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Tuesday's Gospel: Walking in Accord with the Truth

Gospel for Tuesday in the 9th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 12:13-17)

They sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to entrap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?” But

knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a coin,^[a] and let me look at it.” And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

And they were amazed at him.

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Commentary

The drama in the Gospels is built in part on the increasing hardening of hearts of those who should have accepted Jesus. Seen from the perspective of witnessing these events from a certain distance, their attitude can seem not only foolish but even incomprehensible. But can we truly say that we have never

sometimes behaved like them? Paul says in his Letter to the Romans: “to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises” (*Rom* 9:4). After having received so much, how is it possible that they are so blind to the words and works of our Lord?

A constant message throughout Holy Scripture is that those who voluntarily and consciously close themselves to the truth, to the Gospel, fall into the hands of a force of deception that leads them to believe in lies (cf. *Rom* 11:8; *2 Thes* 2:11). This blindness results in building one’s life on unstable foundations and directing it to a mistaken goal. The attitude of those who approach Jesus in the Gospel passage today reflects this very clearly. They offer hypocritical praise and a deceitful question. What a

contrast exists between the truth and lies!

“The truth will set you free” (*Jn* 8:32); “he who believes and is baptized will be saved” (*Mk* 16:16). These

statements show us the right path. In those who approach Jesus in today’s Gospel we see the “ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth” (*Rom* 1:18). But in the end the truth always prevails and every lie will be revealed as such: “nothing is hidden that will not be known” (*Mt* 10:26).

This truth is and will be judgment for those who loved lies and wickedness. Although the true attitude of one’s heart can be masked by words, God knows what is really there. Jesus’ life and words show us the path of God that leads to the truth, the path that leads to life: “Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (*1 Jn* 3:18).

Juan Luis Caballero

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