

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 22:34-46  
October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## The Son of David

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

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

Lord God, heavenly Father: We are poor, miserable sinners; we know Thy will, but cannot fulfill it because of the weakness of our flesh and blood, and because our enemy, the devil, will not leave us in peace. Therefore we beseech Thee, shed Thy Holy Spirit in our hearts, that, in steadfast faith, we may cling to Thy Son Jesus Christ, find comfort in His passion and death, believe the forgiveness of sin through Him, and in willing obedience to Thy will lead holy lives on Earth, until by Thy grace, through a blessed death, we depart from this world of sorrow, and obtain eternal life, through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

My dear friends, as you well know, there are Ten Commandments. Which one would you choose if someone were to ask you, "Which is the greatest?" The Pharisees in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist and Apostle St. Matthew ask our Lord + Jesus this very question. Of course, as the text says, this was to test the Lord; they wanted to trick Him by getting Him to pick one of the Ten Commandments. This has all the markings that this was something that they debated about among themselves often. It sounds like something seminarians discuss to make themselves seem smarter. "This one is the greatest." "No, this one is the greatest." This is why they put this question to our Lord + Jesus so that they could trap Him in His words. For, if He answers any particular Commandment, then they could argue for another.

Their deception is prompted by the fact that our Lord + Jesus has silenced the Sadducees. They had asked Him concerning the resurrection of the dead—something they refused to believe and confess. They had asked our Lord about a woman who had been married to seven brothers because of the Jewish marital laws. Each of the seven brothers had died and the next in line became her husband. Who then is she married to in the resurrection of the dead? The answer is none, for people in Heaven are neither married, nor given in marriage, because marriage is for procreation in this world.

Our Lord continues to silence the Sadducees by using the Scriptures against them. The Sadducees only accepted the Pentateuch—the five books of Moses—as the Word of God, and disregarded the rest. This is the first sign of a false teacher, when they disregard the Word of God for either their own ideas, or for the philosophies of this world. Therefore, our Lord + Jesus roots out their false teaching by using the holy Scriptures against them. And, he uses the Scriptures that they would accept, so that they could not refute Him by saying, "Those words do not count." Moses in the book of Exodus writes that God proclaims Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the present tense. He is the God of the living not of the dead. And so, the Sadducees are silenced because they cannot retort from their Scriptures the words of our Lord + Jesus.

The Pharisees had also been trying to trap our Lord in His words. The Pharisees and Sadducees may have been on opposite sides regarding the word of God, but in their deception and trickery of our Lord they were united. They had tried to trap our Lord + Jesus just prior to today's text with a question about taxes. Are they to pay them, since we are the nation of Israel—the nation of the Lord God—and Roman is not? Our Lord had asked to show Him a coin, and proceeded to ask them, whose image and inscription is it? Caesars money was to be paid to Caesar, and the things of God were to be rendered to God. Their deception did not work. The Sadducees deception did not work. And now, they try to deceive our Lord + Jesus with a question regarding the greatest Commandment.

Our Lord can see through the deception, though. He does not pick any one, particular Commandment like the Pharisees had hoped. No, He in essence chooses all the Commandments, by explaining what the true intent of the Commandments are. Moses had explained this in our Old Testament reading. Love is the purpose of the Law. Love for the Lord Triune God with your heart, your soul, your mind, that is, with your entire being perfectly, and love for your neighbor has yourself perfectly.

Well, we know that we do not love perfectly, either the Lord Triune God, or our neighbor. Our perfect love for the Lord God is ruined because we do not love our neighbor as ourselves. Our neighbor, who we see, was made in the image of God; he is God's creation, just as we are. If we are unable to love our neighbor who we see every day, how are we to love God who we only see through faith? We are given ample opportunities to show love for our neighbor. We can help those in need. We can avoid treating our fellowman with anger or contempt. In short, we can show love for our neighbor by both not treating them harshly and helping them when they need help. We fail miserably on these two points, daily and often. We are way too often selfish and self-serving; caring only about ourselves and what advantage we can have to the neglect and detriment of our neighbor. If we cannot love our neighbor as we love ourselves, how can we love God?

God demands perfect obedience to the Law. If we fail in one small bit, we have failed to keep the Law entirely. The Pharisees and Sadducees were obsessed with the Law of God, but they did not keep it. We know this is true from their previous encounters with our Lord + Jesus in the beginning of this chapter of the Evangelist and Apostle St. Matthew. The question about the coin from the Pharisees is really a question about the Law: should we obey the government? The answer our Lord gives is, "Yes." For the government has been established by the Lord God. The question from the Sadducees about the resurrection is a question about the Law of God. It is really asking, "Do we have to believe everything that is taught in holy Scriptures?" The answer is "Yes." You cannot pick and choose which doctrines you get to believe and confess, and which ones you reject. For if you reject any, you have rejected the whole of Christian doctrine.

This question today about which is the greatest Commandment is also, clearly, a question about the Law. The Pharisees and Sadducees want to trick and test our Lord + Jesus concerning the Law of God so that they can show the people of Israel that this Man + Jesus is not the Messiah. The Pharisees even have a Lawyer—someone whose job it was to study and learn the Law—ask our Lord this question regarding the greatest Commandment. The test fails. Our Lord + Jesus does not pick just one Commandment, but instead directs them to the words of Moses, who said that love is the fulfillment of the Law; love with all your heart, soul and mind, and love for your neighbor.

But our Lord + Jesus does not stop there. The Pharisees and Sadducees want to be obsessed about the Law. Our Lord + Jesus directs them away from the Law. He directs them to the Messiah—the Son of David.

It is certain that we cannot keep the Law perfectly. It is certain that we do not love the Lord God above all things, for we are poor, miserable sinners. Scripture teaches that he who loves iniquity, that

is, is a sinner, hates the Lord God. With our sins we show our hatred for the Lord God. For if we loved the Lord Triune God with all our heart, soul and mind, we would not sin. I am talking here about the actual sins that we willingly and freely commit, whether we do those things thoughtlessly, or whether there is actual intention behind those sins. With those sins we show that we hate the Lord God, for He commands that we show our love for Him with our obedience to the Law of God.

The same is true of our love for our neighbors—our fellowman. We grumble and complain about other people all the time. If you have ever though ill of another driver while driving, you have broken the Commandments, for you have not shown love for your fellowman, but have either called him an idiot for driving too slowly, or a maniac for driving too fast. And, we have this attitude for our neighbor in more things than just when we are driving. This is just one example. The examples of how we do not show love for our neighbor could fill ten sermons.

It is clear that we do not love God, nor love our neighbor as ourselves. For this we deserve God's eternal wrath and displeasure. If we want to get to Heaven by our keeping of the Law, we are sorely doomed. If we want to be saved through our obedience to the Law, we fail miserably, for we do not love God and our neighbor perfectly.

This is why our Lord + Jesus, in His mercy directs the eyes of the Pharisees to the Messiah; to the Son of David. Our Lord + Jesus also has a question for them. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He? They answer correctly: He is the Son of David. This had been promised to King David because of his faithfulness to the Lord God. The Messiah, the Anointed One of God, would be born of the house and lineage of King David. One of King David's sons would be the Messiah. The Pharisees understood this to mean that the Messiah would be only a man. He would have an earthly kingdom, and rescue them from their enemies, who at that moment in time was the Romans.

Our Lord + Jesus, though, shows them, and us, that the Messiah is not just man, but is also God. For how can King David, in the Spirit, call his son Lord. He cannot be both by human logic. He is either Lord or son. You cannot be both. But our Lord + Jesus is both God and man. This is how He can truly redeem mankind from sin, death and the power of the devil. For only a man who is also God can obey the Commandments perfectly for mankind. God can certainly obey His Commandments perfectly, but that does not do mankind any good, for we still break the Law daily and often. And if a man were to keep the Law of God perfectly, that would save that one man, but it would not save all of mankind.

Our Lord + Jesus must be both God and man, so that He can fulfill the Law for all of mankind. Further, only the God man our Lord Jesus, the Christ can not only endure the punishment for our sins and iniquities, but also raise Himself up on the third day. We can certainly endure punishment, even as we feel pain and sorrow and the sting of sin every day of our lives, but we are unable to raise ourselves from the dead. Our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, the Son of David can. The fulfillment of the Law is love. He loves us, His neighbor, perfectly by coming down from Heaven to be born a man and fulfill the Law of love for us, and suffer our punishment on the tree of the holy cross. In doing this He also shows His perfect love for God, for He obeys His Father's will that He should do these things for us.

Our Lord + Jesus is the Son of David, the Christ. He is the One Who is both the Son of David, and is also his Lord. He has put on our flesh, in order that He might make our enemies His footstool, and give to us the rewards that He won by His suffering and death. This is the message that we hear in this house of the Lord. We show love for our Lord God by attending to worship in this place, rejoicing in our Holy Baptism and communing together in fellowship by hearing the Word of God and eating and drinking our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine. We sang in both the Introit and Gradual that it was good to go into the house of the Lord. "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" We show love for God by being here in the place receiving His gifts. But we also show love for our neighbor by inviting them to also "go into the house of the Lord." For, it is here that

we hear about the Son of David, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, Who is our Lord, so that they too may receive the rewards for which we await: forgiveness, life and salvation.

The Pharisees and Sadducees tried to test our Lord with questions about the Law. Which is the greatest Commandment? But our Lord + Jesus directs our eyes away from the Law today, by pointing to Himself. He is love. He is the fulfillment of the Law. In His love for us, He suffers and dies on our behalf, so that contrary to the belief of the Sadducees, we may enjoy a life in Heaven for all eternity, after we have been raised from the dead and given new and glorious bodies. This is the reward for which we await. It makes us glad to go into the house of the Lord to hear once again this good news of our salvation through the Son of David, the Christ. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the glorious revelation of the Gospel, cause Thy Word to dwell in us richly, we beseech Thee, and fill us with the knowledge of Thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we may know our sin, and Thy Son as the Savior from sin, and may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

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

*Soli Deo Gloria!*