

Sermon Notes

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity  
2 September 2012, Anno Domini

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

**A**LMIGHTY and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



*23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. 25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and*

took care of him. **35** *And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.* (Luke 10:23-37)

In order to fully understand the situation confronting Christ, we must observe that which the Lectionary failed to include – the preceding two verses that reveal the setting. *"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* (Luke 10:21-22) Those whose high-minded thoughts are infatuated with the Self of the Ivory Tower will not understand the Words given by Christ here. Those men are much too good to get a handle on such simplicity as the Gospel represents. They must add to it their own complicated and sophisticated interpretations and render those in words which they can barely understand themselves and, certainly, not understood of those who are so simple as to know only Christ. *"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt 18:2-4) I am not so proud of my title as to be very happy to become a simple, little child for Christ. All of the lawyers, Scribes, and Pharisees gathered about not only would not believe, but refused to believe, the simple Gospel that had been given to the simple disciples of Christ. Note the grace of God evidenced in the last verse of the quote: *"...and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."* Has Jesus revealed His Father to you, Friend?

*"And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."* What standing and privilege we have to have come into the knowledge of the Gospel. We have been given greater privilege than many prophets and kings. Have we treasured the privilege above all others? It is comforting to know that we are better than spiders, but even spiders also live the great royal palaces: *The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.* (Proverb 30:28)

Jesus is speaking in a public place and gathered around were those who would have enjoyed presenting a question that would have undermined His wisdom and knowledge. I am amazed that they continued so to do for they were constantly made fools by the attempt. There is a "certain lawyer" present who felt able to place Christ on the spot with a question which it was the Lord's very specialty to answer: *"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* Is this a very good question? No, it is not. The premise of the question is wrong for there is nothing that we can DO to inherit eternal life – it is a gift of God. The lawyer is thinking 'like a lawyer.' He believes only those in the proper bloodline can "inherit" eternal life. But eternal life is not inherited or earned. Jesus, being the most able of all teachers, gives the inquirer another question in response to fathom the depths of the inquirer's knowledge as well as cause for deeper thought on the matter: *"What is*

*written in the law? How readest thou?*" Should not all of us determine our answers to questions of eternity on God's Law? Should we not all have read it and meditated thereon? How does the lawyer, very apt at deciphering law, read the question? This is an excellent technique to determine – not the depth of the lawyer's knowledge, but the want of knowledge.

The lawyer answered very ably for he knew the `words' of the law, but perhaps not the spirit of it: "*And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*" The lawyer may recognize the technical qualities of a diamond, but he cannot know the source of its beauty.

Note how respectfully Christ treats the question and answer of the lawyer who seeks to `tempt' him. "*And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live.*" If credit is due, you may always expect it from Christ.

The lawyer realizes that he has failed to reveal any indiscretion in the answer of Christ and seeks to justify his inquiry and standing by pressing further. By asking this next question, he hopes to weaken the credibility of Christ in whatever He claims as a neighbor. "*But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbour?*" We can clearly see by the motive and attitude that the lawyer is less in earnest to understand truth, than to place his witness off balance. His interest is not truth, but justification of himself which he is incapable of doing.