

## Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 21:23-32      10-1-17

“Is Your Authority from Heaven or from Men?”

- A. A nasty part of Matthew’s Gospel...
- B. A story of two sons...
- C. The challenge for Christians today: claiming our faith opportunities...

*A Luther Sermon Quotation:* [A comment on Philippians 2]. *All the wisdom of the world justly retires before the knowledge of Christ. For what is more wonderful than to have a thorough knowledge of Christ? Wonderful and unspeakable is the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature and so lowered Himself as to be “found in the fashion as a man.” (Philippians 2:7) (Plass, What Luther Says, 4698, page 1545f.)*

---

## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 21:33-46      10-8-17

### WELCOME THE SON

*Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:*

*‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone;*

*this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?’” Matthew 21:42*

Stories can be powerful instruments in telling us the truth about others and ourselves.

Jesus told stories, lots of them. We call them parables. He told his stories or word pictures to convey truths. Sometimes the truth was obvious. Sometimes it had to be explained. And sometimes it confronted people in such a stark, blunt way that it left people with no place to hide. Such is the parable in our Gospel lesson for today.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants clarifies:

- Who Jesus is – his identity
- What Jesus is about – his mission

We misinterpret this parable if we see it only applying to “Israel.” Christ’s church is the “New Israel” and unlike “Israel’s” treatment of the owner’s Son, as the “New Israel” we are called to

“Welcome the Son.” As we do, the fruit from his vineyard that God desires will be produced and gladly returned to him.

\*\*\*\*\*

*“Everyone wants to be considered Christian and evangelical. Yet there is no limit to the care of the stomach, to miserable miserliness, usury, and other sins, though God is warning people through pious, faithful servants and preachers. All this is a sure sign that God will shortly take away the Word and pure doctrine and leave the people to the imaginations of their own hearts that they may walk according to their own counsel. Then, the kingdom of God, as Christ threatens the Jews (Matt. 21:43), is taken from them and given to others who will bring forth its fruit.”* Ewald Plass, ed., *What Luther Says*, CPH, 1991, #1604, p. 532.

~~~~~

### **Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Matthew 22:1-14 10-15-17**

**“No shirt, no shoes, no service...”**

- A. The first paragraph of the story...**
- B. The first paragraph of the text is a set-up for the second...**
- C. The bottom line: “Don’t expect to come to this party without planning on celebrating.”**

***A Luther Sermon Quotation:*** [From a sermon in 1532 on Matthew 22:1-16] *The world does not want and does not like the Word; farming and business are more to its liking. But woe to the world!...but let us gladly and diligently hear the Word and for the sake of the Lord, who sends them, hold particularly those in all honor and love who bid us to the wedding. Then God will be with us in all troubles, will help and protect us, and will finally give us eternal life for the sake of His Son, our dear Bridegroom, and the Lord Christ.* (Plass, *What Luther Says*, 4966, p. 1532)

~~~~~

**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

**Matthew 22:15-22    10-22-17**

**BEARING GOD’S IMAGE**

*“Then he (Jesus) said to them, ‘Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’” Matthew 22:21b*

Have you ever been asked a question that condemns you no matter how you answer it? Two normally hostile parties, the Pharisees and the Herodian’s, combined forces one day to trap Jesus with such a question for the purpose of bringing about his downfall.

When asked, *“Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor,”* Jesus gave an ingenious answer. It had a double thrust that not only foiled their efforts to trap and undermine him, but also caused them to marvel. Jesus in essence said, *“Of course it is right to return coins to the emperor. After all, they belong to him. They bear his picture, his image. But always remember to return to God that which is his.”*

You and I bear the image of God. We belong to him. The question this incident poses for us is, *“How do we best return ourselves to God?”* Martin Luther gives us helpful suggestions in his explanation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of the Apostles’ Creed. For all that God has done we surely ought to *“thank, praise, serve and obey him.”*

\*\*\*\*\*

*“But we have often said much about the meaning of this passage (Matthew 22:15-22). For we constantly teach that these two realms or governments – God’s and the emperor’s, or the spiritual and the worldly estates – are carefully to be distinguished.”* Ewald Plass, ed., *What Luther Says*, CPH, 1991, #859, p. 293.

.....

**Reformation Sunday**

**John 8:31-36    10-29-17**

**If the Son Makes You Free, You Will Be Free Indeed”**

- A. Finding a new way to do discipleship...Sola Scriptura...the Word Alone**
- B. Making the business of the Church less a business...Sola gratia...by Grace Alone**

### **C. Calling Jesus' Followers to Claim God's Gracious Blessings in Faith...Sola Fide...by Faith Alone**

**A Luther Sermon Quote (Comment:** Luther and other Reformers did not believe the changes introduced anything new. In his exposition of John 16:13, Luther wrote) *this message is not a novel invention of ours but the very ancient, approved teaching of the apostles brought to light again. Neither have we invented a new Baptism, Sacrament of the Altar, Lord's Prayer, and Creed; nor do we desire to know have anything new in Christendom. We only contend for, and hold to, the ancient: that which Christ and the apostles have left behind then and have given to us. Accordingly, it shines again in purity, and everybody may see what Gospel, Baptism, Sacrament of the Altar, keys, prayer, and everything that Christ has given us really is and how it should be used for our salvation.* (Plass, What Luther Says, 3771 p. 1180f.