

# God's Word for this Week

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

## **The Collect of the Day**

O God,  
without you we are not able to please you;  
Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit  
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **The Old Testament Reading**

## **Exodus 33: 12-23**

12 Moses 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 favour in my sight." <sup>13</sup>Now if I have found favour in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favour in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.' <sup>14</sup>He said, 'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.' <sup>15</sup>And he said to him, 'If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. <sup>16</sup>For how shall it be known that I have found favour 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.'

17 The Lord said to Moses, 'I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name.' <sup>18</sup>Moses said, 'Show me your glory, I pray.' <sup>19</sup>And 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. <sup>20</sup>But', he said, 'you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.' <sup>21</sup>And the Lord continued, 'See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; <sup>22</sup>and 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; <sup>25</sup>then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.'



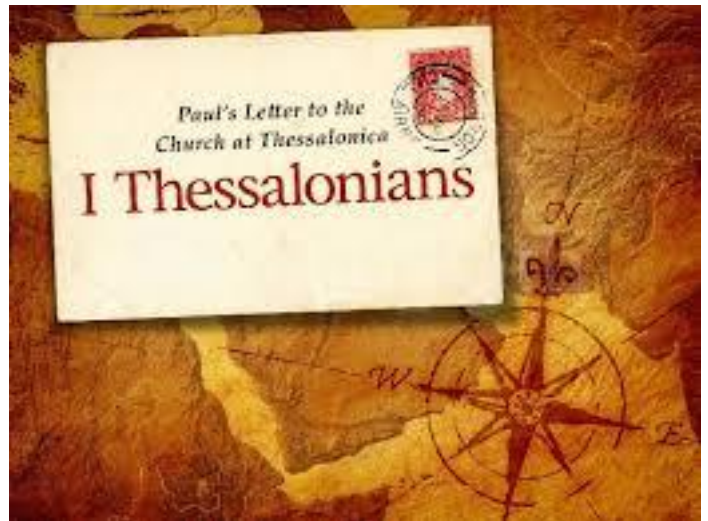
## The Epistle Reading

## 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

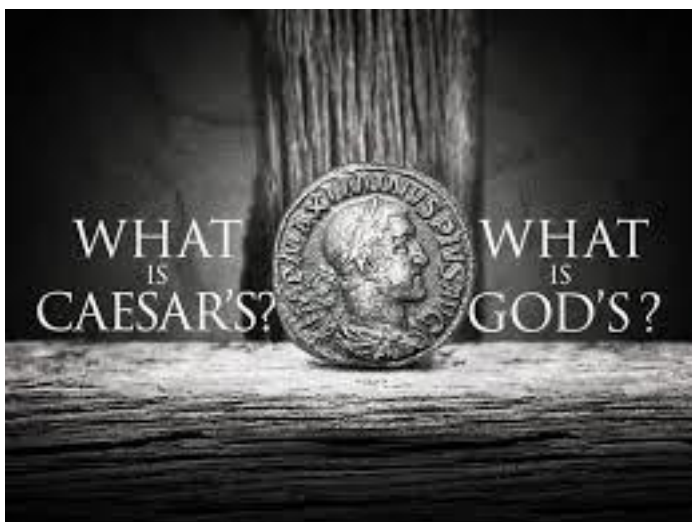
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:  
Grace to you and peace.

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly <sup>3</sup>remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>For we know, brothers and sisters\* beloved by God, that he has chosen you, <sup>5</sup>because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of people we proved to be among you for your sake. <sup>6</sup>And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. <sup>8</sup>For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place where your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. <sup>9</sup>For the people of those regions\* report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.



## The Gospel Reading

## Matthew 22: 15-22



15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. <sup>16</sup>So 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. <sup>17</sup>Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?’ <sup>18</sup>But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, ‘Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup>Show me the coin used for the tax.’ And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup>Then he said to them, ‘Whose head is this, and whose

title?’ <sup>21</sup>They 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.’ <sup>22</sup>When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

## Thoughts on the Gospel Reading:

Here is the context of Jesus' command to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's": in [Matthew 22](#) Jesus had just returned to Jerusalem for the final time and recently finished sharing several parables with the crowd. Jesus' enemies saw an opportunity to put Jesus on the spot in front of His followers. In verse 17, they say to Jesus, "Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" (ESV). It was a trick question, and they knew it. If Jesus answered, "No," the Herodians would charge Him with treason against Rome. If He said, "Yes," the Pharisees would accuse Him of disloyalty to the Jewish nation, and He would lose the support of the crowds. To pay taxes or not to pay taxes? The question was designed as a Catch-22.

Jesus' response is nothing short of brilliant: "But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin for the tax.' And they brought him a denarius" ([Matthew 22:18-19, ESV](#)).

The denarius was a coin used as the tax money at the time. It was made of silver and featured an image of the emperor with an inscription calling him "divine." The Jews considered such images idolatry, forbidden by the second commandment. This was another reason why, if Jesus answered, "Yes," He would be in trouble. His acceptance of the tax as "lawful" could have been seen as a rejection of the second commandment, thus casting doubt on His claim to be the Son of God.

With the coin displayed in front of them, Jesus said, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" The Herodians and Pharisees, stating the obvious, said, "Caesar's." Then Jesus brought an end to their foolish tricks: "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" ([Matthew 22:21, ESV](#)). Upon hearing this, Jesus' enemies marvelled and went away (verse 22).

When Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," He was drawing a sharp distinction between two kingdoms. There is a kingdom of this world, and Caesar holds power over it. But there is another kingdom, not of this world, and Jesus is King of that ([John 18:36](#)). Christians are part of both kingdoms, at least temporarily. Under Caesar, we have certain obligations that involve material things. Under Christ, we have other obligations that involve things eternal. If Caesar demands money, give it to him—it's only mammon. But make sure you also give God what He demands.

Caesar minted coins, as he had a right to do, and he demanded some coins in return, as was his right. After all, his image was stamped on what he had made. God has "minted" the human soul, and He has stamped His image on every one ([Genesis 1:27](#)). So give Caesar his due—the temporary stuff of this world—but make sure to give God His due: "Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness" ([Romans 6:13](#)).

## Take time to Pray

*Perhaps our prayer today should be for discernment regarding the requirements this world places upon us and the requirements of heaven. It's a balance of being able to live in this world but not be of it! When you look at your life, are there any things that could be changed with regard to reliance? How are you maintaining the balance between your earthly and spiritual experience in this world?*