

November 4, 2018  
31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time

### The Commandment of Love!

Deuteronomy 6:2-6

Psalms 18:2-4,47,51

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 12:28b-34

Moses spoke to the people encouraging them to fear the Lord God and to keep all of his statutes and commandments. The Lord promises that by doing such they will grow, prosper, and even have long life. Israel must recognize the "Lord alone is our God." They are to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength.

The psalmist describes the Lord as his strength, rock, fortress, deliverer, rock of refuge, shield, and stronghold and is therefore safe from his enemies. He praises the Lord who shows his kindness to the anointed.

Paul describes the priesthood of Jesus as eternal because Jesus lives forever. Jesus is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and higher than the heavens. He offered sacrifice once for all when he offered himself as the Son made perfect forever. He is always able to save those who approach God through him.

A scribe asks Jesus which of the commandments is most important. Jesus responds by saying we must love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbors as ourselves. The scribe agrees that obeying these is worth more than all burnt offerings and Jesus can see the scribe has understanding and is not far from the kingdom of God.

**Love the Father with all of your heart,  
the Son with all of your soul,  
The Holy Spirit with all your mind.**

In the gospel Jesus spells out the Greatest Commandment in two steps. The first is loving God, who alone is Lord, with my whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, while the second is loving neighbor as much as I love myself. So important are these two statements that Jesus considered them bound together in unity. We cannot be at peace with ourselves if we are not at peace with neighbor as well as with God. The love of God when not mixed with self-interest is a powerful thing bringing protection from enemies, strength of mind, and joy in the spirit. Living by this rule is oftentimes a challenge, but a way that yields the dividend of a great blessing, and is at the foundation of human life and is to be practiced in its totality. Go where you will, seek what you will, you shall not find a higher way above, or a safer way below, than the way of the Great Commandment.



<http://melkaplace.com>

I am patient, I am kind.  
I am not jealous, pompous, inflated, rude, quick-tempered.  
I do not seek my own interests, brood over injury, rejoice over wrongdoing.  
I rejoice with the truth, bear all things, endure all things.  
Love never fails me.  
(See 1Corinthians 13:4-8)

# The Great Commandment<sup>1</sup>



Our relationship with God is vertical,<sup>2</sup>  
With neighbor, horizontal.<sup>3</sup>  
The two combine in perfect unity.

The Spirit of the Whole cannot set one part  
in antagonism with the other,  
Both are duly proportioned.

Taken together they image the sign of a cross,  
More than an ornament from heaven  
It conveys wisdom from long ago.

The tension between the two directions  
Must be centered else it causes separation,  
One direction acting alone can be fatal.

Create God in our own image,  
According to our personal needs,  
And the vertical fades away.

Mix selfish interests  
into our relationships with neighbor  
And the horizontal dissipates.

Harmony is lost when antagonism  
conflicts the fundamental principle  
Of the two acting as one.

This principle is the basis for the Law and prophets  
And its fulfillment brings  
The greatest of blessings.

(When you make the sign of the cross or are blessed be reminded of the Great Commandment)

<http://melkplace.com>

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark 12:18-24    Matt 22:34-40

<sup>2</sup> Dt 6:4

<sup>3</sup> Lev 19:18, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8