

# Commanded to Love

*Matthew 22:34–46*

*Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

October 26, 2014

## Thought For The Week



Our story this week is about a very brave 15 year old Pakistani girl named Malala Yousafzai (not the girl pictured in the photograph). Her undaunted efforts have touched the hearts of many people around the world.

Young Malala lives in the Swat Valley in northern Pakistan. In defiance of the rules imposed by the Taliban, Malala attended her father's school, and encouraged other girls to do the same. On 9 October, 2012, a Taliban

gunman attempted to assassinate Malala as she was returning home on the school bus.

She was very seriously injured and received emergency surgery in Pakistan before being flown to England. As a result of the expert care she has received at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham she is making an amazing recovery.

For some years Malala has spoken for women's rights within her community, and especially the right of girls to receive a schooled education. She is a remarkable example of outstanding ability and courage. Malala knew the risks she faced from violent men in her remote community yet she refused to be intimidated by them and be silent. She has spoken publicly, written a blog for the BBC and made a film to highlight the plight of girls growing up in the Swat Valley.

This has brought her national and international recognition. The man who shot her was determined to silence her but, hopefully, his evil action will only hasten the day when all girls in Pakistan will be free to go to school and enjoy other freedoms.

During his ministry Jesus challenged the religious leaders of his day who were also imposing man made rules on people. They were more concerned about their own power and prosperity than they were about the people.

Jesus was very different. Great crowds came to listen to him and he healed many people. Seeing his popularity growing the religious leaders decided to silence him. They brought false charges against him and handed him over to the Romans who ordered that he should be crucified.

How did Jesus respond to his enemies? He did not gather his followers together to fight and defend him. Instead he continued to speak the truth and did not retaliate. When he was dying on the Cross he prayed for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

The Roman Empire fell many years ago, but today people of many nations continue to find new life through Jesus as they receive him as their Savior and Lord.

*Happy Birthday Jim (10/26), Dorian (10/26) & Karen (10/29)*

## Prayer For The Week

O God, the people are hungry for your Word. Fill us with grace to make your Word alive this day. Help us live by that grace, we pray, as we humbly confess our sins and ask forgiveness.

O God, your people are hungry for food. Help us become better stewards, so that all may benefit from the abundance you have provided. Give us the will to share with all who do not have enough.

O God, your people are hungry for healing. You created us to be whole persons, but many of us are broken. Your people are sick, lonely, in jail, oppressed. Fill us with the power to heal one another and to be healed.

O God, your people are hungry for justice. Help those in authority, in all countries and all institutions, to govern wisely for the benefit of all. With others across the world, we especially ask this on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Philippines on this day. Fill all leaders with compassion, we pray.

O God, your people are hungry for peace. Teach all persons that there is more to bind nations together than to drive them apart, and that there is no place in your realm for war and intolerance. Fill us with understanding we humbly ask.

O Great God, to you be the praise and the honor and the glory. Amen.

## Stewardship Thought For The Week

Christians have responsibility to maintain and use wisely the gifts that God has bestowed. God wishes human beings to be his collaborators in the work of creation, redemption and sanctification.

Increasingly this has been referred to as environmental protectionism. However, this also includes traditional Christian Ministries that share the resources of treasure, time and talent.

What does it mean for humans 'to take care of the world'? Environmental stewardship reduces the human impact in the natural world. However, some claim that humans have a special stewardship role on the planet because through their technology humans are able to save life from otherwise certain elimination. This is a modern day interpretation of Noah's Ark, the cornerstone of human stewardship being technological protection and regulation. What do you think?