

“Over Your Head but into Your Heart”—Matthew 22:41-46

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Over Your Head but into Your Heart”, is Matthew 22:41-46 → *While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?” They said to Him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies under Your feet”’? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

When a nine year old boy came home from Sunday School, his mother asked him what he had learned that day.

“Well,” said the boy, “our teacher told us about how God sent Moses behind the enemy lines to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians. He brought them to the Red Sea, and then Moses ordered his engineers to build a huge pontoon bridge. After all the people crossed over, they looked back and saw the Egyptian tanks coming. Quick as a flash Moses grabbed his smart phone and asked the Air Force to send in

cruise missiles to blow up the bridge and save the Israelites.”

“Bobby!” exclaimed the mother. “That’s not really the way the teacher told the story, is it?”

“Well, not exactly,” Bobby admitted. “But if I told it her way you’d never believe it.”

How many times does it feel like reading the accounts of God’s dealings with people in the Scriptures goes right over your head? For many those accounts may seem so “far fetched” and unfathomable that the devil and their own sinful nature refuse to acknowledge the truths of God’s written Word. It is a temptation for all. In the case of unbelief, the Scriptures get stuck in the head, with the Holy Spirit striving to move them to the heart so that one is brought to faith and trust in the LORD with repentance of sins. It is truly a challenge to break through the hard heart. The words of Jesus would certainly apply here: *With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible* (cf. Matthew 19:26).

Our text brings us to Jesus in Jerusalem a few days before He would be crucified. His teachings left a sour taste in the hearts and minds of the scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees—the religious leaders of Judaism. *Seeking to arrest Him* (cf. Matthew 21:46), their only recourse seemed to be trying to trap Him in His words. The Pharisees placed a tax question before Him (cf. Matthew 22:15-22) while the Sadducees posed a question dealing with marriage practices from the Old Testament (cf.

Matthew 22:23-33). A lawyer (i.e. expert in Old Testament Law), striving to make Him rank the commandments of God, asked Him: *Which is the great commandment in the Law?* (cf. Matthew 22:36) Each answer Jesus gave astonished the crowds listening and left the religious leaders speechless (cf. Matthew 22:22,33). Why?

The responses Jesus gave to their questions flowed from relationship and not simply a point of reference in the Bible. Jesus responded with the same Scriptures these men used. However, His use of the Scriptures focused on their primary purpose: to define your relationship with Yahweh based upon faith in His promised Messiah, *the son of David*. John 20:31 says the Scriptures were *written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name*. While Jesus used Scripture to restore relationship with God, those religious leaders used Scripture to manipulate and defend a relationship with God based on their own traditions and ideas. It was for this reason Jesus told them in Matthew 22:29 → *You know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God*.

Thus, Jesus “turned the tables” to really show how their “heady” knowledge and efforts could not withstand God’s power. He questioned them in verse 42 of our text: *What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He?* According to the Old Testament Scriptures the Messiah had to be born in relationship with the lineage of King David. In 2 Samuel 7

the prophet Nathan brought this word to David: *When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son . . . and your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever.* (verses 12-14,16) This is why Matthew's record of the genealogy of Jesus centered more around King David than Abraham (cf. Matthew 1:1-17).

Naturally, the religious leaders answered Jesus' question appropriately: The Christ was to be *the son of David*. Then Jesus put forth the questions which went way over their heads in an effort to reach their hearts. He asked: *How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies under Your feet'"? If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?* (verse 43-45) Good question. It is true that David did say those words, recorded in Psalm 110. It is true that he did speak it *in the Spirit* (i.e. the Holy Spirit gave him those words). It is true that the Bible, the words of Yahweh, speak of the Messiah as both Son and Lord. How are you going to answer that question?

A faith of only the head does not know how to deal with such a confessional statement since it describes two persons (i.e. Yahweh and the Christ) both as *Lord*. What does one logically do with its inference

of two lords, especially since the Holy Spirit says in Deuteronomy 6:4 → *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD is one**.* You cannot work out this conundrum in any logical way. The men to whom Jesus spoke these words realize this. Thus, *no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions.* (verse 46)

Once again, Jesus attested to the necessity of faith of the heart, a trust in God's power at work in a relationship He establishes with people in the Person & Work of His Christ. He attested to the fact that God's ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9). What is impossible for us to comprehend, let alone make happen, is possible for the LORD working through the Holy Spirit in our hearts. It is only grasped at the mercy of a faith relationship with God by a heart made new in the forgiveness of sins by faith in Jesus. Simply put: *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.* (cf. Mark 16:16)

God's Word will go over your head. But this doesn't mean that you quit reading it. It means that you read it in humble, repentant faith in Jesus. It means that you trust His Word, clinging to His promises, heeding His warnings, receiving His grace and forgiveness, cherishing the relationship He has established with a sinner such as yourself. Thus, it is intended to go over your head but . . . also into your heart, out

of which the Holy Spirit produces a new life in a relationship of love for the LORD and your neighbor. He redefines relationships in this world as well. Galatians 5:6 says: *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.* In other words, when your heart trusts in the atoning work of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, it doesn't matter whether or not you are a physical descendant of King David or Abraham's line (i.e. *circumcision*) or a descendant of anyone else for that matter (i.e. *uncircumcision*). What matters is *faith working through love—the love . . . God has for us in Christ Jesus our Lord* (cf. Romans 8:39) and that love expressed in service to our neighbor (cf. Matthew 22:39). It may be over your head but the Holy Spirit is always at work to put it into your heart and live it in your life. Amen.

*Let us draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith,
with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
and our bodies washed with pure water.*

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,
for He Who promised is faithful.*

(Hebrews 10:22-23)

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.