He took control of the situation by answering with a question of his own. *Whose image is on a Roman coin?* Well that belongs to the Roman ruler. But God’s image is in us, and we belong to Him. Spend a

moment reflecting on this claim that you belong to God. How might that alter the way you see your life and your value?

- **Prayer Prompt: Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”**

²⁷ **So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1.26-27)**

- *God, thank you for creating me—for setting your image deep within me. Forgive me of the ways I have covered up or misrepresented you in the world. Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

- Was Jesus stating his agreement with the way the Roman empire controlled currency and taxes? Nope. That wasn't his primary concern. He was careful not to answer a question he wasn't asked. You see how we can sometimes get ourselves in trouble by answering unasked questions. Jesus is so focused on his mission that he doesn't get drawn into fruitless arguments. What is the primary mission that you, at your best, remain focused on even in the midst of distractions?

- **Prayer Prompt: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (Colossians 3.1-2)**
- *God, keep me laser focused on your calling in me. Give me your wisdom and resolve to remain focused on your redeeming work in the world. Amen.*

FRIDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

- The principle behind Jesus' answer to the spies in Luke 20 is reflected in Romans 13.7. “Give to everyone what you owe them: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then

respect; if honor, then honor.” This is a hard thing for many of us. We would rather evaluate the righteousness of the ruling powers (and there is a place for discernment), but Jesus conveys the urgency of God’s everlasting Kingdom. It is at hand ([Mark 1.15](#)) and it is forever ([Luke 1.33](#)). How do you think about the payment of taxes to the government? Is it an obligation or a necessary duty? How does your interaction with the earthly government impact your discipleship to Jesus?

- **Prayer Prompt: All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. (Psalm 22.27-28)**
- *God, you have placed me in this imperfect world led by imperfect people. But I am grateful for it, and for your dominion over it all. The nations all belong to you. May I see your reign above it all today. Amen.*

SATURDAY: LUKE 20.20-26 (ESV)

- The leaders who were behind this line of questioning were astonished and silenced by Jesus’ response to their question. He hadn’t just weaseled his way out of an answer, he had blown up their narrow view of God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom is not beholden to the earthly kingdoms but neither is it completely removed from them. God’s reign creates a whole new reality. When was the last time you were astonished and even silenced by the words or work of Jesus?
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- **Prayer Prompt: he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. (Acts 13.12)**
- *God, as I behold your power and beauty today, I sit in awe and wonder of the great things you have made, and your gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Meet me in the quiet of this awe. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

We live in complex times. (That may be the understatement of the century!). We all bring our own perspectives and passions to the political climate of the day. But as followers of Jesus, there is a higher allegiance that not only brings unity among us, it also draws us deeper into the heart of God.

- How might the phrase *Jesus is Lord* serve as your guiding light in times of division?
- Would you say that Jesus is political?
- How might the claim that *Jesus is Lord* upset the rulers of this age?