

Near the Kingdom of Heaven Third Week of Lent Friday, March 29, 2019 Hos 14:2-10; **Mk 12:28-34** (This young man recognized a kind of authority, but not quite that Jesus is the new model, the new template, the new paradigm that embodies everything.)

“And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the Kingdom of God.’”

So this young man is not far, but not necessarily within the kingdom of God. If you notice, the question about which is the first of all the commandments, of course the first of all the commandments is **“You shall love the Lord your God and have no strange gods before me; I am the Lord.”** That’s the first commandment. Now what is found here is not actually the first commandment, but a rewriting found in the Book of Deuteronomy. It’s expanded a little bit. It’s enriched a little bit—fine, nothing wrong with it, the meaning is the same. **Then Jesus connected it to another commandment** that isn’t among the ten at all, but in Jesus’ mind more or less summarizes the rest and that is to **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** That is a way of saying do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, and so on.

So far, so good, and the young man gets this. **He answers with understanding and he says. “This is much more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices,”** which is a way of saying all the temple sacrifices. Well yes, and that’s true. But what else? What doesn’t he say? **What he doesn’t say is that this contains the whole of what God really wants, and that all these other stipulations** about the Sabbath and circumcision and **how to apply and measure the Law of God is not important.**

Now the young man was a scribe, and that was his job to write all these things. So he had an insight into the, if you will put it this way, the irrelevance of the **traditional temple** that, in a way, **Jesus was replacing with himself.** He is the new temple. He is the new sacrifice. He is the new priest. **But what this man did not understand is that Jesus is also the way and the truth and**

the life, and that his scribal ministry is eclipsing. So he was close. He was near, but **he wasn't yet within the kingdom of God.**

Jesus tries to bring us within the kingdom of God by embodying what God really desires. He is the human will of God. And that is why **true Christians have always followed Jesus as the model,** not even the words of this gospel, not the words of any gospel, **not any words, but the Word.** Jesus is the Word. **This young man recognized a kind of authority, but not quite that Jesus is the new model, the new template, the new paradigm that embodies everything.**