

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 22:34-46  
September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## The LORD Said to My Lord

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

In our society, love is treated as an emotion. It is all about how you feel. Love for our world and culture is all about the person expressing the love. However, this view is backwards. Love is not about you, but the object of your love. Love is sacrificing yourself—your will, your social status, your money—for somebody other than yourself.

The fulfillment of the Law of God also involves love. The first table of the Law requires us to love the Triune Lord God with all our heart, soul and mind. The second table of the Law requires us to love our neighbor in the same way as we do ourselves. In other words, we do not wish harm to come to our person, and so we act in appropriate ways. This same attitude that we hold for our own well-being is to be directed at our neighbors—those to whom our Triune Lord God have put in our path for us to love in order that we might show our love for Him. For everyone and everything is created by God, and we show our love for Him, and the creation that He gave us, by treating that creation with care and love.

We are to sacrifice our needs and wants and wills for the benefit of our Lord God and our neighbor. Nothing we have is of our own striving and doing, it is all a gift of God. Therefore, we should use the gifts that our Lord God has given us for the benefit of our neighbor and to give glory to God alone. This is a small part of what it means to love.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ teaches us what love is in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Matthew. The lawyer, who was speaking on behalf of all the Pharisees, tried to test our Lord + Jesus about the Law. Which is the greatest commandment? Our Lord + Jesus answers simply. The great commandment is “love.” Love for God and love for our neighbor.

Unfortunately, none of the Pharisees understood this. Even more unfortunate, is that many people today, also do not understand what it means to love. For most people it is all about how they feel. To say, “I love you” to someone means that you would do anything for that person, within the bounds of God’s Law, of course. We do not prove our love for someone—we do not prove our obeying the tenets of the Law—by breaking other commandments.

Since the Pharisees all stood there looking at their shoes, ashamed that they did not know what the Lord + Jesus was talking about, our Lord goes on to ask them a question that teaches us what it

means to love. Our Lord + Jesus Christ shows us what it means to love. The first way is that He bothers to engage the Pharisees. He could have easily ignored the question. It was clearly a way to trip Him up so that they could tell everyone what a horrible human being He was, and then people would stop following Him and listening to Him. But, our Lord answers the question. Even more, He asks them a question to show them what love is.

Our Lord quotes King David from Psalm 110, "*The LORD said to my Lord, 'sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'*" The psalm is referring to the Christ; to the anointed Son of God Who comes in our flesh to fulfill the Law and endure our punishment. The psalm talks about the Lord being a High Priest—a High Priest like Melchizedek. This means that the Messiah was not to be of the Levitical priesthood. He predates the Levitical priesthood. He is outside of the Levitical priesthood.

Priests are supposed to make sacrifices on the behalf of others. They offer up sacrifices for those who cannot offer the sacrifice themselves. But, the person for whom the sacrifice is performed still receives the benefit. Our Lord + Jesus Christ is both the sacrifice and the High Priest. He offers Himself as a sacrifice on the altar of the cross, so that we might be freed from the penalty of sin and death, and free from the power of the devil. And because of this sacrifice of our High Priest, those who believe and cling to this sacrifice receive the benefits that that sacrifice wins: forgiveness of our sins, eternal life and salvation.

This is what the psalm that our Lord + Jesus quotes is all about: His sacrifice for us. His sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and especially for those who believe on Him. This is how the Lord makes His enemies His footstool, by giving up His life. This is also how the Lord shows both His love and His fulfilling of the Law. The Law requires love. He shows His love for us in that while we were still enemies and sinners, He died for us to give us eternal hope. He died so that we might be free from the penalty of our sins; from our inability to love as is required of us in the Law.

We lack the ability to love perfectly. We cannot even love perfectly the people we care about most deeply. We can say we love our spouse, but there are times where they still get on our nerves and we think unkind thoughts about them. In this, we have failed to love perfectly. We can say we love our family, the group of people to whom our Lord has given to us so that we might learn how to love and how to treat our neighbor. But, our family often infuriates us and frustrates us to the point where we at times curse their names. In this, we have failed to love perfectly. The same can be said about our closest friends, we do not always love them the way that we should.

And we know that if we fail in just one small point, as St. James says in his epistle, we have broken all the commandments. We cannot even keep the commandment to love our neighbor perfectly with those who we deeply care about, let alone complete strangers, or even the requirement to love our enemies, because they are still part of the Triune Lord God's creation. On account of this, we do not deserve God's eternal love and care, but rather we require His eternal wrath and displeasure. Think about that, and shake in your boots, that we deserve an eternity in Hell simply because we cannot even love the people who are easiest for us to love.

It was just for this reason, our inability to love God or our neighbor, that our Lord + Jesus Christ came down from Heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in order that He might become our High Priest—the One Who offers Himself on the tree of the holy cross for our sake. He loves us to death. He loves us to the point of sacrificing everything He has, even though we were His enemies, so that we might have life abundantly.

This is what it means to love someone. It means sacrificing ourselves—our wills, our ways, our desires, our needs—for someone other than ourselves. Our Lord + Jesus shows us what it means to

love. More importantly, He shows us what it means to fulfill the Law and how poorly we are at being able to do that. He gives of His very self, so that you might have eternal life with Him. And when we love someone, we want to spend as much time as we have with them. We want to spend our entire lives with them. Our Lord + Jesus Christ loves us so much that He desires to live with us for all eternity, even though we have not shown that we are worthy of that love.

By His death on the tree of the holy cross, our Lord + Jesus has made His enemies—sin, death and the devil—His footstool. He has bruised their heads and crushed them under His feet. And we get to enjoy the benefits of His love for us. He has paid for our sins. He has won for us an eternal life with Him in Heaven. And, He has defeated our mortal enemies of the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh and given us salvation. For all this we thank and praise Him, and through the faith given to us through the working of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, we cling to Him and His promises in love for all that He has done for us through His love for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*