

**Lessons for The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**

**October 29, 2023**

Psalm 1 ~ *The blessed way of the righteous is contrasted with the way of the wicked which perishes.*

Leviticus 19:1–2, 15–18 ~ *God's relationship to us defines our dealings with our neighbors.*

1 Thessalonians 2:1–13 ~ *In order to share the Gospel of God, Paul was gentle yet straightforward.*

Matthew 22:34–46 ~ *Love for our neighbor flows from our love for God.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** Total Love; Total Commitment

God commanded us, His people, to be holy because we belong to the holy God! To be holy is to be wholly committed to God in heart and soul and mind. Our love for one another will move us to share the news that in Christ Jesus our failure to love and our halfhearted commitment have been overcome. Like the Apostle Paul, we will gladly share the Gospel of forgiveness and our lives of hope with those in need. Jesus taught that our love for God determines how we treat one another, as we recognize our place under the grace of Christ our Lord.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Lord God, only through the love of Christ my Savior am I able to love You with all my heart and soul and mind. Make me just as loving toward all those You love as I have been loved by You. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** Love for our neighbors flows from our love for God and shows itself in how we use the material blessings God has given us to meet the needs of our neighbors.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Our life and our love,  
O Lord, we dedicate to You.  
Sanctify us for Your service  
In all we say and do. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** We approach God's law with the idea of measuring ourselves by it and find some commandments greater than others and some sins more damaging, but Jesus cuts through all our manipulating postures. He lived and died by His love for us and His complete obedience to the Father so that we may enjoy the fruit of His perfect love.

**Questions to Consider:** How to Measure Spiritual Integrity

- What is the pattern or model for a Christian's spiritual life, the center of the heart?
- How can our treatment of the "poor" and "great" betray our spiritual integrity?
- Why does telling the gospel test our motives? How can we guard against impure motives?
- What would a "life worthy of God" look like?

**Bonus on next page:** A Servant Heart

## **A Servant Heart**

*(for Chuck Miller, upon his retirement)*

Beneath a manner of irreverence I found it,  
hidden by a well-worn cloak of casual style,  
there where you keep your former life  
and all the pain that made you who you are,  
a broken soul now healed by God's own grace.

An honest, true and servant heart!

A great compassion freely flows to those  
who feel injustice, heartache, pain, or loss,  
and reaching from the source of love you know,  
you strengthen, love, and comfort them.

And now, although you step beyond familiar paths,  
and walk among a crowd you have not known,  
your words of comfort point to Christ  
to share a strength that you have come to know:  
"With God all things are possible!"

*-- Gilbert A. Franke, 6/27/2015*