

## The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (2020)

Holy Spirit, Light Divine: Shine upon this heart of mine;  
 Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day;  
 Let me see my Savior's face; let me all His beauties trace;  
 Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee.  
 Amen.

Matthew 22:15–22 **Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle [Jesus] in his talk.** And 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. Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” 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. And Jesus said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They 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.” When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

In the Name of Jesus.

God the Father’s little, forgiven children: If there was ever a day not to lose sight of the forest, because of this or that stunning tree—this is the day! There is NOTHING all that PROFOUND about ‘Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar’ and so on! It is SIMPLY a call to repentance! You CANNOT serve God AND

God's bounty! Focus on the creature and you cannot find the Creator!

Here's the forest, heaven and earth, authority: Real God-talk:

The One Who makes us and destroys us was made one of us and was destroyed. Then, He rose from destruction and He proclaimed the Gospel! The glad tidings that the ONLY W...O...R...D... you need ever trouble yourself about is this here servant's Absolution: I—this poor pastor, this frail man, this creature of a moment—I PARDON: you! Because you have been spritzed by the authority of an even weaker Man—the King of the Jews Crucified and mocked and spit on.....I'll never catch up with Him; Jesus got too much a head start on me!...

THAT MAN—oh, OUR lords and master are masters of the lie. They LIED about His rising; and shelled out the dough! Can you believe THIS LIE? Most do!

Brave Peter and the other ten scaredy-cats slipped past a Roman squad, rolled back a ten-ton rock, and snatched the body of a man now dead, whom they abandoned while ALIVE!!!.... That lying report worked! To this day. 'Oh, men do NOT rise from the dead!'

Right! And PAUL ANDERSON pardoning you—THAT cannot settle ANYTHING between you and God! Right?! The Holy Spirit says otherwise, right here, right now. God the Holy Spirit opens His insides to you today and pours out His ALL:

YOUR pastor chatting with YOU, about YOUR Servant-God wins the whole argument of heaven, earth and below.

I now hold all things in heaven and earth in my hand. Well, all that Heaven cares to bother about: you.

MAN and man's DISTRACTION—so EASILY tells us: THINK of E...V...E...R...Y...T...H...I...N...G.....ELSEEEE the Almighty could take in hand and stick out His tongue and furrow up His brow and investigate!

Wow! Yup! Lots of THINGS! And I say to you: instead of anything else, He has eyes only for you; a mind; a heart; hands now too.

That is what I say: to you; or to any other flotsam and jetsam that is washed up on our little beach here. That is ALL I have for you, in fact. Don't thank me. Thank the One Who sent His unimaginable Son into our nightmare, our THING, our entanglement: our argument.

That's a better word than the word 'talk' in our Gospel today. Those tricky fellas: they stuck out and bit their tongues and furrowed up their brows—the Christian bullies, the Christian scolds; Christians hallucinate that THEY are now pleasing to Christ, as they cast their webs and spit their goo to trap people this way, Lord 'a mercy!—

Those forerunners of evangelical Christianity—the Pharisees—blurphed out what they argued over and figured would stick to Jesus and slow Him down too and stop all His loose-y goose-y talk about freedom: ‘We do NOT belong in this world, but in the kingdom of Gaw-awd! But God has put earthly authorities over us. But some of the taxes we pay them are misused. Can we get OUT of it? What’s the balance?’

Jesus’ reply?

Worms love mud; Pharisees and Christian scolds love such muck—because THEY figure that THEY have struggled and found a way to serve God AND mammon, the Only One AND the idols He abhors. Jesus and John and Paul and Luther and this poor man just say to all men: repent; and trust the Gospel instead.

My dear ones: it is good for you to hear this, whatever else has your attention today. What ALL men make of this plaything they call ‘church’ is N...O...T...H...I...N...G but an entanglement, a scam, a money-grab, a hostage situation. I plead with Jesus’ Spirit not to let me retard your freedom as the system demands of me. But I fear that many of you—if not all—put your precious ears that are meant for hearing the Gospel into range of the slick ones, the flatterers.

Real God does not seek your stuff. Caesar cannot live without it: Edwards, Trump, Pelosi, et cetera. Their images are on the paper trash people throw in your yard and you pick up and scour.

You don't hafta!

But if you ever run across Christ's REAL thing, what HE would call His own—Church—HIS warming Breath N...E...V...E...R... entangles you, holds you hostage with flattery. The Lord and His Supper are here: to free you, freely, for the sake of...freedom.

When they lied to me and said my Dad was dying—he cannot die; silly men—I thought it my calling to lay the unflattering Gospel before him. Not sure what I was worried about, other than my experience of man's 'cherch.'

Drove up, smiled and said to Dad that when he finally could leave all entanglements to the dead and dying, he had solid hope before His Maker, the One Dad offended daily and much. That hope is the word of Christ: 'The healthy do not need a physician; the sick do. I have not come to call to repentance those who can impress the Perfect One. I have come to call those who offend My Father daily and much!'

Having in mind the things like Isaiah's word to Cyrus today, I laid at my father's feet the Good News: "You, man, have NOTHING to offer to your God, except to stand next to Him and make HIM look good! So that all voices, in heaven, earth and hell would stick out their tongues and furrow up their brows and declare that Jesus Christ is the God of Abraham, the Redeemer of His people. In other words, they would say: 'Well, if THIS MAN—if ANDY is okey dokey with God, the who IS NOT?!'"

ALL that my dad had to offer the Righteous God was his sins. Well, AND, this gift: there would be at least ONE MAN that God's Son could find in this world that needed a substitute who would never leave him, never forsake him. My father's boast was his spritzing by whatever poor pastor baptized him; and the teaching that cannot die: attach all of yourself to your enemies; then you're alive like the Living God!

Wanna know where you poor pastor learned the Gospel? It's a holy place.

Dad listened patiently to the message that I preach. You know it. It's the argument that drives men away week by week to find a normal pastor who will flatter them and pat them on the head and tell them what good little Pharisees they are.

'Dad: you make Jesus look so good! If he can save YOU, then you could almost say the devil himself has hope!'

My father's response?

'If that was not true, I'd have been done for long ago.'

At least it was a pleasant drive through the little hills and valleys of south Wisconsin. Thought maybe I had put great effort into bringing an unheard-of Gospel to the man who hung the moon

in the sky for me. Ahh... He was all over it. Maybe it made him glad that he had not wasted his upbringing on even THIS son.

Allan Peter Anderson's Savior—He wants nothing from you but your sins. With HIS words, Jesus' words—Render to Caesar what's his and God what's His—your Savior is just wiping the dog poo from HIS shoes and YOUR shoes and YOU BELONG FREE and clean and not worried about the bullies and the scolds!

With your FOCUS today on having NO FEAR! Admitting WHAT you do, WHAT you've made of yourself, WHAT you fear and hear and dread that you DESERVE—

But you have been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! You...are...FREE! To sing with the Great One who taught even THIS poor man the Gospel:

Yes. I SHOULD be crushed under the weight on God versus sinner. But the only CONTEST that I WORRY about is this: 'Pastor, what's that in your hand that you are giving me to eat and to drink today? It IS the Body of Jesus, given for me; the Blood of Jesus that was shed for me and for many so that none of us get what we deserve, good, bad or otherwise. Yes? Your final word on me today is PEACE, right?'

Furrow up your little brows this week, little children. Bite down on your tongue in concentration on this: YOU make God a dear Father.

W...I...T...H...O...U....T... YOU SCHOOLING  
 Him.....the One Who forms light and creates darkness, who  
 makes well-being and calamity would be at a total loss today about  
 how to conduct Himself! But He has YOU!

YOU—I tell you...what you already KNOW...whatever  
 additions men make to your Baptism, your Jesus, your life—it's all  
 disgusting and not for you...

I tell you, that YOU—right there in your pew, right there in  
 what's what with God—YOU are HIS teacher today. YOU have  
 what HE—I can't explain it; I can only PROCLAIM IT!

YOU are and you have what HE cannot live without! Tell  
 Him!

‘Watch ME, unseen, unknown Creator! Follow in MY  
 footsteps. Just plant one foot down after the other, after me, as I  
 take the next poor sinner's entanglements of sin, and then I  
 untangle him, and forgive as I have been forgiven. Now, dear  
 Father: YOU know azackly what to do with ME! Again; again;  
 again in the Name of Jesus.