

The God I Believe in : (32nd Sunday)

So let me ask you ! Did you do home work ? Yes homework on the Gospel of last week ? And the additional question I gave you regarding 'your Blind Spots' did you ask somebody for help on that Your spouse or a trusted friend ! Remember I said 'we all have blind spots' every single one of us. They are practices or habits that we have picked up along the way and we have zero access to them unless a good and trusty friend gives us that information. Many will continue to have those Blind-Spots their whole life unless a faithful friend gives them that information This is an established fact in the Behavioral World. It is a part of everybody's life ... just like a part of our DNA.

If nobody shares that information with me I will continue to live those realities throughout my life ! Now it is not easy to receive that information a loving, caring environment has got to be present in order to share such essential information. It is very courageous to seek and ask a trusted one for that information and then be willing to deal with it.

That leads me back to last week's Gospel and I would like to connect it with this week's Gospel. Last week, it was the story of a scribe asking Jesus, "Which is the first of all the Commandments?"

Jesus answers clearly and directly :

“.... The Lord Our God is Lord alone ! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all of your strength. The second is this : You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

What an instruction from the Master !

He has just taken all 613 precepts of the Law and merged them into 2 Maybe 3 Love of God ! Love of Neighbor, Love of Self.

What great Wisdom ! Absolutely and profoundly true.

One would have to say that there are a lot of people that would take exception to Jesus' answer !

Many people would fear that all of the other commandments wouldn't be fulfilled. And too often, we make ourselves the Guardians of The Commandments.

For example, a huge array of people are very attached to a commandment that everybody need to get what is due to them their “come-uppance” So many people are so deeply committed to that process that they are not going to wait on God They want to deliver the “come-uppance” themselves Now the long and the short of that reality is that they are failing in all three of the areas we mentioned (God, Self, and Neighbor) It is as if God needed my help to accomplish this task of Fairness and Justice. He really doesn't !

The Jewish people has 613 precepts in their law The Torah ! Many of them knew each of those precepts, and were committed to following them as best they could but they were often waylaid, just as we are, trying to follow their own wants, needs and desires.

Look at Jesus in today's Gospel — it is so clear :
“Beware of the scribes, who like to go around in long robes and accept greetings in the marketplaces, seats of honor in synagogues, and places of honor at banquets. They devour the houses of widows and, as a pretext, recite lengthy prayers.”

Wow now that is some challenging language But what does it all mean ? It means very simply, that I, as a self-proclaimed Christian, can live comfortably with genuine hypocrisy in my life !

If I am not attentive to myself, and to my own personal behavior, I may be no better than the Scribe In other words I know the Law, the commandments, and all of the precepts, but that does NOT mean I know The Lord !
(I combined these thoughts with my writings in the bulletin this week, and will continue next week I invite you to read along with me in the bulletin and to use it as Home-Work in your own personal Life.)

Jesus moves on directly to the issue of “Generosity” ! One of our powerful words on the back wall ! Jesus invites the disciples to pull closer to Him and observe just what He was talking about ! The Scribes and Pharisees, in general, were not a very generous body of people

Jesus says of them :

“They tie up heavy burdens, hard to carry, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move their finger to help them.” That is hard and tough language. It is possible that such inattentiveness might have been a Blind-Spot for some of them at least. They could very easily have developed such a practice over the course of their lives, and Nobody ever pointed it out to them !

Can you try to imagine how powerful that information would be to one who is not aware of that practice in their personal lives ?

For Example, you might say : Pat, do you notice that you demand a huge amount of those who work for you, but you are not very generous in helping out yourself It would be so much better and so much more helpful if people could see you pitching-in. I believe it would bring greater results both for you and for them ! Generosity goes a long way and that is what Jesus is pointing out to the disciples Look at this Widow she gets it ! She gets it and these others don't get it !

They use the Law to guide and direct everybody else, but they act as if it doesn't apply to themselves.

Home work : This week I would like to invite you to consider this question — In what ways in my life am I failing to get it ? In what ways am I laying up burdens for others to carry and not lifting a finger to help them ? Againshould you need some help Check with your Spouse, significant other, or a Trusted Friend !