

GOSPEL MESSAGE

October 18, 2026

LECTIONARY 29

Undivided Loyalty

When Jesus holds up a coin in the marketplace and asks the Pharisees and Herodians, “Whose head is this and whose title?” (Matthew 22:20), he is asking a question not about money, taxes, or the Roman Empire—at least not directly. It is likely that the emperor’s title, printed on that coin, proclaimed the emperor’s divinity: an implicit question of loyalty. And when Jesus asks his hearers to give “to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” (v. 21), he invites his hearers to decide where they will place their loyalty. What will they give to God? What belongs to the emperor?

We might ask ourselves the same question: Where do we place our loyalty? Where do we place our trust? In Jesus, we see an example: Jesus is loyal to us. Jesus is loyal to us when he teaches. Jesus is loyal to us when he bends down to wash his disciples’ feet. Jesus is loyal to us when he goes to the cross, dies, and rises again for us and for our salvation. Jesus is always loyal to us. Jesus is generous with us in pouring out grace upon grace for us. And we respond to Jesus’ loyalty and generosity with loyalty and generosity of our own.

Throughout our lives, we are empowered by the loyalty and generosity of Jesus to give to God the things that are God’s. We offer our resources for the good of our neighbors. We offer our time, investing in the work of the gospel in our communities and beyond. And we offer our very selves, pledging our undivided loyalty to Jesus, who is loyal to us first.

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