

Invocation

L: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: and my mouth will declare your praise.

L: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C: make haste to help me, O Lord.

C: Glory be to Father and to the + Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Psalmody

Psalm 16:7-11

L: I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

C: I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

L: Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

C: For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

L: You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy;

C: at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

C: Glory be to Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

[1] *Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above:
Often have Your eyes, offended,
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;
Yet upon the cross extended,
You have borne the pain of all.*

[2] *Do we pass that cross unheeding,
Breathing no repentant vow,
Though we see You wounded, bleeding,
See Your thorn-encircled brow?
Yet Your sinless death has brought us
Life eternal, peace, and rest;
Only what Your grace has taught us
Calms the sinner's deep distress.*

[3] *Jesus, may our hearts be burning
With more fervent love for You;
May our eyes be ever turning
To behold Your cross anew
Till in glory, parted never
From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever,
Dwell the cross, the Crucified.*

Reading

Mark 12:28-44

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.'" David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" And the great throng heard him gladly. And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues

and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation." And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

In our reading today, the dispute between the religious leaders of Israel and Jesus continues in the Temple. It is Tuesday of Holy Week and the Sadducees had just failed in their attempt to argue against the doctrine of eternal life and the resurrection of the dead. Jesus countered them with a simple truth: *"God is not God of the dead, but of the living. You are quite wrong."* (Mark 12:27)

It's at this point that a scribe comes forward to test Jesus, hoping to catch him in an incorrect reading of God's

Word: *“Which commandment is the most important of all?”*

For the scribes, the heart of God's Word is the Law. The Bible is about us, primarily, and the purpose of the Bible is to give us guidance concerning God's will. God's Word is a blue-print for life and how to live well and how to please God.

And the Law of God is an important pillar of God's Word. The commandments are a foundation of our life as God's people. And so, Jesus answers him: *“The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

God's Law is important. And the fundamentals of the Law are simple: love God and love one another. This is God's will for us.

But the Law is not the heart and center of God's Word. The heart of God's Word is the gospel of God's Son. The center of the scriptures is the promise that God will send a Savior into the world who will atone for sins through his death in our place. That God will make satisfaction of

human sin through the punishment of his own Son. That mankind will be saved through Christ.

And so Jesus counters an important question of the Law with an even more important question of the Gospel. He turns the attention of the scribes and the Pharisees back to the center and the heart of God's Word. The true center.

And so he asks them, *“How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’ David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?”*

Here Jesus raises questions about the identity of the Christ. Is Jesus the Christ? Is Jesus the son of David? Is Jesus the Son of God. How can David's Lord be David's son?

These are the really important questions that need to be answered. And they will be answered on Friday and on Sunday of Holy Week.

Yes, Jesus is the Christ. Yes, Jesus is the son of David. Yes, Jesus is the Son of God. Yes, Jesus is David's son and David's Lord. His death on the cross and his resurrection on Easter morning will prove it. And our salvation will be won by it. This is the heart of the Bible and the heart of our faith. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

C: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Collect

L: Lord Jesus Christ, cleanse us by the power of your blood that in purity and peace we may worship and adore your holy name; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

Hymn

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[1] Alas! And did my Savior bleed,
And did my sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

[2] Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

[3] Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in
When God, the mighty maker, died
For His own creatures' sin.

[4] Thus might I hide my blushing face
While His dear cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt mine eyes to tears.

[5] But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away:
'Tis all that I can do.