

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 22:34-46  
October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
All Saints Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## What Do You Think About the Christ?

*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 give Thee most hearty thanks for Thy grace which is given us by Jesus Christ, Thy Son, that in everything we are enriched by Him in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that we come behind in no gift; and we heartily beseech Thee Thou wouldst confirm and keep us in this knowledge unto the end that we may wait with joy for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on that day be found blameless, and be counted worthy to inherit life everlasting; through the same Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

Today our Lord + Jesus silences the Pharisees. He had previously, as the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew points out, silenced the Sadducees. From this day forward no one dared question Him anymore. It is easy for us to forget in reading this pericope when these events took place. We are in the beginning of October; in the midst of the Trinity season, so we are not thinking about Holy Week or Easter, but that is when these events took place. The Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place in the previous chapter of St. Matthew. Now in our Lord's final week before His death and resurrection the Sadducees and Pharisees put on a full court press in order to catch our Lord + Jesus in a falsehood. They are desperately looking for some reason for which they can accuse Him. For they desire greatly to put Him to death.

The Sadducees tried to trick our Lord + Jesus with questions about the resurrection from the dead—something which they did not believe was a true thing. Our Lord established that the Lord God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. They only accepted as canonical the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch. In the Books of Moses, they did not find anything to support the resurrection from the dead. However, our Lord + Jesus uses the very words of the Pentateuch to point out that even these books of the Bible support a resurrection of the dead. He quotes the words of the Lord God when He first met Moses who had approached the burning bush—which was burning but not being consumed. The Lord God had introduced Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the three patriarchs upon which the Israelites had their foundation as the people of the Lord God. By the voice of the Lord God, it was testified that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living, in Heaven, at the time of Moses.

The silencing of the Sadducees in this way is important because in less than a week our Lord + Jesus will also rise from the dead. This questioning of the Sadducees is important to establish that there is indeed a resurrection from the dead. There is an eternal life in Heaven with the Lord + Jesus,

and all the saints and angels of the Lord. The Pharisees were like the Sadducees in that they too sought for a way to trick the Lord into saying something for which they can accuse Him and bring Him up on charges of heresy and blasphemy—charges that were punishable by death as can be seen in the events on the Thursday night and Friday of this week in the holy Scriptures. The Pharisees, however, were not like the Sadducees in that they did believe in a resurrection from the dead. They were glad that the Lord + Jesus had silenced the Sadducees. These two groups differed on their interpretation of holy Scripture greatly.

The Pharisees preferred to use the tactic of questioning our Lord + Jesus on the minutia of the Law. Therefore, one of their lawyers—someone who dedicated his life to the study of the law of Moses—asks the Lord + Jesus which is the greatest commandment. Their idea was that they would try to get the Lord + Jesus to pick just one, and then they could argue with Him about His choice. They would choose some other commandment that they could say was the greatest, and thereby plant seeds of doubt in the people standing by and observing these events.

The Lord had Ten Commandments from which to choose. So, which one did He choose? He chose to summarize the Law of Moses into two commandments. We know these from our studies of the Small Catechism that these are the first and second table of the Law. The first table of the Law deals with how we are to love the Triune Lord God with all our heart, soul, and mind. The second table of the Law deals with how we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. The lawyer, on behalf of the Pharisees, asks a law question, and our Lord gives him a law answer. The greatest commandment has to do with our relationship to the Lord God, and the second is like it, for it has to do with our relationship with our fellowman. Upon these two commandments rests all the words of the Law and the Prophets; the entire Scriptures as the Jews knew them. These two commandments inform the whole summary of the Old Testament. We are to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul and mind, and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Therefore, the answer to the question behind the law question—what must I do to be saved? —our Lord + Jesus answers with the Law of Moses. If the Pharisees, or anyone else, desires to be saved by their keeping of the Law, these two commandments must be observed. One must love the Lord God with all his heart, soul and mind and love his neighbor as himself. He must do this perfectly. The Pharisees—and the Sadducees—believed that they were already keeping the Law, because they were only concerned with the outward tenets of the Law. They were able to keep the Letter of the Law, but they were unaware that the Triune Lord God required the perfect keeping of the Spirit of the Law. In other words, faith was required, not just actions.

Our Lord + Jesus does not just leave them with the Law, however. After giving a law answer to a law question, He directs them to the One Who is able to save them apart from works of the Law. He directs them to the One in Whom a person finds salvation through faith in Him. He directs them to the Messiah—the Anointed One of the Lord God. He asks them a question, “What do you think about the Christ?” In other words, what is the purpose of the Christ? What does He do? The Lord directs them to the answer by asking, “Whose Son is He?”

The Pharisees, well-versed in the Law and the Prophets, knew exactly Whose Son He is. He is the Son of David. The Messiah was to come from the house and lineage of King David. As we have been seeing in Bible class, King David was a shadow and type of the Christ. King David’s Son, Who would be the Messiah—the Christ—would be just like His ancestor King David. In this they answer correctly. The Messiah is the Son of David. What they fail to see, however, is Who precisely the Son of David is. Their answer reveals that they view the Messiah as only a Man. The Messiah would be a man who would be a descendant of King David, who would lead them to a return of the glory days of the Kingdom of Israel in the days of King David. They would be freed from Roman rule and occupation, and enjoy a kingdom without trouble and strife; a kingdom of earthly peace.

That this is their understanding is shown by our Lord's next question. He directs them to the very words of King David from Psalm 110: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" The Messiah—the Christ—is both a Son of David and the Lord of King David. He is both God and man. The Messiah is not an earthly king, but His Kingdom is the Kingdom of Heaven. His reign is not a reign on Earth, but a reign over all things created, both visible and invisible. It is this God man Who is able to perfectly fulfill the Law of Moses. He can both fulfill the Law perfectly as a man, and suffer and die the punishment of man, and being God, He can raise Himself from the dead on the third day. This Messiah, this man Who is God, can atone for the sins of the whole world through His obedience to the Commands of the Lord God, and by His suffering and death on the tree of the holy cross. This the Messiah proclaimed by all the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament.

It is through faith in the works and merits of this Christ, that a man has salvation from the penalty of the Law. It is not through our obedience to the Law that we are saved, but by our faith in the One Who perfectly fulfilled the Law and paid our penalty on the tree of the holy cross. For our Lord + Jesus is the High Priest Who offers up His life as a ransom for ours. He is the High Priest Who offers up Himself as our sacrifice for the atonement of all our sins. This is a part of Psalm 110 that would have been known by the Pharisees, for Psalm 110 mentions the priest, Melchizedek. The Messiah was the priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. He is the eternal priest offering interceding on behalf of all those who believe on Him to the heavenly Father. He is our eternal priest interceding on behalf of our sins to the heavenly Father, so that we may live with Him forever in Heaven.

In this Heaven we will enjoy something in which the Sadducees did not believe: we will enjoy the resurrection from the dead. We will be given new and glorious bodies and will dwell with all the saints and angels in Heaven for all eternity. For we cling in faith to the works and merits of the Christ. We cling in faith to His perfect keeping of the Law. Where we have failed to love the Lord God with all our heart, soul and mind, He has fulfilled it perfectly on our behalf. Where we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves, He has perfectly loved our fellowman on our behalf. We have no need to question Him anymore, for He is the perfect and only answer we need for our salvation. Therefore, my dear friends, let us cling to Him in faith, and receive the eternal reward which has been promised to us from His gracious hand. For He has made our enemies His footstool, and they can no longer do us any harm. Thanks be to God! 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!*