

## A Lesson in Truth

Matthew 22:15-22

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way. (KJV)

The present Gospel is a lesson in truth and discernment. The Pharisees desired to entangle Jesus Christ in a conversation by having questions posed to Him. Jesus was perceptive and knew the wickedness taking place.

Evil constantly lurks in daily life. Believers need to be conscious throughout life not to be deceived by seemingly innocent encounters. Evil can be disguised as good. (Mt.7:15)

Vigilance is required to uncover deceptive encounters with others. Jesus Christ realized the effort underway to trick Him. Jesus is all-knowing and answered the questions in a way that kept Him from being fooled.

Believers interact with individuals on a daily basis. Most people are honest and well-motivated. A percentage of people are dishonest. Some are purely evil. Being armed by living in Christ helps the believer to discern true motivation.

The news regularly reports individuals becoming victims in business relationships, investment schemes or home repairs. Elderly persons are often targeted. The internet is rife with predators seeking unsuspecting persons.

Keeping the self totally focused on Jesus Christ and the truth helps the believer to identify and not fall prey to victimizing encounters. The soul desires truth and is nourished by truth.

God's Holy Church is where to foster and learn to develop truth as fundamental to daily life. The Lord Jesus Christ is truth. (Jn.14:6) When Christ guides the believer's life, dangers are often avoided, and falsities are uncovered.

The path from Baptism to eternal life and God's Kingdom is fraught with many perils and dangers. Prayer, fasting and being nourished by life in the Church keep the believer on the narrow path necessary for life. (Mt.7:14)

The Pharisees were not successful in entangling Jesus in the present Gospel. Believers remaining faithful and true to Christ and Christ's teachings will avoid endangering the soul in daily relationships.

Heed the teachings of the Gospel. Nourish daily life by reading the Holy Scriptures. Immerse life in God's Holy Church. Learn of the saints and martyrs of the Church and follow their examples in faith, love and honesty.

Believers have a responsibility to seek out truth because Truth is the Lord Jesus Christ. Truth belongs in relationships, in business practices and in political circles.

Truth has a place in all aspects of daily life, in all aspects of life. Truth is the foundation of a society that will endure and last. Truth is the basis by which good products are manufactured and sold.

The Psalmist said long ago: “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in **vain** that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in **vain**.” (Ps. 126/127:1)

Conversations built on falsities and deceptions eventually become uncovered. Products produced with shortcomings eventually become known. Jesus perceived the intent of those asking about the payment of tribute to Caesar.

The road to eternal life and Heavenly Kingdom carries with it the expectation of a life of truth. Truth and honesty are necessary in daily relationships.

Truth and honesty are essential in the relationship with Jesus Christ. Believers cannot hide their thoughts or actions from Christ. Christ is all seeing and all knowing.

Jesus showed His ability to see and to know when He spoke to Nathaniel: “Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee” (Jn.1:47-49)

Further evidence of the all-knowing God is in the words of the First Epistle of John: “The Epistle states: For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” (1 Jn 3:20)

Truth is the foundation of life. In Jesus Christ we find life and life eternal. Today's Gospel reveals the deceptive motives of the Pharisees intended in the conversation with Jesus.

The Pharisees were not successful in deceiving Jesus. No one is successful in fooling Jesus. The lesson from the present Gospel is to be honest with Jesus and in every relationship.

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Venerable Moses the Black of Ethiopia. Venerable Sava of Pskov. August 28/September 10m 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic