

matthew 22.³⁴⁻⁴⁰

³⁴But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. ³⁵Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, ³⁶“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷Jesus said unto him, “‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹And the second is like unto it, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

This is the 42nd reading for Lent 2025. According to traditional chronologies, the conversation reported here took place on Tuesday of Holy Week. It is also one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement.”*

1. As our atonement title suggests, sanctification is about imitating Jesus in his feelings and actions of at-one-ment or connectedness with others
 - ? To what words and actions of Jesus would you point as evidence of his love for and attachment to God and others?
2. According to Matthew, this question was put to Jesus in a “tempting” way.
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What was the “lawyer” hoping to accomplish?
 - ? How, if at all, did the lawyer’s insincerity impact Jesus’ answer?
3. Consider the lawyer’s question, “Which is the great commandment in the law?”
 - ? In light of our familiarity with this question, it is difficult to do, but we want you to try. If you had been asked this question without knowledge of Jesus’ answer, how would you answer this question? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? If someone followed you around to observe your daily activities, would they be able to surmise from your actions that these two things were the most important things in your life? What would they see to confirm or deny it?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that Jesus did not answer with any specific, legalistic rule?
 - ? What is the relationship between love and legalistic behaviors?
4. Jesus says that “all the law and the prophets” “hang” on the love of God and the love of neighbour.
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? How does the following passage relate to Jesus’ answer and his vision of the law?

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1.⁵).

- ? What do you think and feel when we suggest that “charity” and thus loving relationship with others and God is really the only commandment?
- ? Are there “commandments” that you keep that do not consciously invoke love of others? How would they fit into Jesus’ view of the commandments and of true obedience?
- ? Can anyone claim obedience to God or others if love isn’t the motivating factor? Why do

you answer as you do?

Write down six to ten specific commandments or rules of behavior.

- ? How do these relate to and serve as a reflection of the love of God?
- ? How do these relate to and serve as a reflection of the love of neighbor?

* The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”