

30th Sun A
Junk, Not Love

Introduction

He asked Jesus,

"Which is the greatest of the commandments?"

Jesus responded,

"Love God with your whole heart and mind and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself."

These are the heart and soul of all of the commandments.

I Junk vs Love

There is the story about a woman who took her aging mother into her home.

The mother had had a stroke and needed time to recover.

The daughter was very solicitous and painstakingly attentive to her mother's every need.

Nevertheless, a terrible fight broke out – over a hard-boiled egg.

In the middle of the war of words, the mother stopped short and asked,

"Why are you doing all this for me anyway?"

(It was a question of "from what inner space" is all this care coming.)

The daughter began to list reasons:

I was afraid for her;

I wanted to get her well;

I felt maybe I'd ignored her when I was younger;

I needed to show her I was strong;

I needed to get her ready for going home alone;

old age;

and on and on.

I was amazed myself. I could have gone on giving reasons all night. Even she was impressed.

"Junk," my mother said when I was done.

"Junk?" I yelled.

Like, boy, she'd made a real mistake with that remark. I could really get her.

"Yes, junk," she said again, but a little more quietly.

And that little-more-quietly tone got me.

And she went on:

"You don't have to have all those reasons.

We love each other. That's enough."

I felt like a child again.

Having your parents show you something that's true,
and you don't feel put down –
you feel better, because it is true,
and you know it, even though you are a child.

I said, "You're right. You're really right. I'm sorry."

She said, "Don't be sorry. Junk is fine. It's what you don't need any more. I love you."

II It's From Inside

The daughter's actions were coming from every possible place inside her except from the one place her mother needed to have them come from: the place of love.

Jesus is concerned about the inner state of the acting person. Mindless compliance with the laws and commandments makes you an outer person, conforming but not understanding.

When you work from love, you know why the law tells you to do something. The Ten Commandments are general norms and give birth to a thousand behaviors and regulations. Behavior becomes important. But *most* important is where our good actions come from... It is not only what we do that counts, but from where we do it. Our actions come from different places inside us. These different places affect the quality and effectiveness of what we do.

Why do we do good things?...
To impress others,
out of fear,
because it's the law,
because that's what a good people... and so forth?

Jesus points out that living in relationships of love to God and neighbor is the essence.
Love is an inside reality.

(Above taken from **The Spiritual Wisdom of the Gospels for Christian Preachers and Teachers, Mathew...** by John Shea pp 306-309.)

III Today's SS

In the first reading from Exodus God asks God's people to act fairly and compassionately toward others, because that is how God has acted toward them.

In the second reading Paul praises the early disciples of Jesus for acting as good disciples...

As we read his other letters of Paul describes why we act as we do...

We as Christians are asked to put on Christ – Romans 13:14... Phil 2:5.

We are to be transformed into other Christs.

Our love comes from our transformed hearts...

In today's Gospel Jesus says it simply... there are only two commandments... love God and love others.

Look at the life and ministry of Jesus.

The life of Jesus is the divine way of living on earth.

Jesus reveals God and reveals true humanity.

Jesus is human in the way men should be human –

Jesus shows us God's dream for us.

Read the stories in the Gospels.

Which are your favorite stories about Jesus?

Jesus' views on life, on earth and his whole portrayal of what is valuable in life... Jesu' life shows us what it means to be human.

Jesus is a man of love.

Now as disciples of Jesus, it's our turn...

A Story...

How might a person live today who tries to follow in the footsteps of Jesus?

I have a retired friend who now lives in the Charlotte, S.C.

Recently we were together and he was describing some volunteer work he has gotten involved with.

For some people you are born, you work, you retire and you play golf and die... Not my friend.

Although he plays some golf and enjoys his retirement

and not having the responsibilities of working,

he volunteers time each week at a local soup kitchen

that feeds a lot of the homeless in the city.

He told me the following story...

He got to know some of the homeless.

One day while walking through a park near the soup kitchen

he spotted Gary.

Gary was a meth addict and he was high on meth.
He was sitting on a park bench holding his hand
and talking to himself.
He didn't look good – few meth addicts *look* good.
As a matter of fact he looked terrible...
shabby clothes, hair disheveled, teeth missing, skin and bones. You get the
picture.

My friend walked over to him and Gary – that was his name – imagine that –
my friend know his name –
Gary held out his hand and mumbled that he had been bitten by a squirrel.
My friend called 911.
When the ambulance came the EMS folks took one look at Gary and talked
about just walking away from this mess.
My friend insisted that they take Gary to the ER –
after all, Gary was a person, even if messed up.
My friend also asked that they tell the doctors that Gary had been bitten by
a squirrel.
The EMS people loaded Gary into the ambulance and headed toward the
hospital.

Two days later my friend was helping at the soup kitchen when he saw Gary
walking down the sidewalk toward the soup kitchen. He looked a bit better.
He had washed up a bit, his hair was combed, and he didn't have that wild
look about him.
My friend asked him how he was feeling,
and he said, "Better than two days ago."
Then he showed my friend his bandaged hand
and said that he had received rabies shots and he was going to be ok.
They headed into the kitchen for breakfast together.
What do you make of that story?
Was the meth problem solved?
Would Gary be ok in the future?
Was this just fighting an unwinnable war?

Or... was my friend simply 'loving' Gary?
One person at a time?

Conclusion...

Lord, teach us to be people of love, loving God above all, and loving the
people who cross our path... treating them kindly, fairly and compassionately
– even the toxic people who do try our patience.
In this Eucharist strengthen me Lord, change me, heal me, transform me.

