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After the 10 Commandments, What's Next?

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Last Sunday at St. Albans during the coffee hour, quite a few parishioners were reading the Edmonds Beacon. Betty Bell has been faithfully bringing the paper to church, and consequently my column has been read by quite a few members.



In conversation last Sunday I said to our Rector, Fr. John, "I've now completed teaching the 10 Commandments so I'll have to think of another topic."

He said grinning, "Is there an 11th?"

I responded with a smile. "Well, I've been thinking a good follow-up to the Ten Commandments, through Moses in the Old Testament, would be to give some of Jesus' Commandments in the New Testament."

Now I'll continue my thoughts with you, the reader. I know Bible commentators do not normally describe what Jesus says as "His Commandments." For instance: "The 12 Commandments of Jesus are..." and then a list.

We know all His words are important. Yet what I consider Commandments by Jesus are concise statements He made that are very emphatic. This will be the basis of my new series.

A good quote from Jesus says it well: "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love,

just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" – (John 15:10).

Jesus goes on to say, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" – (John 15:12). Here is that most wonderful word: "Love."

Life giving,
Other centered,
Victorious living,
Everlasting love.

I think God sets standards too high for us to reach so that we'll keep on our toes reaching for the heights.

To love as He loved us is to be willing to lay down our lives for one another. That's going all the way with love. Some have done this in a heroic moment on the battlefield, or a mother has when giving birth to a baby, or a father when searching for his lost child in a hurricane or snow bank.

Even humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers taught students to treat clients with "unconditional regard." That is well said and a good goal.

But even better is Jesus' concept that we should treat one another with "unconditional love."

There are three levels of love in Greek: "eros," "phileo" and "agape" or "agapao." The first is physical love, the second is friendship, and the third is self-sacrificial, unconditional love.

In the gospel of John, chapter 21, there is the story of reconciliation of Peter and our resurrected Lord Jesus.

Peter saw a man on the beach who called out, "Cast your net on

the other side of the boat!" As soon as they followed His instructions, the disciples miraculously had an overflowing catch of 153 fish!

Realizing it was the Lord, Peter jumped in the water to go to Him.

Jesus had been cooking fish and bread so was able to feed the disciples right away. When they were full and relaxed, Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love 'agapao' Me (love Me self-sacrificially) more than these (monetary value of the fish)?"

Peter answered, "Lord, you know I (phileo) like you as a friend."

Jesus asks again, "Peter do you 'agapao' Me?"

Peter answers, "Jesus You know that I 'phileo' You."

A third time Jesus asks, "Peter do you 'phileo' like Me?" Peter with grief answered, "Lord, you know that I 'phileo' like You."

By the third time Jesus revealed to Peter that his love for Him was diminishing. (Author's paraphrase.) We too need to check our love for God and see if it is smoldering or if we're really on fire for Him.

Fortunately, a short time later the Day of Pentecost arrived and Peter's love for God would once again, and forever, be "agapao!"

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