



### Closing Prayer

God of unmeasurable love, you are always with us giving freely to everyone who will accept. You want us to be just as generous with others.

As we overflow with your grace and love help us not to try to store it up in barns for later on but to open the doors to our barns so that all may have a share.

Help us to love like you.  
Amen

With thanks to Carolyn Sharp for preparing today's reflection



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### A Gathering

Let all the nations praise your name, our great and majestic God.

You are a God of goodness and justice: a God who answers prayers and forgives people.

Praise the Lord our God. Bow down in reverence and worship.

The Lord our God is holy!



### Preparation

Grace and peace be yours.

What more could we wish for than God's grace and peace instead of the judgement we deserve. We have been given new life instead of the punishment of separation from God. Let us live the joy and freedom that comes from being forgiven people.

Help us to not only live like we are overflowing with gratitude for the grace we have been given but to share that grace with those we meet. Help us to live our faith in such a way that others want a part of it.

Help us to love like you.  
Amen!

## Reading: Matthew 22: 15–22

### Reflection

Who do you owe? And for what?

This can be a daunting prospect to consider as we don't like being in debt but I'm sure none of us can say that we have done everything without the aid of others. After all, every baby is born helpless and needs to be cared for. I know I owe my parents a great debt of gratitude for the way they brought me up and all the sacrifices they made to feed, clothe and educate me. I can also think of others: teachers, workmates, friends and family who have given to me in so many ways and made me a better person.

And God has been gracious to me too. Whatever happens I have always known God's love and peace. All these things have no market value but are beyond price.

We also have debts that can be measured in dollars and cents, ones that have an actual and exact amount. Some are momentary, like the cup of coffee that you buy; some come every year, like licences and insurance; some are ongoing, think of the taxes we pay in the supermarket or as a worker; and some are a long term commitment – mortgages can take years to repay.

When the Herodians (the ones on the side of the Romans) and the Pharisees came together it was an unusual pairing as these two groups usually didn't have anything in common – they were on opposite sides of the fence. Such was their desire to get rid of Jesus that they worked together to trap him with an either/or question – about debts.

But if any laughing was done it was Jesus as he deftly turned the tables on them with a both/and answer. Like us, Jesus lived in a society with both items that could be bought and the priceless grace of God in existence. Like us, Jesus knew that both were necessary for life.

Jesus was wise enough to get them to answer their own question. If they then had an issue, they then had to sort it out amongst themselves. I'd love to have been a fly on the wall when they got back and had to explain what happened!



But we are still faced with the same issues. How do we answer the questions about God and Government and us?

What are our priorities and where do our loyalties lie?

Who or what do we choose?

What share do we give to God?

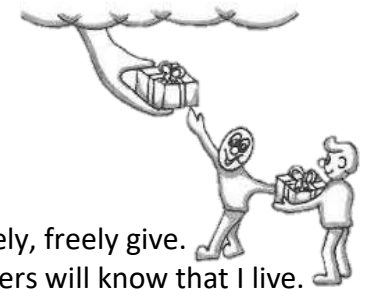
### A song to sing or to read: *Freely, Freely*

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name  
I've been born again in Jesus' name  
and in Jesus' name I come to you  
to share his love as he told me to.

He said 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.  
Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live.

All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name  
In earth and heav'n in Jesus' name  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share his pow'r as he told me to.

He said 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.  
Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live.



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