



Call to Worship – Happy are they who walk in the law of the Lord

Hymn - Singing the Faith 15 – How great is Our God

The splendour of the King
Clothed in Majesty
Let all the earth rejoice
All the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light
And darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice
Trembles at His voice

*How great is our God
Sing with me, how great is our God
And all will see how great
How great is our God*

And age to age, he stands
And time is in his hands
Beginning and the end
Beginning and the end
The Godhead, three in one
Father, Spirit, Son
The Lion and the Lamb
Lion and the Lamb

How great is our God...

Name above all names
Worthy of all praise
My heart will sing, how great is our God
You're the name above all names
You are worthy of all praise
my heart will sing, how great is our God
How great is our God.

How great is our God...

Prayers, Let us pray,

We praise you because you are a God of peace. You need not be.

You could have decided to smash this world into pieces for its willfulness, but you choose to be a God of peace. You choose to be a God who gives. We see it in the life and beauty around us, So, we praise you as well as thank you. You choose to sacrifice yourself for us. We see this in Jesus, and we praise as well as thank you.

Forgive us for forgetting, and forgetting all you who are and what you have done, and the way we follow.

Remind us at this season of remembering, and help us to go on as you would have us go on.
AMEN.

We pray the prayer that Jesus taught us. The Lord's prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Singing the Faith 364 - O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

3 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

4 He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me.

5 He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

6 See all your sin on Jesus laid;
The lamb of God was slain;
His soul was once an offering made
That all may heaven gain.

7 In Christ our Head, you ten shall know,
Shall feel, your sins forgiven,
Anticipate your heaven below,
And own that love is heaven

Reading - Deuteronomy 6:1-12

Our first reading introduces what we are thinking about.

These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.^[a] ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰ When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹² be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Hymn - Singing the Faith 36 – There's a quiet understanding

There's a quiet understanding
When we're gathered in the Spirit,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name.
There's a love we feel in Jesus,
There's a manna that he feeds us,
It's a promise that he gives us,
When we gather in his name.

And we know when we're together,
Sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters
Feel the oneness that he brings.
Thank you, thank you, Jesus
For the way you love and feed us,
For the many ways you lead us;
Thank you, thank you Lord

Prayers of Intercession, Let us pray,

We thank you that we have power to choose, and that you leave us with this power and responsibility. We thank you for your patience with this sad world, that you are always working in people's hearts, to advance your loving purposes.

We pray for the United States as it makes its choice of President. Help them to choose well. For Sudan, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Gaza, The West Bank, Palestine, and Israel. We pray for our friends unable to get about, encourage us to phone them.

We pray for all who are struggling with their health, physical, and mental, perhaps both. We pray for those who care about them.

We pray for ourselves. Give us a spirit of yearning for your world to come on earth. May we know peace as we do so. May the Lord strengthen and bless all those we have prayed for. In Jesus name. AMEN.

Reading - Mark 12 :28-34

The Greatest Commandment

²⁸ 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?"

²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'³² There is no commandment greater than these."

³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Hymn - Singing the Faith 681 Community of Christ who make the Cross your own

Community of Christ,
Who make the cross your own,
Live out your creed and risk your life
For God alone:
The God who wears your face,
To whom all worlds belong,
Whose children are of every race
And every song.

Community of Christ.
Through whom the word must sound –
Cry out for justice and for peace
The whole world round:
Disarm the powers that war
And all that can destroy,
Turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish
Into joy.

Community of Christ,
Look past the church's door
And see the refugee, the hungry
And the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed,
The jobless in your street,
Take towel and water, that you wash
Your neighbour's feet.

When menace melts away,
so shall God's will be done,
The climate of the world be peace
And Christ its Sun;
Our currency be love
And kindness our law,
Our food and faith be shared as one
For evermore.

Sermon

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH HEART SOUL MIND AND STRENGTH AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF

There are some Bible verses that seem to say it all. To say anything more would be to gild the lily. But I am a preacher. I have to find something to say about these verses, too, especially a verse that says . **YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH HEART SOUL MIND AND STRENGTH AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.**

You shall love the Lord your God with heart, and soul.

A Minister was asked what Christianity was all about. He said, "Loving God and others with everything you've got." I can't do better than that.

Loving God suggests believing things about God. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus quotes the verse in Deuteronomy that says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is one. Love the Lord your God"... You believe that God revealed to you through Jesus gives you as full an understanding of God as we are likely to get this side of heaven. It means responding to the God whom you know with everything you've got and everything you are. The word 'heart' means the essential you. The word 'soul' means the life in you. So, "Love the Lord your God with all that makes you, with all the life in you."

Whatever your way of expressing your faith, give to God everything you've got. 'The heart' was the essence of a person. 'The soul' could express the same thing. Maybe Deuteronomy was written when the people of Israel were exposed to outside influences. It doesn't matter whether you use the word 'heart' or 'soul' or some other word. What matters is that you and I respond and go on responding to God with everything you've got.

"What is the secret of your success?" was a question once asked. They never asked it of me. William Booth of the Salvation Army was once asked a similar question.

He said that it was that in a Chapel he resolved that God should have all there was of William Booth.

His daughter replied, "That was not his secret. His secret was – He never took it back."

What can be our response to the God who has given us life, the earth, and its resources to sustain us and look after creation. How can we respond to God who has delivered us and seen us through many dangers? How should we respond to a God who has given us Jesus? Would love be the appropriate word, love of all we have and are, love that we never take it back?

Love God with heart and soul or whatever language you use but let him have all of you..
But love God with mind and strength. Mind and strength.

God gave each of us a mind. God did not give me practical skills, but did he say to me, "You don't have to bother working things out, working out where the screw might go in the Dunelm furniture that you bought. I might want to say that, but God doesn't. Use your mind.

When I asked one too many questions, as to how to do things, my father used to say, "Use the mind God's given you."

We may not be the best thinkers since Einstein. But does that mean we should not use the mind that God has given us to gain a sense of His truth, and to love him better.

Even if we don't think much of our minds, our minds are what God has given us, they are part of who we are, and if we are to love God with all we have we must love Him with our minds as well. You know how some people say, "I can't think deeply. I just accept." That sounds good. That sounds an act of faith. But what we accept is what we have been told, someone else's view. It's

not our view. We need to engage our mind as well as our heart and soul if we are to have a faith of our own.

And we do. I'm using my mind when I try to sort the problem out, as are you when you sort these practical problems out. Could it be that we use our minds when it suits us but sometimes when we don't when it doesn't?

Mind and Strength, we don't think of them as going together. We use the phrase 'strength of mind.' Maybe, we sometimes need the strength of mind, the determination, the resilience, the will to use our mind, as best we can as part of what God has given us to find out more about him.

If we are to use our minds we are more than our minds alone.

We are heart, and soul.

John Wesley said of someone, "The theory of religion he most certainly has. God give him living experience of it."

It is not enough to know about God. We have to know God as a person. In the end, only that will do. A theory will not keep us going through the squalls and storms of life. Only knowing God and Jesus as a person will. That demands a journey of heart and soul.

I, too, once felt it was enough to prove or supply convincing evidence that there is a God, until in a tin shack Chapel long since closed I'm sure, my heart too was strangely warmed and I felt I knew the God who before I worshipped as theory. Yet I have found as I have lived that the insights through someone's thoughts to my mind have helped me love God more, and find how great is God's love for us more. I have found that only the strength of will of remembering that now I belong to God and his ways have kept me going badly wrong. For as I have done that, I have sensed Jesus with me helping me.

But for that to happen, I have had to love the Lord my God with heart, soul, mind and strength. Is it not the same for you, too?

LOVE GOD WITH MIND AND STRENGTH, HEART AND SOUL- JESUS FIRST
COMMANDMENT.

THE SECOND IS LIKE UNTO IT; YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF
The second follows from the first.

God and neighbour, God and neighbour. Love shows no favour between the two.

Rob has said that he read an article, which asked, When you talk about activity and contemplation, what is the most important word? The answer was, "And." Activity and contemplation, they both go together. Love of God and neighbour, they both go together.

Can we forget that a teacher of the law asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

He was talking about following God's Law which was about doing what God required. The Law talked about having right relationships with others as well as with God. So, you can't talk about loving God without concern for others.

Jesus gave him not just one but two commands because he knew that people would want to have one without the other. He knew that people would want to say, "Worship's my thing." "Or Helping others is my thing." He knew that if you didn't do the second you wouldn't be truly loving God. He knew that if you tried to do the second without the first you wouldn't do so in the right spirit. He knew that you couldn't serve God without loving God and others.

We sometimes want to ask, "Who is my neighbour?" We know what Jesus replied to that. He told the Story of the Good Samaritan. We take it to mean to include everybody as our neighbour.

Someone said to me, "When you look into someone's eyes, all you see is eyes." You do not see skin colour, you do not see what kind of education they have had, you do not see what kind of upbringing they have had, you do not see whether they have come from the right areas, you do not see whether they believe the right things, you do not see whether they are newcomers or old stagers, all you see are eyes.

You may see in those eyes, love, or hurt, or acceptance, or grief. Those eyes may lead you having empathy, understanding, and love in return, but you do not see those other things that so often divide us. All you see are eyes.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” it was asked. One reply was, “My brother doesn’t need a keeper. He needs a brother.” “My sister does not need a keeper. She needs a sister.”

It takes all the strength I have, and more, when people persist in their cruel attitudes. Fortunately, Jesus the Teacher is Jesus the Lord who gives us extra strength.

Love your neighbour as yourself. It, too, had been said before, in Leviticus 19:18. Jesus was asked to sum up the law. Rabbis did that kind of thing. They normally meant when they did so, “These are the most important laws, but you should observe the others as well.” Jesus changed the emphasis. He said these two laws sum up God’s intention, which was what the Law was all about, anyway. These two laws sum up what all these other Laws were aspiring to. God’s not about telling us what we should do in each and every detail of our lives. He says do the loving thing for people.

He says, “It means tying the two commandments together. Loving God will enable you to love your neighbour.”

What is the greatest commandment?,” asked the Teacher of the Law. Jesus said, “HEAR O ISRAEL, THE LORD OUR GOD 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,” with everything you’ve got. The second is this, “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF.” AMEN

Hymn - Singing the Faith 73 Fill thou my life O Lord my God in every part with praise

Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,
in ev'ry part with praise,
that my whole being may proclaim
thy being and thy ways.

Fill every part of me with praise;
Let my all being speak
Of thee and of thy love, O Lord,
Poor though I be and weak.

Not for the lip of praise alone,
nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask, but for a life made up
of praise in ev'ry part:

So shalt thou, gracious Lord, from me,
Receive the glory due;
And so shall I begin on earth
The song for ever new.

Praise in the common things of life,
Its goings out and in;
Praise in each duty and each deed,
However small and mean.

So shall no part of day or night
from sacredness be free,
but all my life, in ev'ry step,
be fellowship with thee.

The Blessing –

A blessing on those we love,
a blessing on those we do not like but ought to love,
a blessing on our homes,
a blessing on the homes around,
a blessing on our community,
a blessing on our world,
the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Spirit rest and abide with us now and always. AMEN.