

“The Law”
By Rev. Frances Savill
November 03, 2024

Readings:

Mark 12:28-34

Is there anything better than being in love?

Loving someone or being loved is the most wonderful thing in the world.

What gets you up in the morning?

What brings joy to your life?

There are lots of things we like to do – for some of you it is playing golf, or gardening, or music, or going for a walk in the park, or learning something new, but aren’t those things all better when you share the experience with someone wonderful?

Special moments aren’t nearly as special unless we share it with someone we care about, and who cares about us.

Graduation, or receiving an award, isn’t as much fun if you’re not surrounded by people who are cheering you on and are celebrating with you.

Learning to love well and learning to be loved well is a worthwhile endeavour of a lifetime. We have had several funerals of late, and we have remembered some wonderful people, and much of what we recall as significant about a life is how they loved, how they were a good friend, how they by their words and actions blessed us as a church, as a community, as family and friends.

The Apostle Paul tells us that without love we are nothing, none of our accomplishments matter without love, and I think we know that.

Life isn't good without people in our lives who love us and who we love – friends, and family.

Jesus tells us that we will fulfill all righteousness, we will fulfill the whole of God's commands when we fully love God, and fully love one another.

In the paraphrase from The Message, Jesus said:

“The first in importance is, ‘Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and

energy.’ And here is the second: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’

Simple words to hear and learn, understand and even memorize, but challenging to live.

Love the Lord God with all your **passion** and **prayer** and **intelligence** and **energy**.

This is every day, for all your life, way to live before God and with God.

Now I don’t know about you, but I don’t find loving God consistently, steadfastly, with all my passion, prayer, intelligence and energy very easy.

What I can do it is thank God for the things I see, and cultivate gratefulness, I can remember God’s faithfulness to me and remember God’s promises.

But we have another great help in this endeavour of learning to love God.

We have the Holy Spirit.

In the Triune God of love, the Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Son with a perfect love.

The Trinity is in perfect mutual love, and if we ask, the Holy Spirit will teach us to love God with all our energy, passion, prayer and intelligence. And over a life-time, with God's help, we learn to love God.

It's like a child learning to love a parent, only more so for God's love is always first, and God's love for us is perfect.

We learn a love that is deep, deep trust of God, like going home, restfulness, a relationship of complete acceptance, and there is a security in God's love because God is never grumpy, never too busy, always steadfast in loyal love.

You come to know you are always welcome, God always want to hear from you, is always willing your good, cheering you on, that God is for you.

Our love is always a response to God's great and perfect love.

Love is work, always.

It calls me to sharing my whole self with God, coming honestly and developing my relationship with God.

Relationship need time, and so daily I spend time with God, taking the relationship seriously - not

flippantly – delighting in the relationship of being together, learning about each other.

God doesn't learn new things about us, but we learn new things about ourselves as we always do when we are with others.

We learn about God, who God truly is, when we spend time with God and read God's word.

And then there is the second half of Jesus' command.

For we can't love God without learning to love God's people who are made in God's image.

We are to love each other, as we love ourselves. And immediately there is a problem, for we don't love ourselves very well some of us.

We don't know how to love ourselves, our inclinations are often wrong.

And so we look to Jesus for how to love ourselves and how to love each other.

Jesus loved his enemies.

God's love is generous, indiscriminately generous.

The whole story of the Bible is about God's indiscriminate love for Israel and for all people.

We've been called to be a mirror of God's love and care for the world.

What is God like? Loyal love and faithfulness.
Love, generosity and enduring commitment.
Deep personal care for his people.
God loves because it is God's character to love, it has nothing to do with our deserving.

God loves because of who God is.
We learn to love, because that is who we are.
As we abide in Jesus, and his love for us, we are transformed into people who know how to love ourselves and how to love one another.

This is the work of a lifetime, learning to love, learning to care, every day we have opportunities to grow in love of God, and one another.

I can think of nothing more difficult, nor can I think of anything more wonderful.

Thanks be to God!