

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2024:** Thirty first Sunday in Ordinary Time.

*For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.*

**Theme for today is “Motivated by love”**

**Our call to worship:** We come to worship the Lord who surrounds us, does good to us, invites us to trust and reminds us to follow scripture to lead the life destined for us.

**Hymn: StF 608 All praise to our redeeming Lord**

**Prayers of adoration and confession**

Think of the past week and say both ‘thank you’ and ‘sorry’ to our loving God.

**Hymn: StF 346 Christ is the world’s light**

**Readings: Hebrews 9: 11-14 and Mark 12: 28-34**

**To think about**

What motivates you to act? Some people act out of a desire to be the most powerful and influential, to be admired and set upon a pedestal. Some act out of anger, frustration or even hatred. Some act simply to be law abiding, but Jesus commands that we act out of love.

**Message from a Circuit Friend**

Just before this Bible passage, Jesus has been involved with the Sadducees discussing resurrection, which they did not believe in. They were the party of the privileged and wealthy and they were most displeased with Jesus’ answers. Now he has a new questioner, a scribe.

He asked Jesus, ‘of all the commandments which is the greatest?’ It’s a bit like that question that people ask, ‘if your house was on fire what would you save?’ Family and pets excepted, perhaps a memento from a loved family member, your wallet, a cherished photograph, or the insurance policies.

Jesus has no hesitation in his choice, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbour as yourself.’ We’ve heard it often, even perhaps quoted it ourselves.

Jesus was often called Rabbi or teacher, but he did not leave us too many instructions. He did however leave us examples and guiding principles. Jesus didn’t tell us about ‘church’ or how it should fit into a community, but he was very clear about one thing in his actions and words. That in everything we are to love God and all our neighbours as much as we do ourselves. Do we apply this guiding principle when we are making decisions in families, the Church and about ourselves? Do we ask ‘what would love do?’

The scribe argues with Jesus. Most villages would have access to a scribe, a practical man well versed in the law. He would draft contracts for marriage and buying and selling. He would be called in to settle disputes and he had learnt that the best way to settle them was to listen attentively to each side, bringing understanding, care and the commandment about loving God and your neighbour as yourself. It might take more than one meeting to resolve the matter and the anger, but to keep trying.

Would this work in our fractured and complex world? It would be a big ask. All those in positions of power and leadership would need to have wisdom and courage to hold fast to what is right and just, have a genuine commitment to peace, a concern for all peoples and integrity in all their thinking, forgiveness and love. They would also need to leave threats and anger outside the door and listen to others and not want to have the loudest voice. These are only my thoughts, yours might be completely different.

To return to our reading. There has been much debate about Jesus’ words but perhaps we should take them at face value. If we love God, others and ourselves we are close to God’s harmonious kingdom. It is a guiding principle for our daily living following Jesus’ pattern. May we walk this path together and find others to join us as we journey on in love.

*From Avril Temple Local Preacher and a member of Sculthorpe and Fakenham Methodist Chapel.*

**Hymn: StF 242 A new commandment I give unto you.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

**Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord’s Prayer...**

**Hymn: StF 73 Fill thou my life, O Lord my God**

**Closing blessing - We say together the Grace.**