

This is an outline from the sermon on February 19<sup>th</sup>, rather than the text I usually publish. After completing the 8<sup>th</sup> draft at 7 am Sunday, and still not pleased with the result, I preached this sermon more extemporaneously. I hope you can make some sense of this.

Blessings on your journey with God,

Lynn+

1. One of those weeks. Too many things in the readings I wanted to address.
2. “You be holy as I am holy,” from Leviticus. “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect,” from Matthew.
  - a. Perfect = perfect fit, not perfect score
  - b. Holy = practicing the love, compassion, mercy, creative power of God.
3. 10 commandments help us to create the kind of community that will allow us to best as we can, practice the love, compassion, mercy, creative power of God.
  - a. “Love God, love neighbor, the rest is details.”
4. Details in Leviticus, for example: suitable to a community that lives in a rural area, there are poor to be respected, cared for, and even your occasional refugee and alien wanders through: for the time being, they are members of the community, so you take care of them.
5. Centuries later Jews are living in a different situation, so there are different details. How to live the command love God and love others? What do the details look like?
6. Jesus gives us some instructions that on the face, sound bizarre. It even sounds like he is wanting us to roll over in the face of evil, and be doormats to those who would oppress us.
  - a. Turn the other cheek and its meaning in that culture.
  - b. Hand over your cloak as well and its meaning in that culture.

- c. This is a martial arts kind of resisting evil: not engaging in violence, but acting so as to maintain human dignity. The perpetrator of the violence will be shamed by these responses.
  - d. But the idea is the same: we are loving God and others by maintaining our own dignity, and by refusing to collude with evil by engaging with it, escalating it. Which is what evil usually wants. Evil wants to be the center of our attention to pick fights and actually, to alienate us from each other.
7. Which brings us to today. We are such a divided country. In this time in our own time, what would loving God and loving neighbor's look like?
8. What about picking up, intentionally, our Anglican heritage of holy dialogue? Partners keep talking until the Holy Spirit provides a way forward. Richard Hooker says, we do that not for the sake of compromise, but for the sake of comprehension: for the sake of most fully understanding a problem so that we can come to a best solution.
- a. We are shy. We have our political differences. But what if we could take on the challenge of learning to talk to each other respectfully. What if we could take on the challenges of learning to listen well to each other, to walk in their shoes for a bit, and then let them walk in ours.

Maybe that is how God can use us in this broken world. Maybe that is how we can become a holy community, dedicated to the learning the details of loving God and each other in this time of our nation's, and our parish's history.

I'd like to explore that with you, but I need to know if you think it makes sense.