

*The LORD said unto my lord, Sit thou on my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

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How many times do you look and look and look again for something and never find it?

Maybe it's your keys. Or your glasses. Or the remote control for the TV. Or the can opener.

You look, and you look, and you look again; and when you can't find whatever it is that you're looking for, in desperation you call your wife or your husband or one of the kids.

Because surely, they must have done something with it. They've used it and not put it back where it's supposed to be. Or they've moved it and haven't told you. Or they've just hidden it just for spite.

So you yell out them and you ask them what they've done with it. Maybe with a bit of accusation in your tone. And they stop whatever it is that they're doing, and they come to you, patiently, even forgivingly. And, in a fraction of a second, in a fraction of time too small to measure, they point exactly to where it's been all along. Right there in front of your nose.

Maybe it's a kind of magic. You know – how else can you explain not seeing what was right in front of your face the whole time? How could you have missed something that was so obvious? Maybe they conjured it up while you were standing there. Just to make you think that you're going crazy.

At the end of this week's Gospel Jesus asks a question of those who have come to ask him questions; those who have come to try to trap him with their carefully crafted questions. And maybe the question that he asked them made no sense to you as you were listening to the Gospel; especially coming, as it does, right after that well-known bit about loving our neighbours as ourselves.

As you may recall, it was a question about the relation of King David to the Christ; to the Messiah. And about how the Messiah was supposed to be, according to prophecy, a son of David; a male heir; a new king descended from the line of Israel's greatest king. No surprise there. And about why King David, who was the assumed author of the psalms, would refer to this heir; this son or grandson or great-grandson, as "my Lord".

Jesus' question centred on the words of Psalm 110

The LORD said unto my lord;

words which for centuries had been understood as a promise of the day when God would send his Messiah to rescue his people from political and social despair; when God would defeat Israel's enemies and bring back Israel's king, who would be the long-awaited, long-desired, long-prayed for Son of David.

But Jesus sees something in Psalm 110 that, apparently, no one else had ever seen before. Jesus sees a puzzle that, in a way, only he could answer. Because if King David is the author of the psalm, as everyone assumed he was, then who would the great King David, the greatest king that Israel had ever known; the king against

whom all future kings were measured; [who would the great King David] ever call his lord?

That's the question that Jesus poses to those who had gone out of their way to try to trap him with a long series of questions. Why would David speak of his son, his heir as his lord? We know, of course, that the answer is found in the fact that the Christ was not just a son of David but also the Son of God; so David's psalm, his prophecy, refers to his future heir not as his son but as his Lord, because when the Messiah finally came, he came as God incarnate; as God born in human flesh.

And the amazing thing is that for century after century, even to that day when Jesus asks his question, they'd missed something that had been right in front of their own faces. Not only didn't they not know the answer when Jesus asked the question; all along they'd failed to realise that there even was a question. Even though it had been right in front of their noses.

And that brings me back to the other part of this week's Gospel: the part about loving God and our neighbour. Because we've heard those words so often that I suspect they pretty much wash over us whenever we hear them. That even though these words speak of how we must love God and each other with every fibre of our being, in every way that we possibly can, I suspect that we hear them with our ears but no longer hear them with our hearts. And if we do, we may be missing more than we imagine; missing what's been right in front of our faces all along.

At the end of this episode we hear that those who came to test Jesus stopped asking their questions; that they were they afraid to ask him questions? And maybe that's because they were afraid to hear his answers; that they feared that he might be challenging them to think about their lives in ways they didn't want to. And perhaps, at heart, that's why we let these amazing words wash over us. Maybe we don't want to be challenged by the answers we get. Maybe the thought of loving God and neighbour with every fibre of our being will challenge some of the assumptions, some of the biases, some of the resentments, that we've accepted along the way. Maybe we're afraid that if we think too closely on such things Jesus may be asking us to do things that we don't really want to do; telling us things that we don't want to hear. We may just find that Christ is calling us to love the people who have been there all the time, right in front of our noses, if only we'd thought to see them. And to love them in ways that we don't really want to.

So hear again the words of this week's Gospel. And as you hear these well-known words again, slow down and think what they may mean for you.

Slow down and think about what loving God with every fibre of your being, and loving your neighbour – each and every neighbour – may require you to do; not just in some theoretical way but in the practical, hands-on, everyday way in which life is lived.

*Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord;
and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,*

and with all your strength.

*This is the first commandment; and the second is like it, namely this,
you shall love your neighbour as yourself.*