



WE ARE  
THE CHURCH

ST. LUCAS UCC

*Transforming lives  
as the hands and feet of Christ*

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

**November 3-4**

**“A Simple Gospel”**

**By Rev. Keith Herron**

## What Is This?

This brief guide is intended for use individually, or in small groups. It's your chance to dive deeper into the issues raised in the weekend sermon and to connect a Biblical story with your daily life.

## Revisit the Text

Mark 12:28-34; <https://bit.ly/1MeyE3r>

## Big Ideas Raised

Our scripture this past weekend is something of a final exam for Jesus. It comes as the last of a series of questions posed to him when he arrived in Jerusalem. When the theology professors tested Jesus, it was not a friendly “sharing of the minds.” It was a test of the will, more like a game that matched wits with Jesus.

Give Jesus credit for what he did with the question. Rather than clouding the issue with unnecessary complexity, he simplified it. Jesus found the bottom line in their complicated question. The move from complexity to simplicity was a sign of Jesus' brilliance in a moment pregnant with political implications. The Jewish scholars knew that the Hebrew law contained 613 laws in the Torah. Keeping the law was understood to be the goal of all God fearing Jews but no one really felt it was possible. The power to keep all the laws was understood to be akin to moral perfection ... a good goal but not really attainable.

So maybe this religious seeker was seeking relief for his weary religious soul. All the minutiae of the law were simply overwhelming and maybe his question was this: “If you could hang all the law on one nail, what nail would that be?” One nail wouldn't do for such a lofty concern, so Jesus used two nails: the love of God and the love of neighbor.

## Questions Meant to Dig Deeper

- How do you respond to the question posed to Jesus, “Which law is the most important?”
- Jesus answered plainly. He accepted the simplicity of the two Scriptures he quoted, one for the vertical nature of loving God, and the other for the horizontal nature of living others. Which is the hardest? Is one harder for you to live over against the other?
- These two laws can form guidance that helps us prioritize life. Something to make life and its many demands easier rather than harder. Is that how you see it?

## Revisit the Sermon

For a recording or a manuscript of this weekend's sermon, please visit: <https://www.stlucasucc.org/sermons-resources>