

October 8 2017

Reading from the Bible *Exodus 20:1-4*
 Psalm 19
 Matthew 22:34-40

Sermon *You Should and You Shouldn't*

Rules, Rules, Rules. You should do this and you REALLY should do that. You shouldn't do that and you REALLY shouldn't even think about doing that. From day one we hear about the rules.

If you were able to ask my mother, she would probably say that I was the epitome of a terrible two with a few years added on. I know she told me as I was getting ready to go outside to play to stay away from the pile of ashes from where she had been burning leaves because it could still be hot. Did I listen? No, and I have the scar on my ankle to prove it. The ashes were still hot. I am sure she told me to leave the cat alone because it had a mouse and was playing with it. Did I listen? No, I picked up the mouse and it bit me.

I could continue with more did I listen stories but I think you are getting the drift. You don't listen and you pay the consequences. So why did she take time to tell me what not to do? Because she cared.

As Marty read today in the passage from Exodus, God gave to the people of Israel the Ten Commandments. They were the rules that God handed down to the Israelites that they were supposed to use to guide their lives. Why do you think God made the Ten Commandments? Not because He liked to make all these rules for His people to follow but because He cared and because He knew that without any guidelines their lives would be chaos. Can you imagine what it would have been like if there were no rules? Or what it would be like today if there were no rules?

They continue to be the rules that we should use to guide our lives. How long has it been since you read and really thought about the Ten Commandments? Are they are part of our daily lives? If all of us really followed the Ten Commandments, do you think the world would be a better place? I would hope so.

Then we go to Jesus' time with the passage from Matthew. When asked by the Pharisee which commandment in the law was the greatest, Jesus replied with the greatest commandment of all. "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.”

That says it all. If you love God with all your heart, soul, and mind and love your neighbor as yourself, you are following the basics of the Ten Commandments. If you love your neighbor as yourself you wouldn't murder, you wouldn't steal, you wouldn't commit adultery, and you wouldn't lie. You wouldn't do those things to yourself would you? I would hope not.

So, how do we comprehend the chaos that seems to be a part of our world today? It is like people have forgotten about loving thy neighbor as themselves. How else could you walk into a school and start shooting or to shoot into a crowd at a concert? Somewhere, somehow, something got lost in those people's lives. It makes it difficult for those of us who try to follow the commandments or the rules if you will, to make sense of what is happening. We may never be able to make sense of it. Maybe we are not supposed to be able to make sense of it. We need to remember who we are and who we strive to be. We can't let the chaos that surrounds us to change who we are so that we become a part of it. As hard it is sometimes we have to have faith and we have to have hope and we have to find the good in people.

I watch the news on channel two, KREM. The national news on Friday nights always has a segment from Steve Hartman who travels the country looking for a feel good story. They are ones that highlight the good things that someone has done for a stranger, the hope that is placed in a lost person, that type of thing. He can find the good in just about any situation because there is some good in any situation. But this Friday, he highlighted the shooting in Las Vegas and he said that he couldn't find the good this time, there had just been too much of that kind of event. He had no words of hope; this type of event was becoming so commonplace.

His statement saddened me just as much as the event itself saddened me. Where will we be if we all get to the point where we can't find any good?

We have to have faith. We have to remember that God loves us and He cares for us, even during the times of chaos in our lives and those around us. There is good, sometimes it is just hard to see.

As you go about doing what you do in this week to come, keep looking for the good, keep doing the right thing and keep remembering that God is always there even if it is cloudy and dark. Amen.