

SHOW ME THE MONEY

(Matthew 22: 15-22)

Intro: It was Wednesday afternoon.

-It was getting late.

-I was sitting at my desk.

#Up to my eyeballs in stuff to do.

#Trying to finish up a couple of tasks.

-Phone rang.

#I answered it.

#There was a moment of silence.

*Phone solicitor.

+I knew it right away.

*Their computer dials multiple numbers.

+They talk to the first person who answers.

+But it takes a moment or two to clear the other calls.

#I was about to hang up.

*When I heard:

+First background music.

+Then a voice.

#Voice said:

*"May I speak with the owner or manager?"

#I said:

*"If you want the owner or manager,"

*"You'll have to talk to God."

Now I must confess.

-Phone solicitors are not among my favorite people.

-I have never:

#Bought anything.

#Ordered anything.

#Donated any money.

*Because some stranger called me on the phone.

-My response.

#May have been a little flip.

*OK, it was more than a little flip.

#But it expresses the point of the Gospel Lesson for this week.

*"Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

*"Give to God the things that are God's."

+Matthew 22:21.

*"If you want to talk to the owner,"

+ "You're going to need to talk to God."

I. Give To Caesar The Things That Are Caesar's.

A. It Was A Trap.

1. Pharisees had been butting heads with Jesus over a number of issues.
 - a. Jesus' riding into Jerusalem like he owned the place.
 - Palm Sunday.
 - #We call it.
 - Matthew 21: 1-11.
 - b. Jesus' cleansing of the Temple.
 - Overturning the tables.
 - #Money changers.
 - #Pigeon sellers.
 - Matthew 21: 12-13.
 - c. Jesus' healing of the blind and lame.
 - Who came to him in the Temple.
 - #For healing.
 - Matthew 21: 14.
 - d. Children shouting Jesus' praises.
 - In the Temple.
 - Matthew 21: 15-16.
 - e. Jesus' cursing of a fig tree.
 - Because it did not bear fruit.
 - f. Question of Jesus' authority.
 - "By whose authority do you do these things?"
 - Matthew 21: 23-27.
 - g. Jesus' telling parables.
 - Critical of:
 - #Chief Priests.
 - #Pharisees.
 - Matthew 21: 28-46.
2. Pharisees plotted to entrap Jesus.
 - a. They came up with a question.
 - Sounds like it came straight from the presidential debates.
 - It was about taxes.
 - #Not:
 - *Who should pay how much?
 - *How should our tax dollars be spent?
 - #But:
 - *Should they be paid at all?
 - *"Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"
 - +Matthew 22: 17.

- b. It was part of a national debate.
 - Israel was ruled by the Romans.
 - #Romans had taken over in 63 B.C.
 - *During a time of internal conflict in Israel.
 - Some welcomed the Romans.
 - #Who put an end to anarchy.
 - #Who brought:
 - *Order.
 - *Stability.
 - +To the region.
 - Others hated the Romans.
 - #Chafed under foreign rule.
 - #Resented paying taxes.
 - *To these outsiders.
- c. It is in this context that the question comes.
 - To pay.
 - Or not to pay.
 - #That is the question.
 - There is no right answer.
 - #It was a lose/lose proposition.
 - Jesus.
 - #Ultimate Independent.
 - #Was being asked to choose sides in a political debate.
 - If he said:
 - #“Yes, pay the taxes.”
 - *He would upset those who favored independence.
 - +Like the Zealots.
 - =Who wanted to kick the Romans out of their country.
 - By force, if necessary.
 - #“No, don’t pay the taxes.”
 - *He would upset those who were loyal to Caesar.
 - +Like the Herodians.
 - =Who depended on the Romans.
 - To keep their government jobs.
 - d. You can see.
 - How Jesus was being set up.
 - How the trap was being set.

B. But Jesus Had A Way Of Grabbing The Cheese Without Getting Caught In The Trap.

1. Jesus.
 - a. Without the benefit of the Tom Cruise movie.
-*Jerry Maguire.*
 - b. Says:
-"Show me the money."
2. They produced a coin.
 - a. It had Caesar's image on it.
 - b. It had Caesar's inscription on it.
3. Now they were trapped.
 - a. Here they were with Roman money.
-Coins that had a picture of Caesar on it.
#This in the hands of people.
*Who thought it unlawful to make any graven image.
 - b. What were they going to do with their Roman money?
-"Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

II. And Give To God What Belongs To God.

A. What Belongs To God?

1. Maybe we should ask:
 - a. What doesn't belong to God?
 - b. Is there anything that doesn't belong to God?
2. World.
 - a. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,"
 - b. "The world, and those who live in it."
-Psalm 24: 1.
3. Even Caesar.
 - a. Roman Emperor.
-When Jesus says:
#"Show me the money."
-Roman coin was produced.
#I've seen such coins.
*Couple of weeks ago.
+Pam and I spent a day in Oklahoma City.
=At the OKC Art Museum.
+"Roman Art from the Louvre"
=There were a few Roman coins.
*Several years ago.
+I was at the Philbrook.
=Here in Tulsa.
+There were Roman coins.

#Image.

*Tiberius Caesar.

#Inscription in Latin.

*On one side.

+ "Tiberius Caesar."

+ "August Son of the Divine Augustus."

*On the other side.

+ "Great High Priest."

-Roman coins reinforced imperial claims.

#Made for Caesar.

#Made by Caesar.

*He was divine.

*He was a god to be worshipped.

-Jesus debunks that claim.

"Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's."

"And to God the things that are God's."

*Caesar is not:

+ God.

+ Divine.

*Even Caesar belongs to God.

b. Persian Emperor.

-Cyrus.

#Isaiah 45: 1.

-There is no evidence.

#Cyrus:

*Believed in.

*Worshipped.

+ Yahweh.

+ Lord God.

-But he belonged to God.

#He is called:

*Lord's "anointed."

*Messiah.

+ Hebrew.

*Christ.

+ Greek.

#God:

*Chose him.

*Used him.

+ To deliver the people of Israel.

= From Babylonian captivity.

= From 50 years of exile.

+ To set them free.

#Cyrus belonged to God.

4. We belong to God.
 - a. If Caesar's image.
 - On a Roman coin.
 - #Makes it Caesar's money.
 - b. Whose image do we bear?
 - We have been created in the image of God.
 - #Genesis 1:26-27.
 - In the waters of Holy Baptism.
 - #We have been marked with the cross of Christ forever.
 - We bear the image of God.
 - We belong to God.
 - c. So far, so good.
 - World belongs to God.
 - Caesar belongs to God.
 - We belong to God.
5. Our stuff belongs to God.
 - a. Our possessions.
 - Cars.
 - Computers.
 - Homes.
 - Hedges.
 - #All belong to God.
 - b. Our money.
 - Bank accounts.
 - Investments.
 - Retirement funds.
 - #All belong to God.
6. You can maybe see where this is going.
 - a. If we give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar.
 - b. If we give to God what belongs to God.
 - And everything belongs to God.

III. Then What's Left For Me?

- A. We Become Anxious.
 1. How am I going to pay my bills?
 2. How am I going to put my kids through college?
 3. What if my health fails?
 4. Will I be able to retire?
 - a. Value of my retirement funds decreased more that 30% in the last year.
 - b. No guarantee they will ever come back.

5. What about our congregation?
 - a. We've been deficit spending for the last several years.
 - b. Our savings account is shrinking.
 6. What are we going to do?
 - a. Listen to Jesus.
 - b. What does Jesus say?
- B. Show Me The Money.
1. What does our money say?
 - a. Currency.
 - b. Coins.
 - "In God We Trust."
 2. Do we really trust God?
 - a. When the stock market takes a nose dive.
 - b. When there are natural disasters.
 - c. When there are terrorist attacks.
 - d. When our health fails.
 - e. When we are asked to support the work of this congregation.
 - Do we really trust God?
 3. Later this week you will receive a stewardship mailing.
 - a. Do you know what it means to be a steward?
 - Word "steward."
 - #Old English.
 - #Means:
 - *Sty warden.
 - +Caretaker of the sty.
 - =Pig pen.
 - #Sty wardens.
 - *Didn't live in the manor.
 - *Didn't own the pigs.
 - *Entrusted with the care.
 - +Of that which belonged to the lord and master.
- We are sty wardens/stewards.
 - #But God has given us more than pigs.
 - #God has given us:
 - *All that we are.
 - *All that we have.
 - #God has given us:
 - *Life.
 - +Life in our birth.
 - +New life as we are brought to faith.
 - +Promise of eternal life in the world to come
 - *Daily bread.
 - +Bread of life.

*His anointed one.

+Jesus.

=Messiah.

=Christ.

+Given into death.

=For our sins of:

-Covetousness.

-Selfishness.

-Stinginess.

+Given back to us.

=In resurrection.

=To open:

-The grave.

-Our hearts.

-Our hands.

-Our wallets.

#To give to God the things that are God's.

b. You will be asked to give.

-Time.

-Talent.

-Treasure.

c. You may be tempted to make excuses.

-“I don't have time.”

#Really?

#God gives the same amount of time to everybody.

*24 hours in a day.

*7 days in a week.

+No more.

+No less.

#Give to God the things that are God's.

-“I don't have any talents.”

#Really?

#God gives different gifts to different people for the good of all.

*1 Corinthians 12:7.

#Give to God the things that are God's.

-“I can't afford to give any more than I'm already giving.”

#Really?

#Jesus says:

*“Show me the money.”

+“In God we trust.”

#Give to God the things that are God's.

Concl: When I told that phone solicitor:
-“If you want to talk to the owner,”
-“You’re going to need to talk to God.”

Phone solicitor.
-Laughed.
-Said:
#“I do that twice a day.”

I hope you will do the same thing.
-When you receive your stewardship mailing.
#Talk to the owner.
#Give to God the things that are God’s.

