

July 10, 2016 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Old Testament Reading=Deuteronomy 30: 9-14

Responsive Reading=Psalm 25: 1-10

Epistle Reading=Colossians 1: 1-14

Gospel Reading=Luke 10: 25-37

Sermon Title= No, The Word is Very Close to You

By Rev. James A. Gardner

I love our Old Testament lesson. Moses gets a little sarcastic. He reads them the law and then says, “Hey guys, this is not rocket science, you know it and can quote it.” In the New Revised Translation it says that it is in your heart and in your mouth. He says, “Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us, so we may hear it and observe it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it? It is in your heart and in your mouth.”

Hey guys it is right here and it is easy. Our Psalm reading says that not only is it easy but we have a leader who will guide us through it. “Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs

sinner in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.”

I say that the law of God is easy but for generations Jews and Christians have been over thinking it.

This is evident in our Gospel lesson.

“Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”

Lawyers are supposed to be smart and the answer he gives is right on. He should have left it right there, but he wanted to show off so he says, “But who is my neighbor?”

At another time Jesus had said that the two great commandments were love God and love you neighbor as yourself. At that time Jesus went on to say that, “On these two commandments all of the laws of God are based.”

This means that this is the litmus test for all the laws of God.

In the story of the Good Samaritan this test is made painfully clear.

It was the law that a priest could not go into the temple and conduct a service if he touched a dead person or animal until he was ritually cleansed. Also the Levite who was supposed to

assist the priest in the service could not do his duty if he was not ritually clean. This guy on the side of the road looked as if he could be dead. The Levite even took a closer look.

Neither of these guys checked the litmus test for when and where to obey a law of God. Love thy neighbor as yourself is a more important law than keeping yourself clean so you can participate in a worship service.

If any of you are ever faced with a choice of saving a life or hearing me preach I sure hope you will choose to save a life.

Besides, Marcy will put my sermon on the internet anyway.

Any who.

Jesus said that he did not come to replace the law but he came to fulfill the law.

A lot of good people say you don't have to go to church or be an active Christian to go to heaven; all you have to do is to obey the Golden Rule, i.e. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." You know what? They are half right. They just forgot that other part of the litmus test, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all of your soul and with all of your mind and with all of your strength."

Another great man once said, and I paraphrase this because I forgot the exact words and who said it, "Preach the good word of Jesus Christ at all times, and if you have to, use words."

Jesus never told a Pharisee or a scribe that they were wrong when they quoted a law. Jesus told the legal scholars that they were hypocrites because even they did not obey the law in all circumstances. “Who would not get an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath?” or “Where does it say that you cannot do good on the Sabbath?”

It is not whether the law is the law, rather it is that law appropriate at that time and place and circumstance?

No, the answer is very close to you. It is in your heart and in your mouth. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.

Do this and you will live.

That ain't rocket science man; that is God with you till the end of the age.

Hallelujah and Amen.