

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time – February 15, 2026 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Sirach 15:15-20

If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too shall live; he has set before you fire and water to whichever you choose, stretch forth your hand. Before man are life and death, good and evil, whichever he chooses shall be given him. Immense is the wisdom of the Lord; he is mighty in power, and all-seeing. The eyes of God are on those who fear him; he understands man's every deed. No one does he command to act unjustly, to none does he give license to sin.

Psalm: Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

R. (1b) Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Blessed are they whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.
Blessed are they who observe his decrees,
who seek him with all their heart.

R. Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

You have commanded that your precepts
be diligently kept.
Oh, that I might be firm in the ways
of keeping your statutes!

R. Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Be good to your servant, that I may live
and keep your words.
Open my eyes, that I may consider
the wonders of your law.

R. Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Instruct me, O LORD, in the way of your statutes,
that I may exactly observe them.
Give me discernment, that I may observe your law
and keep it with all my heart.

R. Blessed are they who follow the law of the Lord!

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

Brothers and sisters: We speak a wisdom to those who are mature, not a wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. Rather, we speak God's wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew; for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: *What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him*, this God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God.

Gospel: Matt 5:17-37

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *You shall not kill; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment*. But I say to you, whoever is angry with brother will be liable to judgment; and whoever says to brother, 'Raca,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin; and whoever says, 'You fool,' will be liable to fiery Gehenna. Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Settle with your opponent quickly while on the way to court. Otherwise your opponent will hand you over to the judge, and the judge will hand you over to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Amen, I say to you, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny. "You have heard that it was said, *You shall not commit adultery*. But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into Gehenna.

"It was also said, *Whoever divorces his wife must give her a bill of divorce*. But I say to you, whoever divorces his wife - unless the marriage is unlawful - causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. "Again you have heard that it was said to your ancestors, *Do not take a false oath, but make good to the Lord all that you vow*. But I say to you, do not swear at all; not by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. Let your 'Yes' mean 'Yes,' and your 'No' mean 'No.' Anything more is from the evil one."

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

When I was a boy, my brother being four years older, he and I and our parents heard a reading at Mass that included the word *raqa*. Since we had plenty of laughter within us, and since the reading told us one must not say *raqa* to his brother (since it meant “thou fool”) obviously the minute we left church we began to say *raqa* to each other. With impunity and humor, since we were brothers in the strict sense of the word. It did not last, of course. This unusual word, *raqa*, is used in today’s Gospel (or at least in the “long version” of the Gospel (and it is long!)). I wonder if that is not the way a person or a people grows up. I mean the progression from an uncomplicated, grinning approach to the commandments, to a more nuanced one, and, if they can hang into true maturity, to an experience of the inside of the commandments. That progression is one way of looking at the readings for this Sunday. In the First Reading, the writer speaks in very plain terms, as a father might speak to a son or daughter. “If you choose, you can keep the commandments—they will save you. If you trust in God, you too shall live.” These words are an echo of the last of the five great opening books in the Jewish testament: I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. (Deut 30: 19-20) This is not complicated, not too mysterious and remote for people. Maybe even we boys would have understood. We would have recognized “life and death, good and evil.”

According to Paul, the commandments became “a wisdom to those who are mature, ... God’s wisdom, mysterious, hidden, which God predetermined before the ages ...” (Second Reading). Eons later, Jesus came along. He had grown up. One by one, he took the various laws, in all their externality, and drew out their inside roots. One injunction had been against killing. The inside of that law is: do not ever act out of anger at your brother or sister. Not even the word *raqa* now should be spoken. Then, you shall not commit adultery. The inside of that law is, be pure enough to not even look lustfully at another person besides your mate. And divorce: the interior law is to stay faithful and loving within your marriage relationship. Finally, the matter of oaths. We could talk of these for pages, but here we just realize that people today use warrants, such as, “... in the name of God,” or “OMG,” (which stands for O, my GOD!), or “By God ...” Jesus talks of these simply: you are trying to make up for your weakness by putting almighty power behind your words. Just say yes or no, and mean it. Be real. Why does Jesus dig so deep? Because “the Spirit scrutinizes everything, even the depths of God” (Second Reading)! The inside of the law is written in Jesus’ heart. As you and I grow up, let it be written in us too.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Which do you choose, life or death? Good or evil? Do you always know which is which? When you don’t know for sure do you trust in God and go with your best guess? Why did God give us free choice?
2. Discuss a beautiful scene in nature that you like. Or your favorite painting, or your most preferred music. Take your time. Now read from the Second Reading what St. Paul tells us God has prepared for those who love him. Can you sense something of what that will be?
3. Jesus is critical of the Pharisees’ type of righteousness, which focuses on externals. They make sure everyone sees when they fast, pray on street corners, wash hands, etc. How do these things relate to the inner Spirit of the law? How do they relate to loving God and neighbor?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations. *Some Suggestions:*

1. Make a positive effort to treat another with human dignity, especially someone to whom you may have been unkind.
2. Pray daily for God’s grace to correct or strengthen your inner attitudes concerning one particular person.
3. Ask people you know how they would define Christian morality. Share your beliefs and learning with them.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following: Jesus, our Lord and Savior, you have given us yourself in Eucharist. You are with us to strengthen us in our love for one another. Help us acknowledge our need for change. Your gospel is our New Law, our New Covenant. We need your help to change our lives to be gospel people who truly live in love and holiness. It is through your love that we can become who we are called to be. We make our prayer united with you, the Spirit, and the Father. Amen

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen