

Greetings

from **North Harrow Methodist Church**

Worship resource

Sunday 25 October

The Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Bible Reading: Matthew 22:34-46 (Bible Gateway.com)

The Greatest Commandment

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” 37 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.’ 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

The Question about David’s Son

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: 42 “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” 43 He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

44 ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’?

45 If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” 46 No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. (NRSV)

Prayer

Come, Love the Lord your God,
With all your heart,
With all your soul and with all your mind.
Loving Lord,

We come in a moment of quiet, to a place of peace where we can cast off our worries and to a time where we can reflect on you and recharge our batteries.

May we be free to care gently for those we share time with.

Loving God, we pray that you renew us so we may renew others.

AMEN

Hymn: (StF 518) Father, hear the prayer we offer (source: musixmatch)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtoF8VFVPRg>

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength, that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.

Not forever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay;
But would strike the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our Guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

Words by Love Maria Willis (1824-1908) Words and Music c1975 Thank you music

Reflection

When I worked in Knutsford, it was in a café on a local estate where people had to learn to get on ...

They would come in for a meal, a brew or just a chat, there were all sorts of people, people recovering from addictions, addicts, people suffering from a broken heart or an illness. There were many who suffered from severe mental health problems – anxiety, panic attacks, depression. It is closed at the moment to the public but when it was open there were many different ‘characters’ – some smartly dressed, but others who wore stained jumpers and torn trousers. Some people didn’t know much about personal hygiene. Many people would come in and couldn’t stop tapping their fingers on the table or jiggling their legs up and down – their anxiety was palpable. The people would sometimes just start a random conversation that you couldn’t follow. Sometimes, other people, myself included just wanted or needed peace and quiet. Such times certainly tested the understanding of the second commandment to “love your neighbour as yourself”!

I’d like you to consider how Jesus turned the tables on his detractors. They have spent much time goading him and testing him, first about Caesar and their taxes, and about marriage at the resurrection, and finally straight back to the central laws of their faith. Jesus has batted the ball back, with volleys and lobs every time, to their amazement. For when he is asked about which is the greatest commandment in the law – what does he reply – with the word

love! This love isn't just a noun, it's a verb – a doing word. He transforms and completes them. He says nothing new, but the combination of what he says is dramatic.

Consider Jesus' great ability to disagree politely, he argued in a kindly manner and he talked softly to his opponents. I'm not sure I always manage to do that, sometimes I cringe and clam up, I do try to not become dismissive of other's points of view.

Consider how Jesus coped with criticism – always calmly, often by asking a question, as he took the idea further and deeper than anyone expected, and often threw a curve ball, taking the idea in an entirely different direction. But, then it is his turn to bowl a ball right back at them – to see if they knew the answer this most important question – “What do you think about the Christ, whose son is he?”

It is worth reading through this passage from Matthew and asking what sort of man Jesus is. He is patient with the people who were trying to trap him. His response is gentle explaining his understanding of the scriptures. But at the same time, he is stating his beliefs – showing strength of mind and character

Contemplate the best way to effect a lasting change on another person's attitude. The most important question we may ever answer is what we believe about Christ.

Contemplate if and where there are opportunities in your life to ask questions and be able to reply with an answer that can lodge in another's mind, to show that you love your neighbour as yourself.

I invite you to pray

I promise to love you, Lord God,
With all my heart – all my compassion,
With all my soul – with all my prayer,
With all my mind – all my reason,
And with all these powers,
I will love my neighbour as myself.
AMEN