

Lectionary Bible Study

For Sunday, October 18, 2026 (Pentecost 21)

Isaiah 45:1-7

Discussion Starters

1. Who is Cyrus? In the past, only Israelite kings were called "God's anointed." What is the significance of God's using this title for a pagan king?
2. Why does God give victory after victory to Cyrus (vv. 3-6)?
3. Several times in this chapter God repeats that there is no god besides Him. Why is this statement being stressed?
4. What are ways in which you have seen God use evil things and bad people to accomplish His purposes? What current event(s) disturbs you because you cannot see any sense within it? Based on this passage, what should be your response?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Discussion Starters

1. Read Acts 17:1-9. What do you learn about the church at Thessalonica from that passage?
2. What convinced Paul that the Thessalonians had been chosen by God?
3. How did the Thessalonians first become imitators of, and then models for, the faith? What does this tell you about their growth in Christ?
4. Which of the qualities listed in verse three do you most want to see developed in your own life?
5. Who has been a model of the faith for you, and why? For whom have you been a model? What are some ways you can be intentional about modeling your faith for others?

Matthew 22:15-22

Discussion Starters

1. What would the social and political implications have been if Jesus had simply said "Pay Caesar?" What if He had said "Don't pay Caesar?"
2. What did Jesus mean by his answer in verse 21? What should we give to God, and what should we give to Caesar?
3. What we learn from this passage about a proper relationship between church and state from a Christian perspective?

WRAP UP

What key insight did you gain from this Bible study? How might it make a difference in how you live today?