

## **The Reading for 3<sup>rd</sup> November – Mark chapter 12, verses 28 - 34:-**

### **The Encounter with one of the scribes:-**

Read through Mark 12, verses 28 - 34; also note Matthew chapter 22, verses 34 – 40 and Luke chapter 10, verses 25 – 28.

For background read Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 4 – 9 and Leviticus chapter 19, verse 17 – 18.

### **The setting:-**

In the events described in Mark chapter 11, verse 12 to chapter 14, verse 11, the Lord Jesus was staying at Bethany and coming into the city of Jerusalem each day – see Mark chapter 11, verses 11 – 12; 19 – 20, and 27 and chapter 14, verse 3. The teaching and debates in chapters 11 and 12 appear to have taken place in the Temple precincts.

### **The encounter:-**

This is the fourth recorded debate in this section with the Jerusalem authorities. In chapter 11, verse 27 it is “*the chief priests the scribes and the elders*” who came to Him. In chapter 12, verse 13 it is “*some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians*” and in verse 18 it is “*Sadducees*”.

Here we have “*one of the scribes*” who overhears the dispute and realises that the Lord Jesus “*answered them well*”. This question is based on the heart of the Jewish faith and belief. A seemingly simple question to which the Lord Jesus gives a straightforward answer!

### **The Teaching:-**

The answer given by the Lord Jesus is familiar to many of us as ‘The Summary of the Law’ as used in the Service of Holy Communion.

The First Commandment is part of the statement of faith from Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 4 – 5 known as “*the Shema*” recited daily by every pious Jew.

(The set Old Testament Reading for Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup> November is Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 1 -9).

The Second Commandment is from a lesser known text – Leviticus chapter 19, verse 18. Alongside these direct commandments there are a number of reminders that the Lord God cares for the slave, the stranger and the sojourner – e.g. Leviticus chapter 23, verse 22 and Deuteronomy chapter 24, verses 19 – 22.

The reply of the scribe shows that he not only accepted the teaching but also understood its implications. It was, and is, far more important to act on the teaching than to simply recite it daily or to offer “*Burnt offerings and sacrifices*”! This is emphasised by the Old Testament prophets e.g. Hosea chapter 6, verse 6 and by our Lord Jesus himself in Luke chapter 10, verses 25 – 37. On that occasion the lawyer himself gives the answer but then goes on to ask “*and who is my neighbour?*”. The example of the Good Samaritan follows.

Remember that to “*love your neighbour as yourself*” is called “*the royal law*” in the Epistle of James chapter 2, verse 8. The Summary of the Law as given by our Lord Jesus Christ should be our guide to living a full Christian life.