Our gospel reading today comes at the end of what must have been one of the most eventful days in Jesus' life, for it all happened on the day we call Palm Sunday.

It began with the festive entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, welcomed by the crowd who greeted Him with song and jubilation: "Praise God. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord", and so on.

Luke then tells us that Jesus went up to the Temple, and finding the forecourt transformed into a marketplace, he drives the traders out, accusing them of turning God's house of prayer into a den of thieves.

Several temple officials then come up to demand to know where he thinks he gets the authority to do what he has done and to preach what he does.

As they leave a group of Herodians come up together with some Pharisees to trap Him with the question whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? He sends them packing with the response: "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God".

Next come some Saducees, with a ridiculous story about a woman who was made to marry seven brothers in succession, without having children by any of them. They then ask: "If there is a rising from the dead, whose husband will she be, since she's been wife to all of them?" Jesus shows them the stupidity of that question.

Then, last of all, comes this Scribe with a much debated question: "Which is the first of all commandments?"   The Law of Moses, as the Jews understood it, had 613 commandments, and discussion was rife. Jewish history of that time mentions that one of their most revered Rabbis, Hillel, was asked one day if he could teach his questioner the whole gist of the Law while standing on one leg?   Hillel's response?   *"Do not do to your neighbour what is hateful to you; this is the whole Torah, the rests is commentary.*"

Jesus' response is drawn straight from Scripture, from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, which we heard in our first reading, and if you listened carefully you would have recognised that the answer Jesus gave is, in fact, only one word: *"Listen",* - all that comes after that is commentary.

"Listen", - with that one word Jesus said it all! That one word indicated all the rest that followed. That one word summed up *the love of God, the love for the other,* and *the love for self.*

You don't believe me? Just think of your everyday experience. Isn't the one who loves you the one who listens to you?

You have a problem. You go to a doctor, a priest, a lawyer, a psychiatrist, your father, your mother, or someone you thought was your friend. Your problem is serious, your anxiety great. But they say they have no time, they are too busy, that you don't have the money. Even when they listen, you see their eyes turn away from you in other directions. You feel their minds turn away; *they do not love you.*

Think of yourself when someone you don't like comes to make you a participant in her worries, his anguish, her sickness. Do you ever listen, really listen, when you don't love her, when you don't love him?

Think of the times you found one who listened – really listened – to you. Isn't it true that all of us complain that nobody seems to listen to us?

That learned man, that Scribe, went to Jesus and asked: *"What is the most important thing in life?"* And Jesus said: *"Listen."* Listen to God, listen to your neighbour, listen to the source of life, listen to human life. There is no commandment greater than this one: *"Listen."* If you listen, life will be loved and the consequences will be drawn. All will be well.

You don't need much imagination to know and feel that this is true. If we listen to God, we will not fight in God's name. If we listen to God, things will be shared. If we listen to God, others will also be heard. If we listen to God, others will hear us, too.

Listening to God, God will be loved with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our our strength, and we will love our neighbours as ourselves.

Translate the word *love* as "listen", and you <u>know</u> what love and the "good life" are both about.