

Rev Robin Selmes
GILLINGHAM METHODISTS | *Part of the North Kent Circuit*

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Thirtieth Sunday in ordinary Time

Evening Worship Sunday 25th October 2020

Spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people at Third avenue are sharing this act of Worship with you.

Call to worship

Wherever we worship, whether alone or with others; whether in chapel, at home or elsewhere; whether we are full of joy or overwhelmed by fear and despair; we are thankful that we worship together as a community of Christ. Amen.

Hymn Majesty worship his majesty
Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here
www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcbCAq_A7to

Majesty, worship his majesty
Unto Jesus be all glory, power and praise
Majesty, kingdom authority flow from his throne
Unto his own his anthem raise
So exalt lift up on high the name of Jesus
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the king
Majesty, worship his majesty
Jesus who died now glorified
King of all kings.

Jack Hayford

Prayers of adoration, thanks and confession

We pray together
Holy God, creator of all things and source of all holiness,
we praise you for all that you provide for us materially and spiritually;

we give thanks for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who showed to us that perfect example of human love;
we praise you for your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to share that love with others.

We give thanks for our local Christian communities and the worldwide church to which we belong; may we praise you with one voice.

God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
accept our praise and adoration. Amen.

We confess our sins to God.

Silence

We confess that we have not loved you with heart, soul and mind. We have failed to love our neighbours as ourselves. Help us to become the loving people you want us to be. Amen.

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is his gracious word:
"Your sins are forgiven."
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
² Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

¹⁵ You shall not render an unjust judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer^[a] among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood^[b] of your neighbour: I am the LORD.

¹⁷ You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

Reading Matthew 22:34-46

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' ³⁷ 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.'" ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² 'What do you think of the Messiah?^[a] Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' ⁴³ He said to them, 'How is it then that David by the Spirit^[b] calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴ "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet'"?

⁴⁵ If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?' ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Time to Reflect

Questions, questions, questions. My five-year-old daughter asks far too many questions for her own good. And no matter how good the answer I give her is, her default response is "Why?" (It is an effort at times not to scream in anguish!)

I can therefore appreciate Jesus getting tired of all the Pharisees' relentless questions. They never seem to tire of them, and there's always another one lined up in the wings "Ah, but what if?" they reply. Not content with the truth, they are the Jeremy Paxman's of the ancient world; the interrogators of Jesus who won't be fobbed off until they get the answers they want.

But yet again they are foiled. Probably expecting Jesus to refer to one of their written laws, in which they are well versed and eager to trip him up with legal jargon.

He turns their argument on its head replying to *"Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

With: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And followed it up with: 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

Not the answer the Pharisee's were expecting, nor one they could easily answer back to. The awkward silence lengthened because Jesus not only gave them one great commandment, but two (one of those in-store buy-one, get-one-free special offers).

How can they respond to answers like this, the truth from God spoken so eloquently and with no fluffiness included. They knew the answer, just didn't want to hear it and so they try another trick to trip up Jesus – this time purporting the Messiah's Son to be of king David.

Yet again their reply unravels before them, in the glare of the spotlight that is Jesus; when he states: [King David said] “The Lord said to my Lord” So, if David calls him ‘Lord’ how can the Messiah’s Son be David’s?’ David rightly places the Messiah’s Son in a greater stead than one of his own sons would be. Surely David would have used the term ‘my Son’ if he were ordinary and human. But no, David lifts him up with agape love, placing him above all others.

Here Jesus subtly rebukes the Pharisees, for there is no reply they can make. The truth hits them square in the face. It’s like that for us too, we must stop questioning Jesus’s love for us and place him above all others in our lives. Above our family, friends and neighbours; loving with every fibre of our bodies, with everything we have. And while we’re at it, loving our neighbours too. Our neighbours in our street, our community, this country and overseas; loving them as we would want to be loved. Through our actions seen and unseen. If we give, let us freely give; of our time, ourselves and our love. Giving because we want to, not because we are doing it for a “show”, and end up looking upset at losing what we are giving (as one prominent US Statesman did this week, counting out his twenty dollar bills in a US church, in full view of the media circus that follows his every move and looking downcast and as if he was throwing away good money after bad).

Love. The greatest commandment of all.
Amen.

Ian Watton

Prayer of response to Matthew 22:34-46

Dear Lord help us to see that to love You with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind is paramount to our very relationship with You. To err from that great command will lead us always into a direction where our thoughts, words and actions will not be guided by You. And help us day by day to also see that in first loving You, we can love others as we love ourselves. For the love of others is firmly grounded in our love of You and, consequently, in our selfless service to others. Amen

Derek Gallagher

Take a time to sit quietly

Prayers of intercession

Loving God,
as we mediate on Christ’s commandment to love,
we pray for the church throughout the world;
for justice and peace between and within nations;
for political leaders and all in authority;
for the communities in which we live;
for people who suffer in any way;
and for all those on our minds today.

Silence

May the presence of your love be felt in every situation.
We give thanks for those who have died, especially those who have lived in the love of Christ.
May we be united with them in your eternal kingdom. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Hymn 503 (StF): Love divine

Sing/ read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://youtu.be/sw5ZCZeS32M>

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

A prayer of blessing

May everything, we do be guided by the law of Christ's love; and now may the blessing of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us this day and forevermore. Amen

Time to Meditate

We are including some additional questions to help you explore the passage in more depth.

Bible notes: Gospel Matthew 22.34-46

Jesus was not the first to summarise the law as love for God and love for neighbour; it had already been used by the teacher Hillel. In answering the Pharisees in this way, Jesus was thus showing how close to them in many ways he was. That's probably why in his early ministry he sometimes ate with Pharisees and preached in synagogues they led. Ironically, we often find our bitterest opponents among those with whom we almost, but don't quite, agree. Doctrinally, Jesus was not far from the Pharisees – he shared their belief in the resurrection of the dead, and he accepted their view of which books comprised the Scriptures (and which still determines the contents of the "Old Testament" today).

Jesus' question is a good example of Jesus debating like a rabbi. It seems to imply that Jesus is not son of David – though Matthew's genealogy has taken great care to establish he was. So what is this about? It seems likely that this is included as an argument against the Pharisees of Matthew's day, who wanted to limit Messiahship to a particular kind of human descent, which they thought ruled out Jesus. Matthew broadens the concept; Messiah is David's lord, and thus of divine sonship. The Pharisees failure to answer Jesus is the final sign that they have lost the plot. They have blinded themselves to the truth.

Questions to ponder upon

How do you love God with ALL of heart, soul and mind?

Can you give any examples of what loving God with only part might look like?

Are there any differences between heart, soul, and mind?

Why do you think all three are emphasized here?



Time to Sit quietly with this poem

GOD'S GREAT COMANMENTS

by Malcolm Westwood

To know God is to love him
With heart and soul and mind,
To see the world through his eyes
And care for all mankind.
To love man is to love God
When serving as he would,
By putting others foremost
And working for their good.
To obey God's commandment,

His will must be our own,
And through our true obedience
God's love in us is shown;
To love God without question
Demands we serve the world,
And view all men as brothers
Beneath love's flag unfurled.
Our brothers' needs are our needs,
Their cares are our cares, too,
And in the way we serve them,
God's love is seen anew.

A way into prayer

Reflect on **Matthew 22.37-39**, then ask yourself whether you have obeyed these commandments. How do you show love to God and your neighbour? How will you use your heart and soul and mind to love God? Give thanks for opportunities to show love to a neighbour, and pray for discernment to see – and use – more opportunities.

Additional Prayers for use at Home

Prayer

God our creator,
you made us in your image
and called us your own.

Although we have failed to love you as we
should,
you love us and call us back to your heart of
love.

Learning to respond to you,
give us grace to open our hearts and lives
and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Help us to treat them with kindness and mercy,
believing the best of them,
giving them honour and a place at your table.

Just as you have welcomed us,
teach us to offer the same unconditional love to
others.

As we gather round your table,
remind us that we are all equal in your sight:
young and old, of every language race and
culture;
reflecting your wonderful diversity
and the promise of your way of love
that leaves no one outside.

Amen

My Heavenly Father

I trust in God wherever I may be,
Upon the land, or on the rolling sea,
For come what may, from day to day,
My heavenly Father watches over me.

I trust in God, I know He cares for me;
On mountain bleak or on the stormy sea;
Tho' billows roll, He keeps my soul;
My heavenly Father, watches over me.

He makes the rose an object of His care,
He guides the eagle thro' the pathless air,
And surely He remembers me;
My heavenly Father watches over me.

I trust in God, for, in the lion's den,
On battlefield, or in the prison pen,
Thro' praise or blame, thro' flood or flame,
My heavenly Father watches over me.

Th valley may be dark, the shadows deep,
But O, the Shepherd guards His lonely sheep;
And thro' the gloom He'll lead me home,
My heavenly Father watches over me.

I trust in God, I know He cares for me;
My heavenly Father watches over me.

A personal prayer

God of all times, may I live my life so that others know that I
care for them,
am there for them,

am loving them in your name. Amen.

Sunday & Mid-week Worship

BBC 1 – Songs of Praise Sunday 1.15pm

For Black History Month, guest presenter Mark De-Lisser visits the International Slavery Museum Liverpool, and Yolanda Brown meets classical pianist and Christian Alexis French.

Circuit live streaming

You are warmly invited to join others in the North Kent Methodist Circuit in worshipping from home on Sunday 25th October at 10.30am. If you have access to the Internet, the service will be 'live streamed' at 10.30am.

Via the North Kent Methodist Circuit website

www.nkmethodists.org.uk/news/invitation-to-worship-from-home.html

or

Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/northkentmethodistworship/) to find the live stream.

You can download the order of service from the same page.

Alternative worship: Swan Bank Methodist Church in Burslem, this worship will be studio based, contemporary style. Sunday 10:45am

www.youtube.com/user/SwanBank/videos and www.facebook.com/swanbank/

Mid-Week Prayers

A short service of prayers to set you up for the day.

Join the Wesley's Chapel for morning Prayer. The service uses the Methodist Worship Book but it doesn't matter if one doesn't have it in one's own possession. The service lasts about 15 mins and is led by either, Rev Jen Smith, or her husband Rev Keith Raglan or Rev Steve Cooper.

www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming/