

Sunday, May 14, 2017 Confirmation Sunday, Holy Communion

Confirmed: Michael, Erik, Armando, Nathan

Message: Whose Image?

Scripture: Mark 2:14-17

Text: Ephesians 4:23-24 “Let the Spirit renew your mind and make you into a new person, for you were created in God’s image in true righteousness and holiness.

Wednesday Blurp: Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." This famous proverb comes straight from Jesus. And it has to do with money and faces! What does it mean? How do we live this way? Come this Sunday and hear it from confirmation students. It's the first of two Confirmation Sundays. Ian Bautch, Conner Keintz, James Richter and Max Thompson will give their faith sharing, and we as a congregation will bless them and pray for them. We who follow Jesus live with God's image in us, restored and reflected to others.

GATHERING SONG: *Even So, Come* - Sanctify

WELCOME: Pastor David

GREETING: Mother’s Day Blessing - For all women

“May the Lord bless you as you nurture the next generations.”

PRAISE WORSHIP: Sanctify

That’s Why We Praise Him

Forever Reigns

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Worship Prayer - Andrew

SCRIPTURE: Mark 12:14-17

PP#1: Mark 12:13-17 (CEB)

13 [The Jewish leaders] sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch Him in His words. 14 They came to Him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? 15 Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

PP#2: Mark 12:13-17 (CEB)

15 But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” He asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” 16 They brought the coin, and He asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

17 Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” And they were amazed at him.

PP#3: *Image of two “widow’s mite” coins.*

Not many of you may know this, but I am a bit of a coin collector. My preference is US coins minted for circulation, but as a pastor I also have an interest in the coins of the Bible. I have in my collection, for example, what the Bible calls “The Widow’s mite,” the two copper pennies that the elderly widow put in the temple offering, giving all she had. Some of the biblical coins are rather rare and expensive, so I don’t have them all...yet!

PP#4: *Image of silver Denarius of Tiberius at*

<http://bibleandarchaeology.blogspot.com/2011/02/coin-with-image-of-caesar.html>

This passage from Mark 12 mentions a coin. It’s a silver denarius, about the size of a dime. A denarius was the standard issue coin of the Roman Empire, and was the pay for a day’s work by a skilled laborer. What would that be today? \$100?

When Jesus was an adult, Tiberius was emperor in Rome. Tiberius was the second Roman emperor, taking over from Caesar Augustus, the emperor of Jesus’ birth, in 14 A.D.

Now, one of the great problems for Jews was that, starting with Augustus, the Roman emperors claimed divinity. You can see it on this coin, here. On the right, starting on the bottom. Ti, is abbreviated for Tiberius. Then Caesar. Then Divi, meaning divine. The coin had the name for God on it. So, could faithful Jews use such coins, when they claimed that the emperor was god?

This is what some smart-thinking Jewish experts used to try to trap Jesus. The story, as we read it in Mark 12, is that some of them come to Jesus and at first, ever so innocently, try to butter Him up. But then they lay the trap. Should we pay the tax to Rome?

Now, this was not the ordinary tax. This was the special tax that the Roman Empire levied on all non-Romans within of the empire, one denarius once a year, as a way for them to help pay for all the benefits they, as conquered peoples, receive by being subjects of the superior Romans. The Romans taxed everyone, and then they had this extra tax for non-Romans.

Of course the Jews hated it. And they hated it all the more because they had to swear allegiance to the Roman emperor, who considered himself divine. And they had to show their allegiance by paying a tax using a Roman coin with the word “god” on it.

So, Jesus, do we pay the tax, and support the idolatry of the Roman Empire (breaking Jewish law), or do we not pay the tax and breaking the Roman law? Which is it, oh very wise and noble Jesus?

Well, Jesus doesn’t answer their question directly. He first asks to see a denarius. Then He answers the question with a question: “Whose image is on the coin?” Well, it is Caesar’s.

Then Jesus makes that amazing answer: “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

PP#5: *Last/fourth image from:* <http://www.altarandthrone.com/render-unto-caesar/>

Michael, Erik, Armando, Nathan, I think this answer that Jesus gave, is a way for you to live the rest of your lives as Christians.

Today you are swearing your allegiance to Jesus. You belong to God! But you also live in this physical world, and you have to follow it’s rules, too. Being a Christian in this life means giving to the world what belongs to the world, and to God what belongs to God.

Christians, every day, have to discern what this means in order to live faithfully for God. So, I'm going to give you each a reproduction of the denarius that Jesus talked about. [Give reproduction coin to the students.]

I hope it will remind you, from now on, to live for God, in this world.

You see, God wants you here, involved in this world, on purpose, to live for Him while you are in it. When you give yourself to God, God then uses you to make the world better through you, by what you do, and how you live.

Now, how we live this out is not just figuring out how much to pay in taxes and how much money to give to God's work. You will soon find out that God is far cheaper! Taxes are about 25%. And we learned last week that God expects you to give only 10% to His work. God's a bargain!

But this really isn't about money.

Jesus, if you notice, asks about *the image* on the coin.

Emperors put their image on coins to remind everyone that everything actually belonged to them, and that they deserved the people's allegiance. Everything people did with money, they did in Caesar's image. It belongs to Caesar.

PP#6: Genesis 1:26-28 (NIV)

"Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness ... So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them"

But Jesus digs deep back to the beginning of the Jewish Scriptures, back to creation, where it describes how God created people. Again, it's about the image. The Bible says that in the beginning God created people in *God's image*.

Every coin was made with the same image of Caesar, and every person is made in the same image of God. We belong to God! And everything we do, we do as God's image.

PP#7: *Fifth image down at:* <https://hereistandobservations.wordpress.com/tag/religion/>

You can almost imagine how Jesus did this.

Jesus holds the coin and asks, "Whose image is on this coin?"

Answer, "Caesar's."

Now it doesn't actually say it, but it is implied here. Perhaps Jesus even physically put His arm around the shoulders of one who questioned Him, implying the question, "And whose image is on *this* coin?" Mental answer, "God made people in God's image."

Then Jesus says, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

PP#8: Whose Image?

This is why the people who came to test Jesus, quietly walked away. It is no longer about the tax. It's about being God's image, and living as God's image in the world!

It's not about giving the tax, it's about giving your whole selves to God. "Give your whole self to the One who has imprinted His Divinity on you!"

We live in Caesar's empire, and so we follow those rules. But we belong to God. And when we choose Jesus, we live for Him, and that means differently than the rest of the world.

Because God rules over all rulers, because God calls out of each of us God's very own image, each of us must follow God, not Caesar.

Michael, Erik, Armando, Nathan, today, on your confirmation, I call you to live out your image of God on you. I call you to live differently, following God, not Caesar.

To help you remember this, I'm going to give you a very unique Confirmation Cross. Each confirmation class I've ever confirmed, I've given a different confirmation cross to wear. This year, I will hang around your neck something special as your confirming pastor, and as a coin collector.

PP#9: *Image of the bronze follis (both sides) that is their confirmation cross.*

Your Confirmation cross is a coin, a reproduction of a bronze coin from the Eastern Roman Empire, dating back a thousand years. A thousand years after the Tiberius denarius, the Eastern Roman Emperor John 1, who was a Christian, began striking coins with the image of Jesus, as a way to mark that his empire didn't belong to him, but to God.

Can you see the cross on the coin? It's the halo behind Jesus' head. That's your confirmation cross! And just as this coin was made in Jesus' image, may it remind you, that as confirmed Jesus-followers, you have Jesus' image on you.

On the back, in Greek, is are the words, "Heasus...Christus...Basilieu...Basile" "Jesus Christ, King of Kings."

Today, as you choose to make Jesus your King of Kings, I pray that you would live, from now on, not just in His image, but *as* His image."

Amen!

So, it's now time to hear from each of you.

Today, you are making your public declaration of your allegiance to Jesus. You are claiming your identity as made in God's image. And as you do, you also share with us, this hope joy we all can have.

Michael, you're first.

FAITH SHARINGS

PP#10: Michael Stanley Karan

Baptized: June 22, 2003 at Grace UMC, Minneapolis

Confirmation Mentor: Bob Rosenbaum

Favorite Bible Verse: Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Favorite Christian Song: *Joy to the World*

PP#11: Erik Robert Kargel

Baptized: Oct. 20, 2012, Gulf Islands National Seashore, FL.

Confirmation Mentor: Chuck Yetter

Favorite Bible Passage: Luke 23:39-43

Then [the criminal] said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Favorite Christian Song: *10,000 Reasons* or *I Got Jesus*

PP#12: Armando Joseph Lorenzi

Baptized: Dec. 1, 2002 at FHUMC

Confirmation Mentor: Louis James

Favorite Bible Verse: Matthew 6:34 “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Favorite Christian Song: *Here I Am to Worship*

PP#13: Nathan David Werner

Baptized: December 29, 2002 Atwater UMC, Atwater, MN

Confirmation Mentor: Rev. Dan Hair

Favorite Bible Verse: John 14:2-4

[Jesus said,] “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Favorite Song: *God’s Not Dead* by the Newsboys

VOWS OF PROFESSION OF FAITH:

“The Apostle’s Creed”

PP#14: The Apostle’s Creed, as understood by Erik Kargel

I believe in the Lord who created us and the universe itself.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and Savior. He was born when the Holy Spirit came to the virgin Mary and gave her a child with God’s awesome power. He was later arrested, nailed to a tree, and killed under Pontius Pilate. He was then buried in a stone tomb. He first descended into hell, and on the third day after his death, He rose and ascended into Heaven. He now sits at the awesome, great, and powerful God, where at the end of time, Jesus will decide who will live and who will die.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who gave Mary a baby, the places all over the world where Christianity exists, the gathering after death of those who believe and trust that God is real, the power to be forgiven of any bad thing you may do. I believe the resurrection of our bodies after death, and that anyone can go to heaven and become immortal if they chose to follow God. Amen.

CONFIRMATION OF FAITH**PP#15: *Images of baptism and prayer***

Pastor: Confirmation is a completion of infant baptism.

Baptism is a declaration to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior

Initiation into Christ’s Church

Incorporation into Jesus’ act of salvation, and

in the New Birth given through the Holy Spirit

Begun in infant baptism, with the vows by God and parents, awaiting the vows by the individual

Or is declared at baptism by a person of age

Through Confirmation and the reaffirmation of our faith, we renew the covenant declared at our baptism, acknowledge what God is doing for us, and affirm our commitment to Jesus.

Those being confirmed take their place, surrounded by their families.

PRESENTATION OF PRAYER SHAWLS - Mentors

Explanation of the meaning of the colors and pattern.

CONFIRMATION BLESSING FOR EACH CONFIRMAND

Pastor goes to each confirmand, one at a time

Family and friends of that confirmand stand in the pews

Pastor places confirmation cross around confirmand's neck

Parents and mentor lay hands on the confirmand

Church family extend their hands toward the confirmand

Pastor lays hands on the confirmand and proclaims the blessing:

Name, We pray for the Holy Spirit to work within you,

That having been born through water and the Spirit,

you may live as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Everyone affirms, Amen.

Pastor moves to the next confirmand.

PP#16: Picture of Nathan

Pastor: Nathan David Werner, we pray ... a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen!

PP#17: Picture of Armando

Pastor: Armando Joseph Lorenzi, we pray ... a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen!

PP#18: Picture of Erik

Pastor: Erik Robert Kargel, we pray ... a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen!

PP#19: Picture of Michael

Pastor: Michael Stanley Karan, we pray ... a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

All: Amen!

PRESENTATION OF THE CONFIRMATION BIBLES: UMW**PP#20: Presentation of the Confirmation Bibles**

by the United Methodist Women

CONFIRMATION VERSE: Ephesians 4:23-24**PP#21: Confirmation Verse: Ephesians 4:23-24**

"Let the Spirit renew your mind and make you into a new person, for you were created in God's image in true righteousness and holiness."

BAPTISM BLESSING SONG: Andrew

May You Run and Not Grow Weary

PP#22: Song of Blessing

"May you run and not grow weary...."

Parents and Mentors return to their seats, students stay standing.

JOINING FOREST HILLS UMC

Names, you have professed your faith in Jesus and are a part of Christ's universal church on earth. Do you also vow to be loyal to Christ through the United Methodist Church, and do all in your power to strengthen its ministries? As members of Forest Hills United Methodist Church, will you faithfully participate in this congregation by prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness? If so, say "I will."

Response: **I will.**

Welcome and Blessing

Congregation extends hands to the new members and prays the blessing on the screen.

PP#23: *Blessing of new members*

HOLY COMMUNION

PP#24ff: *Andrew has these slides.*

Communion Song:

Hesed

Prayers, Lord's Prayer, Offering

Confirmation students help serve, wearing shawls

CLOSING SONG: Sanctify

I Love to Tell the Story

BENEDICTION

Invitation to the reception

RECEPTION (Lobby)