

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 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." Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; 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,' —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

THANKS BE TO GOD

Listen carefully and incline the ear of your heart...

Saint Benedict

For a lack of attention a thousand forms of loveliness elude us every day

Evelyn Underhill

Spirituality is about what we do with our unrest.

Ronald Rolheiser

‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 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.”

These words are among the most un-original words Jesus ever spoke. They are beautiful and reverent and poetic, yes, but he’s quoting Hebrew scripture that, in the first century, was already 1000 years old. Today, a form of these words, called the Shema, are still spoken when our Jewish brothers and sisters gather for their prayers and worship.

These two commandments are succinct distillations of the Ten Commandments, five of which have to do with loving God, and five of which have to do with loving neighbors. It did not take Jesus’ ancestors very long, once they had the Ten Commandments, to begin to work with them theologically. On the one hand, they began to break them into various iterations which related to more specific and concrete life situations of life in Israel. So that by Jesus’ time there were, and remain today, 613 Laws which comprise the whole of Jewish Law. On the other hand, as Israel worked with the Ten Commandments, instead of expanding upon them, they also distilled them down into these two; love God and love neighbor.

So Jesus is here reminding the Scribe and his listeners of a true treasure in their possession, and a profound way of living to which they had been called for 1000 years.

The scribe seems very happy and enthused to have been reminded of this by Jesus and re-grounded in this ancient wisdom. This, by the way, is Jesus’ most pleasant encounter with a scribe or a Pharisee or any of the temple officials in the entire Gospel record. So a tip of the hat to this nameless scribe. Although we need to mention Nicodemus here. A temple official who came to Jesus by night and was told he needed to be born again and was baffled by Jesus. This encounter was not as positive as the encounter with the scribe, but Nicodemus eventually and quietly becomes a follower of Jesus.

So the scribe, by all appearances, resonates deeply and authentically with Jesus’ affirmation of the ancient and precious gift of these two commandments. He has heard them in a fresh way and says so and, right there, begins to work with these two commandments and to re-affirm that they are far more weighty than the burnt offerings and the sacrifices which may for him, we can only speculate, had become his primary focus lately..... who knows? Sometimes religious routines can become a way of keeping God at a comfortable distance.

So he seems grateful and enthused by all this and Jesus, grateful and enthused himself, says “You are not far from the Kingdom of God. You are doing good work here!”

Then, the text says, no one dared ask him any question.

At least in this moment, for all those gathered there, the call of God upon their lives had become as clear as day. No questions needed. They, Israel, had “heard.”

Their listening had become HEARING.

The ancient command did not say “Listen O Israel,” right?

It said, “HEAR....”

In this moment described in the reading, HEARING happens.

When listening becomes hearing, we are not far from the Kingdom of God.

When a light comes on interiorly and we see more deeply into ourselves or Into God.

Listening has become hearing

When a previously undiscovered spiritual capacity or energy or passion comes into view,

Listening has become hearing.

When an indescribable sense of peace sweeps over us, or a sense of grief and anguish and aching for our dysfunctional human family stops us in our tracks,

Listening has become hearing.

When a 1000 year old text you know by heart suddenly clarifies for you God’s call upon your life,

Listening has become hearing.

There is nothing quite as wonderful as that moment when listening becomes hearing. It’s happened to me reading scripture of course, reading any number of other books, listening to sermons, writing sermons, walking along a beach, taking communion, listening to music, staring at a painting, walking a labyrinth.

What are your questions today? About the meaning of your life. About how to faithfully impact the lives of people you care about, or the larger world. About a persistent sadness or worry weighing on your heart. Questions about today, tomorrow, next week, next year. Questions about God, grace, salvation.

Begin with one.... and pray it to Christ, offer it to Christ. Then listen. That’s our job. To listen. “Stay awake” Jesus says. Open your being to Christ. Do exactly what the scribe did.

And with what the mystics call the ears of your heart, may you be led by our Perfect Teacher, to HEAR.

SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD-GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE

NORTH OAK CHRISTIAN CHURCH-DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

November 4, 2018

In Jesus' Name, Greetings!

Music for Gathering

Thanks be to Thee Jesus Christ

FOR THE MANY GIFTS THOU HAS BESTOWED ON US

We give Thee love with our whole devotion

WE GIVE THEE AFFECTION WITH OUR WHOLE SENSE

We give Thee assent with our whole power

WE GIVE THEE HONOR WITH OUR WHOLE UTTERANCE

(Ancient Celtic Prayer)

Lighting of the Candles

"Blessed are the clear in heart..." Matthew 5

234 Crown Him with Many Crowns vss 1, 3, 4

We Welcome One Another as Christ

87 I will Sing of the Mercies

The Morning Prayer and Choral Response

"Earth, teach me stillness..." Ute Prayer

Children's Circle

All children thru 5th grade are welcome to come forward. A small outreach offering will be collected for our money jar. Following this time of sharing and prayer, children may attend their very own "Worship and Wonder" time together in our classroom annex. Child care is offered for infants and toddlers but they are also welcome in the sanctuary.

Prayer for Illumination

Love Creating, Grace Abounding, Peace Abiding

PREPARE OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE YOUR WORD, AMEN

THE GOSPEL Mark 12: 28-34

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen amen.

The Meditation "Do Exactly What the Scribe Did" Rev. Rob Carr

Ever Gracious God, whose death-defeating love was given a human face in Jesus of Nazareth, we prayerfully and joyfully commit ourselves to witness this day, and every day, to the commonwealth of your goodness, to the Shalom of your justice and peace, and to live in the freedom of forgiveness, in the power of your Spirit, and so to be the Church. Amen and Amen.

Silent and spoken personal prayers of thanksgiving confession, intercession

Piano Solo Jeff Nunn

The Offering

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.
As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

406 Beneath the Forms of Outward Rite

Aware of our imperfections, God of grace
WE COME ASKING THAT YOU SHAPE AND MOLD US
Move us to choose the difficult right
RATHER THAN THE EASIER WRONG

Welcome to the Table
The Words of Institution

O Heart of Pure Fire, You who cleanse and refine us
COMPASSIONATE ONE, SHINE FORTH!
Break open the hearts of your people
THAT WE MIGHT HEAR YOUR VOICE AND HEED YOUR WORD

The Communion Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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, amen.

Following the Lord's Prayer, please come forward by rows to receive the loaf and the cup.
The cup is non-alcoholic by choice of the congregation
Gluten free crackers are available on the table for those who prefer this option
Children also celebrate communion weekly as part of "Worship and Wonder"

452 Here I Am Lord vss 2, 3

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord
**AND TO LIVE OUR LIVES SO THAT THOSE TO WHOM LOVE IS A STRANGER
WILL FIND IN US GENEROUS FRIENDS**

TO OUR GUESTS----WELCOME!

**SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD AND GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE
WE WALK HUMBLLY, LOVE DEEPLY, LIVE SIMPLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY**

We are delighted to include you today. Your presence and participation is a gift to us all. We hope you experience among us the warm spirit of our family of faith and the gracious touch of Christ upon your life. Refreshments and welcoming conversation are available before and after worship in the Community Room just down the hall. More information about NOCC and the Disciples of Christ is available via Facebook and these websites

www.nocckc.org www.kcdisciples.org www.disciples.org

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

THIS WEEK

Today Following Worship-- Community Life Ministry Team Meets (All Welcome)

5PM Northland Youth

Monday 6PM Troop 900

Monday 630PM NOCC Elders

TUESDAY VOTE VOTE VOTE!

Tuesday 945AM Men's Bible Group

Tuesday 6PM Pack 900

Wednesday 7PM Music Ministry

Thursday 6PM NOCC Board

Friday 6PM Tall Oaks Gala

Saturday 10AM Music Ministry

Next Sunday--Celebrating our Volunteers

Next Sunday 5PM Prayers for Healing and Wholeness

UPCOMING

Wednesday November 14 Vital Conversations 1PM

Friday November 16 STRUM at Westport Presbyterian Arts Series 12noon

Sunday November 18 NOCC Community Thanksgiving Pot Luck Following Worship

Sunday December 2 Congregational Meeting Following Worship

Sunday December 9 5PM Talent Show

KEVIN KELLEY NEEDS STUDENTS

Rob has been training a cohort of people this year to present workshops on Centering Prayer. Our former beloved seminary intern Kevin Kelly is in the cohort. After several training experiences and lots of reading, Kevin is ready for his final test. He needs to do a three hour presentation on centering prayer to a group of willing folks while Rob observes. Would you be willing to be part of his "test audience?" Saturday February 9 2019 9AM to noon at NOCC. Our centering prayer "veterans" are welcome to attend plus people who have decided it's time to learn what centering prayer is all about.

Even if you are not interested in centering prayer but want to be helpful to Kevin----please come.

Contact Rob with your interest. Child care available if needed.

SOWING A SEED-GROWING OUR VISION 2016-2018

Our campaign prayer: We want what you want God. Open each heart and mind to Christ, our Light.

Guide us together by your Holy Spirit, to trust in your will, amen.