

Scripture Reading

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 22:34-40)

When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them (a scholar of the law) tested Him by asking, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection – The only criterion by which we will finally be judged

The only reason God made us. God is the Eternal Father. From all eternity, God is Father. He is Father to Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. Out of love, He created us to be members of His household, to be His adopted children through Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:5). Such is the great love and generosity of God. Such is the dignity of our identity as none other than children of the Most High. God gives us freewill and His trust. When His children fell from grace, God demonstrated again His selfless love when He made a great personal sacrifice in sending Jesus as a sin offering to redeem His human children. God's greatest desire is to see every one of His children safe in His glorious Kingdom where St Paul tells us eyes have not seen, ears have not heard nor the human mind ever conceive of the things God has prepared for those who love Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9).

The greatest and first commandment of the Lord (cf. Matthew 22:37-38). Jesus teaches us to love God above all else with our total self. We are to love God by exercising our will to love Him in cooperation with God's grace. *The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us (Romans 5:5).* It is not because of our own goodness but by God's grace. Without God's grace we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5). We exercise our love for God by adhering to His teachings. *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments (John 14:15).* The second commandment is similar to the first: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39).* The ancient Jews were struck by the authority of Christ's teachings. They found Jesus teaching them in a way they had not been taught before. Unlike their religious leaders, Jesus taught the Jews with the authority backed up by the way He lived His life during His time on earth. In short, Jesus teaches us through His Word and example that our love for God and others must be more than the love we hold for ourselves.

The only criterion by which we will finally be judged by God. God's ways are different from human ways. The human way to value an action is how it seems in the eyes of others. Thus, much of the time, consciously or unconsciously, we do things to please others, to gain their approval, admiration, esteem, appreciation or affirmation. However, what impresses people may be useless to God Who is more interested in looking into the human heart and the purity of its intention. Doing something for the glory of God, our Highest Good is the purest intention. It is only when we have the motivation to do everything for God's glory that we can overcome all the difficulties that cannot be overcome by mere human goodness alone. By grace of God, we can "offer the other cheek" as commanded by the Lord. When we come before the Lord on our judgement day, the only criterion by which we will be judged will be how much love our heart holds for God and for others. *Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).*

The chief attribute by which we will be like God. God is love (cf. 1 John 4:8). To be fit to live with God, we need to be like God. Thus, we are given the commandment to love God and others. Whilst we may feel we are not able to love God and others perfectly, we are given every help to do this through the power of God's grace by the Holy Spirit living within us. God has raised up many saints to show that by His grace, a soul can rise to love God more than oneself. It is only when we can imitate God by loving Him and others more than ourselves can we enter deeply into His peace and joy even while on this earth. *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God (Matthew 5:8).*

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You are love, and out of love You created me. You command me to love God and others more than myself. It is only in this way that I can imitate You and make myself fit to enter Your glorious Kingdom. By loving You and others more than myself, I can enter more deeply into Your peace and joy. Flood my poor heart with Your divine love and give me all the graces to love You as You love me. Through Your Passion on the Cross, flood all hearts with Your love so that all evil can be conquered and all hardened hearts can be opened to receive Your love, mercy and salvation. In this way, the burning thirst in Your Sacred Heart will be assuaged and Its wounds will be healed. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus. www.twohearts.hk