

Sermon Proper 25A, 10/25/2026

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https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Pentecost/AProp25_RCL.html

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, **make us love what you command**; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Leviticus 19:1-2,15-18

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Matthew 22:34-46

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."**...

Pharisee asks: "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

Jesus answers, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'** ("Shema", Deuteronomy 6:5) **This is the greatest and first**

commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Leviticus 19:18–Today’s 1st Reading) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

2 Commandments provide: Scaffolding for a Faithful Life:

VERTICAL: God

HORIZONTAL: Neighbor

VERTICAL: LOVE GOD

- **Deuteronomy 6:5 (Hebrew MT):**
 - *Lēvāv* (Heart) | *Nephesh* (Soul) | *****Me’od** (Might/Strength)
- **Matthew 22:37 (Greek NT):**
 - *Kardia* (Heart) | *Psyche* (Soul) | *****Dianoia** (Mind)

(Jesus is quoting from) **Deuteronomy 6:5** (*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might"*)

HEART: (Levav/Kardia)

- In ancient Hebrew psychology, the heart (*lev* or *levav*) was the seat of intellect, will, thoughts, and decisions. ("Heart-Mind")
- **Heart** (*kardia*): The center of human will, thoughts, and interior choices.

SOUL : (Nephesh/Psyche)

- The word *nephesh* is often translated as "soul," but it literally means "**throat,**" "**breath,**" or "**the whole living being.**" It refers to your entire physical existence, your life force, and your vitality.
- **Soul** (*psyche*): The life force, breath, and total physical existence.

***MIGHT (Deuteronomy) vs. MIND (Matthew)

Why the difference? Shift from Hebrew to Greek (language AND worldview).

- (**Me’od** (Might/Strength) : **HEBREW:** Ancient rabbinic tradition (found in the Talmud) frequently translates *me'od* as **wealth, property, and influence.**) *Me'od* is almost always used as an adverb in Hebrew meaning "**very**" or "**exceedingly.**" Deuteronomy turns this modifier into a noun, effectively telling the reader to love God with their "**muchness.**";

- **Mind** (*dianoia*): **GREEK** The intellect and understanding. reason, logic, and critical thought.

Mark and Luke handle this shift by including both "mind" (*dianoia*) and "strength" (*ischys*). I suggest we do the same: Heart, Soul, Mind, AND Might

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT (possibly invite verbal responses):

What would it look like for YOU to LOVE GOD with all your

HEART: will, thoughts, and decisions.

SOUL: breath, vitality, physical life force

MIND: intellect, reason, critical thinking

MIGHT: wealth, influence and your intensity and “muchness”

HORIZONTAL-LOVE NEIGHBOR

Leviticus 19:18 : **You shall love your neighbor as yourself**

What God says to Moses in Leviticus, Jesus says to the people in the Gospels:

Leviticus 19:18 is part of “Holiness Code”---links spiritual/ritual commandments with social/ethical commandments—inseparable.

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT:

What would it look like for YOU (as an individual) to LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and for US (as a church, a community, a country) to LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS

HEART: will, thoughts, and decisions

SOUL: breath, vitality, physical life force

MIND: intellect, reason, critical thinking

MIGHT: wealth, influence, and our intensity and “muchness”

CENTER-LOVE SELF

Leviticus 19:18 : **You shall love your neighbor as yourself**

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT:

What would it look like for YOU to LOVE YOURSELF with all your

HEART: will, thoughts, and decisions.

SOUL: breath, vitality, physical life force

MIND: intellect, reason, critical thinking

MIGHT: wealth, influence, intensity and “muchness”

CONCLUSION:

Loving God, Loving Neighbor, Loving Self—inextricable link



CROSS SYMBOL can serve as a reminder

We worship a Trinity of persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

We LIVE by this Trinity of Action—Love God, Love Neighbor, Love Self

Loving God & Loving our Neighbor are not at ODDS with one another, nor are they at odds with loving ourselves.

Because we love God, we love our neighbors and we love God **by** loving our neighbors. When we love ourselves, we can more easily love God & neighbor, and when we love God & neighbor, we can more easily love ourselves. It's ALL CONNECTED.

In the place where Love of God and Love of Neighbor intersect, that is the place where we FIND our true self, our MOST abundant life, our greatest joy and connection, and authenticity and flourishing.

Jesus says to us today: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Love God, Love Neighbor—This is the Cross on which “Hang all the Law & the Prophets”,

Love God, Love Neighbor—This is the Cross on which Jesus offers his life for the life of the World.

Love God, Love Neighbor—This is the Cross on which all OUR hopes, our hearts, our identities, our lives, our church, our world, and our future hang—even to this very day. It is on this Cross, in the place where Love of God and Love of Neighbor intersect, we discover and experience eternal Life.

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” and ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

These are the First and the Greatest Commandments.

This the Law that governs our lives.

These are our instructions, our pattern, our road map for life

Join me in praying this

BODY PRAYER (3x)

Love God

Love Neighbor

Love Yourself

With all your Heart

and Soul,

and Mind

And Might

AMEN

