



YEAR A – FEBRUARY 16, 2020

Have you ever heard someone say, “I know I'm out of control when I get angry, but I can't change. That's the way I am. It is what it is.”

God tells us that is simply not true. We can change. We have the capacity to change for the better. We also have the capacity to change for the worse.

In the first reading today (Sirach 15:15-20), God tells us, “If you choose to do so, you can keep the commandments. We have the capacity to do that.”

Notice he doesn't say you can keep all of them except the following. There are no exceptions. We are free to choose, but we must accept the consequences. The prophet goes on to say, “God sets before us life and death, good and evil.” We must choose.

Psalm 119 reminds us today that those who follow the way of our Lord will be blessed indeed. If you feel that you are not blessed indeed, maybe it's time to look at the whole picture of your life and decide what needs to be changed. Are you making some wrong choices?

St. Paul reminds us in the second reading (1 Corinthians 6:2-10) that eye has not seen, and ear has not heard what God has ready for those who love him. What God has ready for those who love him has been revealed to us by Jesus.

In the Gospel (Matthew 5:17-37) Jesus speaks to us about his own commandment. Remember in the Scriptures where he says if you love me, you will keep my commandment. Notice, he doesn't say, “You will keep the Ten Commandments.” He says, You will keep my commandment.”

He tells us what his commandment is all about. It is the Commandment of Love - giving oneself to another without expecting anything in return. It means caring about the other more than we care about ourselves. It includes the Ten Commandments, but it goes far beyond them.

Jesus goes so far as to say, “If you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave your gift at the altar and go first to be reconciled with your brother or sister. Then and only then, come back and offer your gift on the altar.” You won't find that in the Ten Commandments, but you do find it in the Commandment of Jesus.

The Scribes and the Pharisees obeyed the Ten Commandments - every one of them - and yet Jesus said, “Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Scribes and the Pharisees you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” What does he mean?

Read the Gospel again. You can find it on our parish website. Then, for a few moments in silence, reflect on the Commandment of Jesus. What does it mean to you?

