



## **The Most Important Commandments of the Law**

### **Dear Members of Trinity UMC:**

One of the teachers of the Law came to Jesus and heard Jesus and others debating. The interpreter of the Law, noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "It is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but Him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mark 12:28-34). The gospel of Mark tells us about this incident when Jesus was asked about the first and most important commandment of the Law.

The love for God and neighbors, according to Charles Guignebert, is necessary to extend this love toward those who refuse to accept our love and therefore, by refusing to accept our love, they attempt to harm us. So, the love for God and the love for neighbors are essential commandments for us to keep in touch with the source of power, God. Also, this is a demonstration of the type of religious practice we must follow up with, which is according to God's instructions.

Finally, this teacher of the Law received the Lord's answers, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Being far or near doesn't matter. What really is important is to be **in** the kingdom. To belong to the kingdom and become an active participant in His kingdom is what really matters. It could be considered as tragic being near the kingdom and at the end of life discovering that we do not belong to it. Life in the kingdom is manifested when we love God. It means we enjoy having fellowship with Him, and a strong desire to know more about Him. As we learn more about His divine will we decide to trust and obey Him more and more. Loving God and loving our neighbors is the commandment that will never wither, or get older and obsolete.

The kingdom manifestation is demonstrated by the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is based on the love God has for us and the love we direct toward God and our neighbors. This love is the only sacrifice acceptable to God and we may do well to extend this love to all our neighbors.

I hope you enjoy this season with both outside and inside home activities and enjoy the beauty of God's creation. Please, do not miss church service this coming communion Sunday. It is time to return home for spiritual nourishment and Christian fellowship.

*Pastor Rey Díaz*