



MARCH 22, 2020

# LOVE FIRST, FIRST LOVE

WEEK DEVOTIONAL BASED ON SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:00AM AT  
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERAN-BARRON.ORG OR ON THE RADIO 97.7FM

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. Amen.

If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand? Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess. Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned away from you, knowingly and unknowingly. We have wandered from your resurrection life. We have strayed from your love for all people. Turn us back to you, O God. Give us new hearts and right spirits, that we may find what is pleasing to you and dwell in your house forever. Amen.

Receive good news: God turns to you in love. "I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live," says our God. All your sin is forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the free and abounding gift of God's grace for you. Amen.

## MARK 12:28-31

28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

# REFLECTION

BY PASTOR RON MATHEWS

A scribe comes to Jesus and asks him what the greatest commandment is, as if we should only follow the “really important” commandments and then ignore the rest! Jesus eloquently avoids this trap by responding with an answer that summarizes the Ten Commandments.

The first three of the ten Commandments are about our

relationship with God (Exodus 20:4-11):

1. You should have no other gods
2. Don't take the name of God in vain
3. Do remember the sabbath day and keep it holy

The second seven are about our relationship to neighbor (Exodus 20:12-17):

1. You should honor your father and mother
  2. Don't murder
  3. Don't commit adultery
  4. Don't steal
  5. Don't bear false witness
  6. Don't covet neighbor's house
  7. Don't covet neighbor's spouse, family, or possessions

This is the greatest commandment, that you change the way you live and live entirely for God and others...that is, not for yourself. Every action you take should be at the care and consideration of others and of God.

Love with our heart, soul, mind, strength.  
Love with our entire being.

HEART = emotion

Our heart draws us into a deeper relationship of connectedness.

SOUL = what makes you, you

The genuine article, no faux investment here. You are engaged in the ways that you can, in ways that you are able, in ways that speak uniquely to you.

MIND = logic

We are thinking people, filled with questions and ponderings. Ask, think it through, consider all the angles.

STRENGTH = focused power

Conviction. Determination. Discipline. From the Greek word for dynamite, this is best described as all of your power to be focus on achieving your goal.

The line between loving God and loving others is blurry as they are connected together. We love others by loving God. We love God by loving others.

The love of God and the love of Neighbor is linked together...giving from our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One.

Love God with your entire self. Filled with trust and hope that comes only from the cross, hold nothing back.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord of love, you have taught us that love is your greatest commandment. Teach us to love as unconditionally as you love us. Amen.

## LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

