



Sunday 25th October 2026

Last Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading

Matthew 22.34-end.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’

He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment.

And a second is like it: “‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ‘What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?’ They said to him, ‘The son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet’”? If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?’ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Other readings: Deuteronomy 34.1–12

Psalms 90.1–6, 13–17 [or 90.1–6]

1 Thessalonians 2.1–8

Homily

The Gospel passage for today contains several questions: the initial question from the Pharisees “which commandment in the law is the greatest?”; and the questions Jesus poses to them as part of his reply.

When questions are being asked in any area of life there is often rather more behind the question than a simple request for information. The text tells us that the Pharisees, experts in the law themselves, are asking the question “to test” Jesus, maybe to catch him out and to see perhaps if they can do better than another group of experts, the Sadducees, have done.

We have probably all been on the receiving end of questions designed to make us feel foolish, to expose gaps in our knowledge or to show us up in front of others. This is not a very pleasant or life-affirming experience. Accountability is important and sometimes, of course, hard questions must be asked of institutions, processes and people. But when the only purpose of a question is to diminish the person being asked we need to examine closely the motives of the questioner. Maybe we also need to examine our own motives when questioning others in this way.

A good teacher asks questions of their students. These questions are designed to check whether information has been learned or retained. They also encourage further thinking around the issue, and develop students' critical thinking skills so that they can continue to learn and explore for themselves. Questioning in this way can encourage a deeper engagement with the issues and an encouragement to positive action and new avenues of enquiry. Jesus' questions here expose the fact that Jesus' questioners do not themselves have all the answers. They have further thinking to do before believing themselves to be experts pronouncing on the behaviour of others.

Jesus' further questions also serve as a warning that one can get caught up in wars of words which are not in themselves helpful unless they lead to a deeper understanding or promote a positive outcome. There are many points about which Christians disagree but the way we explore and seek to resolve these disagreements is important. It is sometimes hard, but we must respect our brothers and sisters in Christ, and behave lovingly, even when we disagree.

Jesus' initial answer, and his summary of the law, tell us and the Pharisees what is important: that all commandments are summed up in loving God and loving other people. Getting lost in finer points of discussion and debate for the sake of it is not constructive. Using questions as a weapon to intimidate, or as a proof of superiority, is neither loving nor helpful.

Like most things in life, questioning can be positive and life-giving, or it can be negative and crushing. As Christians, we are called to explore ways of living and relating that build each other up. That includes being mindful and careful when we question others. We need to check our behaviour often, so that our everyday lives truly demonstrate love for God and love for others.

Conversation Questions

1. How can we ask good questions of ourselves and each other?
2. What question or questions would you like to take to God in prayer this week?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you?
What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

Merciful God,
teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty,
that trusting in your word
and obeying your will
we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(or)

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

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