

St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas GA

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Scripture: Matthew 22:34-46

"The Son of David"

So far we have been dealing with Matthew chapter 22 and it is loaded with information. Jesus has already come to Jerusalem on the colt of a donkey. We call it Palm Sunday. People, thousands of people were proclaiming Him King, but yet the leaders of the Temple would have none of it. Jesus' questioners are still trying to trap Him and get Him to say something that will hasten His execution. It is only days away anyway – but they are relentless to mount a case against Him. They are trying to find out is the Messiah David's son or David's Master – or perhaps both? They'd never asked Jesus that question before, and they certainly didn't know the answer, even though the answer was standing in front of them in flesh and blood.

The very next times that Jesus will meet those who oppose Him will be in Gethsemane when they arrest Him, in the Council when they accuse Him, and on the cross when they mock Him. But each time they will know, and we will know, that He knows the answers to these questions and they do not. He also knows, and Matthew wants us to know as well, that His arrest, trial and crucifixion are exactly the way that Jesus is fulfilling those two great commandments that He spoke of, and the way in which He is being enthroned both as David's son, the true king of Israel, and David's master, David's Lord.

This is how, as the Son of God, Jesus has come to rescue His people. Many Jewish teachers asked the question of which was the greatest out of all the 613 commandments in the law of Moses. Many of them would have agreed with the answer that Jesus gave – as the first part is taken directly from the 'Shema.' The Shema is a special prayer that Jewish people pray when they go in and out of their home. There is a 'mezuzah' on the doorway. Have you ever see that? They will kiss their finger and touch it – when they go or come into their house. Inside is a scroll, and the scroll says this: "*Hear, O Israel: (that is what Shema means – 'hear') The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) That doesn't just mean that there is ONE God (in three persons) but that is the position that He is to take in our lives and our hearts. The commandments were not simply among the things the Jews were supposed to do or not do, they formed part of the prayer that every devout Jew prayed every day, in a tradition that continues unbroken to today. The very important question is: did people actually keep these commandments?

Jesus had already spoken about the need for people's hearts to be renewed so that they will produce real fruit: words and deeds which are proper, rather than making them impure. His challenge in the Sermon on the Mount was that the heart should be renewed, not just doing things that look good – and are noticed by others. Do you remember the story about the Pharisee and the Tax Collector praying in the Temple? The Tax Collector is being quiet and humbly asking for God's mercy, but the Pharisee is standing and saying, "Oh God, please don't let me be like this tax collector" – just to be heard by other people who holy and devout he was. Not just doing things to look good and are noticed by other people.

What Jesus says here about loving God, and loving one another, can only make sense when we see the bigger picture. We are very blessed because we know what is about to happen in the life of Jesus. The people that are with Him don't. Jesus would be dying for the sins of the world, and rising again with the message of new life. That's when these commandments can be seen not as orders to be obeyed in our own strength, but as invitations and promises to a very new way of life which, little by little, hatred and pride can be left behind, and love can become a reality. It is so important to notice that Jesus told them to "*Love your neighbor as yourself*" (Matthew 22:39) – meaning that in order to love your neighbor you need to first love yourself. Sadly, so many people do not thin very much of themselves. They will look in the mirror and they cannot stand to look; they will shave or put on the eye makeup and get away from the mirror as fast as they can. Some of that is guilt. It is a matter of seeing people as God sees people. They see themselves as being not big – when indeed they need to remember that they have been made in the image and likeness of God. This is not a blessing to practice narcissistic behavior – but to get your own house in order – to have a self-image that realizes that you are made by a loving God who made each one of us. All we need to do is look at DNA – it is not an accident that we are her. We have been made; we have been formed in the image and likeness of God Himself, and then to give others that same love and respect. Even if you disagree with them; even if they are sitting in an office – governing people and you disagree with what they say – they were made by God – and God loves the word – so much that He gave His Son.

Next, we need to pay specific attention to Jesus' remarkable explanation about who the Messiah really is – and He will use Scripture to do that. The Gospel is very clear (and again we are fortunate because we know the end of the story) that Jesus is indeed the son of David. All we need to do is look at the lineage of Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew – you can see that he comes from the House of David. But simply calling Him that doesn't tell the whole story. The term 'son of David' could mean the coming king who would win military victories over Israel's enemies. If that were so – then He would hardly encourage people to love God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves, especially when we realize, as the Sermon on the Mount insists, that when we say the word 'God' we mean the creator and lover of the whole world, not just of one small piece of it – bordering the Mediterranean, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. Not just that one little portion – but the whole world.

So let me suggest this to you:

- If God Himself became human as the Messiah, then I believe that would be a major game changer.
- If David's son is also David's master, then the long expected warlike Davidic Messiah, that they were expecting, will be the one who will bring the saving, healing rule of the Creator, God to the whole world. He would not be riding in on a white horse, with a big sword, swinging it and knocking down Romans.

Psalm 110 insists "*The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*" (Psalm 110:1) The enemies are not just of the family of Israel – the descendants of Jacob, but the ultimate enemies of the whole human race, and indeed of

the whole world; in other words. The enemies are not Rome – the enemies are sin and death. Those are the enemies that Jesus came to take on and on the cross the enemies that Jesus defeated.

It is because Jesus sees that sin and death are still at work, in the Israel, which prides itself on its special status – they were God’s Chosen People. But because Jesus knows that sin and death can only be defeated by David’s master going to meet them in single, unarmed combat that He continues His work all the way to the cross. The way that Jesus, God’s anointed Messiah, will defeat sin, death and evil – is to be the actual ‘satisfaction’ ‘the propitiation’ of the debt that came about through sin. It would not be just the fact that He would be arrested, tried, beaten unmercifully, and nailed to a cross – but the fact that He did it willingly.

According to Holy Scripture – there are over four hundred prophecies about the messiah that are fulfilled in Jesus’ birth, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ – Jesus of Nazareth. From the disobedience in the Garden of Eden, God needed to satisfy the debt that was caused by that sin, and the resulting fall from grace; it had to be paid, and it could only be paid by Himself. In Genesis 22 Abraham takes His son, His only son to a mountain in the Moriah region that God told him to go to. And so he takes Isaac, a servant and a donkey to the mountain, a three day trek, and when they get there Abraham tells the servant to wait there ‘until WE go and worship and return,’ knowing God’s promise that Isaac would be the one whose descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abraham foretold in his answer to his son’s question: “father, we have to wood, and we have the knife, but there is the lamb?” his answer was “*God Himself will provide the Lamb!*” Remember Matthew 22 took place just a few days before the Lamb of God would be arrested, tried, beaten, and crucified. He would in days to come really take on the leaders of the Temple, calling them ‘hypocrites’ which would surely seal His coming death.

The long expected ‘*Son of David*’ had indeed come, but not as expected. Instead of slaying the oppressors and making them succumb to His reign – He would submit to their cruelty, and pay the price with His life. Jesus knew what the next few days held for Him, but those around Him did not. They could not understand the words that Jesus spoke to them from Psalm 110: “*The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." If then David calls him 'Lord, how can he be his son?'*” (Matthew 22:44-45) It puzzled them, and they walked away without saying anything in reply. The Gospel says that they didn’t even ask Jesus any more questions from that day on. We know that His time was indeed short – but they did not – they had no answer to His words. In just days – King David would witness his Lord defeating his enemies – sin and death – enabling eternal life to those who believe in Him. “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son – that whoever believe in Him should have eternal life!*” (John 3:16)