

G-5

Gospel

Matthew 22: 35–40

This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

35 A lawyer, to disconcert Jesus, put a question,
26 ‘Master, which is the greatest commandment of the Law?’
37 Jesus said, ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, and with all your mind.
38 This is the greatest and the first commandment.
39 The second resembles it:
You must love your neighbour as yourself.
40 On these two commandments hang the whole Law,
and the Prophets also.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

G-5 Matthew 22:35-40

This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it.

The Gospel of St Matthew

This is the first of the four gospels, giving an account of Jesus' life and ministry, teaching by word, stories, and example — how to live with others, how to pray, how to grow in wisdom and come close to God. Matthew writes as a Jew for the Jewish Christians in the early days of the Church, proclaiming Jesus as 'Messiah', as the fulfilment of the Old Testament, both the Law and the Prophets.

In this passage

Jesus gives us a summary of the whole law found in the Old Testament, joining the two key teachings into one great one — love of God and love of neighbour forming one whole. It might seem too easy to love God and then quietly ignore our neighbour. However, Jesus says this is impossible. If we really love God, and know we are precious in God's sight and loved by God, we are overwhelmed, filled to overflowing with that love. This in turn encourages us out to feel with God's heart, to see with his eyes, to listen with his ears, to touch and heal with his hands, to walk his way in actively loving and serving all those we meet. This begins at home with the people God gives us to love — one another in our marriage, and our families and friends, and moves out to the wider community. The love of God and of one another is inseparable. However, don't miss out the bit 'as yourself'. You too are a precious, loved child of God, and the first step in being able to love is knowing the security of being loved first. You can't give what you haven't received yourself.

Your love for one another in your marriage is a wonderful experience. You know you are loved. You can then love. As the first letter of John tells us, 'God is love and he or she who lives in love, lives in God and God lives in them'. This truth is the heart and strength of your married life.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- Talk together about what it is that first attracted you to one another. Can you finish the sentence many times over, 'I love you because...' or 'I love you when...'
- What are the ways in which you show your 'love with all my heart' to one another?
- Think of a marriage you admire. What do you think has been the 'glue' that has kept them together? Could you have a conversation with them about what makes a good marriage?
- What do you like about this reading? Why might it be a good one for your wedding?