



Come and See!

Week of July 13, 2025, 15 OT

The Word...

"For this command that I enjoin on you today
is not too mysterious and remote for you.
It is not up in the sky, that you should say, 'Who will go up in the sky
to get it for us and tell us of it, that we may carry it out?'
Nor is it across the sea, that you should say,
'Who will cross the sea to get it for us and tell us of it,
that we may carry it out?' No, it is something very near to you,
already in your mouths and in your hearts; you have only to carry it out"
(Dt 30:10-14).

"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"
He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy."
Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise"
(Lk 10:25-37).

Pondering the Word...

The word for the week is "simple."

The preceding seventeen chapters of Deuteronomy are not so simple, and if you combine them with parts of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, you wind up with 613 commandments (mitzvot). Wow! It's no wonder a thousand years later, the people kneeling and prostrate on the ground weep as Ezra reads the rediscovered law! (Neh 8:1-9). Aside from the realization of their ignorance, that's a long time to be on your knees!

The point Moses is trying to make, the point Jesus is trying to make in his parable is that deep within our hearts, we are made in God's image. We have the capacity for mercy and to love as God loves. Yes, the rules and regulations, the trials we experience, the day-in, day-out grind can cause us to create hoops we have to jump through or walls we have to scale. But we don't have to memorize every prayer or all the specific laws, we don't have to have all the "I s" dotted and "T s" crossed. In fact, doing so, we risk "swallowing—and choking on—the camel" because we are too busy "straining the gnat" (Mt 23:24).

No, it is something already near to your heart. It's simple. It's called love. For everyone, even (or especially) for those who are different from you. You just have to carry it out.

Living the Word...

Spend time this week considering the sources of complexity in your life. There are plenty to go around! In times of chaos, people of conscience can fall prey to a heightened need for control, even to circle the wagons and protect what is theirs. It can cause us to get mired in detail and lose sight of the big picture. Instead of waking each morning to the news or to the tasks and anxieties ahead, start the day in prayer. Always start with God. Let prayer be simple: "Lord, help me to love today." As you go about the day, stop and check in every so often: "How have I simply loved today?" Give thanks to God each night for the love that lights your life.

Personal Reflections and Ideas ... _____

Mon, Jul 14: *"Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man... will receive a righteous man's reward"* (Mt 10:34-11:1).

This verse is in keeping with our reflection about simplicity. Of course, the preceding verses are anything but simple: Jesus bringing the sword but not peace, losing one's life to save it. Jesus is just pointing out how human beings tend to behave. He instead calls us to simply welcome and to love. **Provision: Be a welcoming presence.** God knows we need it! We may not realize the person we receive is a prophet or a righteous person or disciple (*"Lord, when did we see you..."*) We may look to scholarly and pious people to be prophets and righteous, but instead, look into the eyes of the poor, the refugee, the rejected. They are often the real prophets. Be a welcoming presence to them. You will surely not lose your reward.

Tue, Jul 15: *"In your great kindness answer me with your constant help"* (Ps 69).

Note: this doesn't say anything about granting me my specific prayer. In this case, the psalmist is lamenting about sinking in "the abysmal swamp." While we might want to pray "get me the heck out of this swamp," what we hear is a prayer for help with the struggle, protection in the midst of affliction. **Provision: Pray for God's help.** I know people who have given up on faith because a particular fervent prayer was not answered; people who quote Jesus' words, *"If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it"* (Jn14:14) as a way to dismiss him. But all prayers must start with these simple words: *"God's will be done,"* followed with a prayer for God's kindness and help in the struggle. Remember this quote from Anthony de Mello, SJ: *"If you had the choice, which would you choose: the granting of your petition or the grace to be peaceful whether it is granted or not?"*

Wed, Jul 16: *"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike"* (Mt 11:25-27).

Here's that simple theme again: it is to *"the infants, the babes,"* the childlike that God has revealed the essence and true meaning of the law and the prophets in Jesus. But I wonder: Is it that God has hidden things from the wise and learned, or is it that the wise and learned who, in their very grown-up need to answer every question, have closed their hearts and minds to learn something new? **Provision: Look at the world through a child's eyes.** Go "marveling" today. Look for God's majesty everywhere. Praise God. *'My head [and my heart are] bursting with the joy of the unknown'* (Rumi, adapted).

Thurs, Jul 17: *"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves"* (Mt 11:28-30).

As I write this, I have just read the news the bill that will slash benefits for the poor in the US has been passed. The burden I feel—the disappointment, sadness, and discouragement—is *nothing* compared to the labor and burden of those negatively impacted by this heartless action. **Provision: Be compassionate...with others and with yourself.** As people of goodwill, we can't allow our discouragement to hinder our efforts to reach out and protect others. But let's not forget that Jesus went off to the lonely place often to receive strength and courage from God. This is not a time to lick our wounds, but to offer them to God and ask for provisions for the fight. Write a psalm. Express your frustration to God. Then praise God and ask for God's constant help.

Fri, Jul 18: *"How shall I make a return to the LORD for all the good he has done for me?"* (Ps 116).

Provision: "Call upon the name of the Lord." It's that simple. Not a bunch of rules and theories. Accept God's love and mercy. Call upon God when you are weary or in trouble. Love others. Say thank you. It is not up in the sky or across the sea. It is in your heart.

Sat, Jul 19: *The children of Israel set out...about six hundred thousand men on foot, not counting the little ones. A crowd of mixed ancestry also went up with them* (Ex 12:37-42).

Well, this is interesting: "a crowd of mixed ancestry." Hebrew scholar Robert Alter writes the most accurate English translation would be "riffraff." I guess that makes us all "riffraff." Isn't that great?! **Provision: Welcome everyone!** My grandfather used to say if you go back far enough in any family, you're bound to find a horse thief! Heck, look at Jesus' heritage...lots of big-time sinners! Nationalism, white supremacy, and ethnic discrimination are not of God. God welcomes all to his holy mountain. To do otherwise is the sin of pride, putting ourselves above God. It's simple: all are welcome.