



**The Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost  
October 25, 2020  
Archdeacon Peter Scott**

**Matthew 22:34-46**

<sup>34</sup>When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, <sup>35</sup>and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”<sup>37</sup> 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.’ <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” <sup>41</sup>Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: <sup>42</sup>“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” <sup>43</sup>He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, <sup>44</sup>“The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””? <sup>45</sup>If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” <sup>46</sup>No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions

**Love and Christ**

Today, we finally get to the last testing question for Jesus in this section of scripture in Matthew’s gospel which began four weeks ago. This is the last question Jesus will answer for them as they go away unable to answer his final question. We now move to All Saints Day next week, and the unofficial Kingdom Season or Kingdomtide follows which speaks of God’s kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. The Gospel readings over the last four week have for the most part included parables about authority, vineyards, stuff and money. They have been a series of combative readings where there has been a lot testing, trickery, entrapment and blatant challenges to Jesus from the religious authorities. I can’t say that I am going to miss those readings, but Jesus did send them packing every time with more questions than they came with that they could not answer. We may well have left the service each week in the same way 😊 The first part of the reading has to do with the last test of which is about the **greatest commandment** and the second concerns **Jesus being the Son of David or Messiah** A good way to end this series – with love and Christ.

**The greatest commandment** We might remember that this whole section that we began reading about stretching back to Matthew 21:23 we began

reading on September 27 with the Chief Priests and Elders asking Jesus by what authority he was doing what he was doing. Today, we read that the Pharisees hearing that the Sadducees had been silenced by Jesus send one of their own, a lawyer to ask what we learn to be, one last question. That question is which commandment in the law is the greatest. Jesus replies: "*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 neighbor as yourself.'* On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." I find that sometimes, as a priest, pastor, minister that people will insult, ignore, or says things to me that aren't based in love. Jesus never was tricked, trapped or tested beyond his limited because he was God, knew their inner thoughts and often asked a more difficult question as his answer. Sometimes, people try and trick me with difficult questions about the Trinity or social issues of the day; you may find that too. Sometimes, I don't have the answer, the right words or a way to answer them. All of the time, I try and think what I might have said after the fact and I will be more ready next time to speak about the meaning of faith, love and Jesus in our lives. As well, if I debate in a spirit of love, what more can I do, and if they haven't, then it is they who have some learning to do.

**Son of David or Messiah** Jesus is referred to a "Son of David" no less than 8 times in Matthew's gospel. Jesus responds by saying in so many words that the title Son of David for him is not adequate. Last week in our Bible Study, I spoke about how Jesus did not come to conquer the Romans. He was part of David's line as we sing in *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by night at Christmas: To you, in David's town, this day is born of David's line a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, and this shall be the sign.* Jesus was not the earthly conqueror who would repeat the triumphal battles of David. Jesus conquered sin, not earthly leaders, conquered sin, not earthly governments, conquered sin, not earthly armies. Students of history will remind us that ultimately the Roman occupiers convert to Christianity under Constantine, but by the end of the fifth century the Roman empire falls. We then enter the dark ages, but ultimately many of the barbarians convert to Christianity. We might be thinking that certain leaders today, may or may not be doing God's will. We might think because we agree with them on a social issue, a fiscal issue, or their handling of Covid we turn a blind eye to the other failings of the person. At the end of the day as it says in Romans, *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* but we still have to support, vote and be governed by those we elect.

Too many Christians put too much stock in Trump or Trudeau, but at the end of the day we believe God's will prevails, but sometimes our faith or our actions don't reflect that. The American theologian and preacher, Barbara Brown Taylor puts it better than I can. *Beware those who claim to know the mind of God and who*

*are prepared to use force, if necessary, to make others conform. Beware those who cannot tell God's will from their own. Temple police are always a bad sign. When chaplains start wearing guns and hanging out at the sheriff's office, watch out. Someone is about to have no king but Caesar.”* We are called to love God who we are to love our all our heart, body, mind and soul and agree with the teachings of Jesus. When it comes to our neighbours, next door, in Ottawa or Washington as ourselves, even the ones who challenge us and we might think are enemies, we are to love them, even if we don't agree with them. Amen.