



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast

June 23, 2024

“The First Invitation Challenge: I am the Lord your God”

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
(Matthew 22:36-40)

As a child when I first encountered the Ten Commandments in Sunday school, I found them, frankly, something to be feared. Whenever I heard the words “the Ten Commandments,” I immediately conjured up the image of a list of “Thou Shalt Nots,” cautiously wondering which I had broken and which would be written down in God’s book for eternity! Even today when I challenge myself to list these ten things, automatically I start to use that long-ago-learned King James language “Thou shalt...” and “Thou shalt not...”.

Maybe instead of a divine checklist to follow we might look at these “Ten Words” (“Ten Words” or “Ten Things” as translated from the Hebrew) as challenges and an invitation to engage with God, a way to pursue an on-going relationship with our creator and walk our life-long journey during which we must cope with really hard things in life: honoring our parents, dealing with adultery, getting out of the rat race one day a week, not feeling jealous of what other people have, avoiding malicious gossip, and not embracing vindictive anger.

The first commandment (Exodus 20:2-3), *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me”* has profound implications for us today. A way to read this is “I am God. I created, not just you, but everything. I have given you freedom from worldly things which can enslave you. I have been and will be with you always in good and bad times, and I want you to live a good life. Will you let me lead you?” At this point we must ask ourselves – am I willing to live focused on learning what God is and means to me?

Engaging in self-examination and personal accountability are our first steps to accepting this invitation/challenge. These actions are crucial aspects of Christian faith and practice. For Christians, the first commandment’s call to have no other gods before the one true God serves as a foundation for living a life aligned with divine principles. This commandment invites believers to continually assess their actions, motivations, and priorities to ensure they are in accordance with God’s will.

These practices foster humility, repentance, and a deeper commitment to following Jesus’ example of love, compassion, and righteousness. By regularly engaging in personal accountability and self-examination, we strive to live authentically and grow closer to God, embodying the values of our faith in every aspect of our lives. May we accept that challenge/invitation! Amen.

Prayer Box: pray for the safety of those threatened by fires in New Mexico and California; pray for all first responders; pray for healing for Elizabeth, Joyce, Debbie, Joe, Holland, Gail, Mia, Patti, Florence, and John; pray for an end to the divisiveness our country; pray for peace in the Middle East.

Lord, hear our prayers!