

Praying in Colour: July 2010
Week Two: Heart of the Gospel

Checking out Scripture

On the look out to test Jesus, various learned Jewish teachers asked Jesus questions to see what he knows and how he responds. They want to trip him up or embarrass him in front of his followers. In the following 'test' Jesus is asked a question that was a regular point of discussion amongst the rabbis. Jesus was asked to name which commandment is the most important. How does Jesus respond? Read on . . .

Mark 12: 28-34

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, 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 mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.



Reflecting Further

Interested in exploring a little further? Read the whole of chapter 12 in Mark's gospel to put this section of scripture in context. Also, check out how Matthew and Luke's gospel tells the same story (Matthew 22: 34-40 & Luke 10: 25-28). Why do you think they are different? If you'd like to read other translations, check out:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/>

- What do you think about Jesus' response?
- Do you feel excited by his invitation to love neighbor as self?
- Or do you hear this invitation as a burden?
- What kinds of neighbor can you love easily?
- What kinds of neighbor offer more of a challenge?
- How will you rise to that challenge?

Praying in Colour

Last week I introduced the idea of praying by doodling. Perhaps this seems a childish approach to prayer. However, we are all different, with varying personalities and differing learning styles. We need to create a whole array of approaches to prayer, including a more creative, artistic approach.

Our world is filled with words - spoken and written. And yet God communicates very little with words. We apprehend God through the immensity and beauty of creation. We feel inner restlessness and yearning from God's still, quiet voice. We respond with God's compassionate heart when we learn of people in trouble in our communities or around the world. We taste God's grace when we share communion bread and juice.

This week, take time to doodle with hearts, perhaps line drawings, or with red pencils, or with a rainbow of pencils. Create a heart that loves God. Add hearts that pray for those you are close to and those further afield. And a further challenge - compose hearts for those you are struggling to love. Of course, don't forget to pray for yourself because we can only love our neighbor as much as our heart is open to praying for ourselves.

Shalom,
Abigail

