**What Does The Lord Require?**

**Deuteronomy 10:12-21**

18th Sunday after Trinity

10.03.2021

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Old Testament lesson begins with Moses asking the question, “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you?’ That is indeed an interesting question. It is one that ought to be seriously considered by those who desire to claim to be Christians. It is especially true in the world and cultural climate that we live in today.

In our text, there is really no question mark at the end of that phrase, Moses just continues on. “But to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I'm commanding you today for your good?” It is at the end of his statement that Moses places his the question mark.

We would call this a rhetorical question. What that means is, there is a question asked, but the answer is so blatantly obvious that it is not truly a question.

Maybe you are wondering, is that really true? Is the answer truly obvious?

In answer to that, I direct you to our Gospel lesson. A lawyer from the Pharisees gets up to ask Jesus a question about the law, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus replied 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 great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

So let me ask what Moses asks, “what does the Lord require?” Let us make that more accurate, put a little bit finer point on it, “what does the Lord require of – YOU? That is after all what Moses is getting at when he’s talking to the Israelites, and as it is recorded in Scripture, it is God’s word to you. This question is directly asked of you.

First, you are to fear the Lord your God. You are to revere Him, respect Him, and in fear of His wrath – knowing the damnable consequences of doing otherwise – be obedient to Him.

The next phrase helps to define it further. You are to walk in ALL His ways.

You are not just to walk in His ways when they make you happy.

You are not just to do as He says when it fits your own agenda.

You are not to abide by the laws He has set before you only when they are in agreement with the world's thinking.

He requires you to walk in all His ways – all the time. Full stop! Period! End of discussion!

I know when my dad laid down the rules and I would question them, he would sometimes reply, “Because I said so.” I am sure your father, or your mother, said the same thing to you. I am equally sure that reply sat in your gut in the same way those words sat in mine. I didn't like it! I felt I deserved a better answer! At least that's what I thought. If I pressed them and asked why, my father and mother would often reply, “I don’t need to explain to you. I’m your father, I do not need to ask your permission to lay down your rules.” On a good day for me, I might get the response, “I said so because it’s for your own good.”

Parenting classes today would say these are highly inappropriate responses, that we need to give more information to our children, they deserve it. Maybe that’s true, maybe it’s not. When they are little children, I would say no other explanation is necessary – especially as I have seen some explanations given by parents go way over the heads of their children – information overload. Because I said so suffices!

Now let's consider God speaking to us in this manner. God, our heavenly Father, who desires nothing more for us than our good, who sees and knows things we cannot even begin to comprehend, and Who has an eternal plan for us, tells us how we are to live. While you and I might like an answer, does He, Almighty God truly need to give us an answer? (That’s another rhetorical question. You already know the answer. You may not like it, but you know it.)

In this regard, we really are little children. Luke records comments Jesus makes to His disciples. “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.” (Luke 17:1-3)

We are to have childlike faith. We are trust God like little children. Too often we are just like little children. Point out to someone their sins and see their reaction. If they were doing something they love to do, they act like a little child. They will get upset. Some take their toys and go home, “I’m not going to come back to church as long as ‘he’ is there.”

Some claim the unfairness of it. Some claim it is a moral choice and none of your business. Some sins are declared to be political or cultural issues and have nothing to do with God.

We should look at a couple of these.

Abortion is the murdering of children. Satan moved Herod to kill all the infant male children as an attempt to kill the infant Christ. Pharaoh similarly moved by Satan to kill the infant male children to kill the coming of God’s promised savior. Children are God’s gift, another life begun in the womb in the image of God. Explain to me how abortion has nothing to do with the Christian faith?

Each of us is made by God in His image. This speaks to a number of things which many would claim are political issues today. Critical Race Theory, Black Lives Matter, and the many gender and marriage issues all have to do with those made in God’s image. They also have to do with God’s relationship with His bride, the church.

This means all these issues are attacks on the Christian faith. There isn’t time now to expand in detail, but to touch briefly.

Many want to pass off these topics by saying, “I personally would never do (put your pet issue here), if someone else want so do so, I will not get in their way.”

How about this, “I personally would never murder, but if someone else wants to do so and is fine with it, I won’t get in their way.”

There isn’t time here, but maybe we should have Bible study to discuss these faith issues further. If you are interested in such let me know.

Let us go back to the first question we asked, “What does God require of you?”

We will not keep silent when God's Word is under attack.

We will not whine when God's word convicts us, and rebukes us in our sin. We simply repent!

We are to circumcise our hearts, and no longer be stubborn. It's a tall order! It is tough to follow! But God is not partial, He takes no bribe. There are no excuses before Him!

He also speaks quite pointedly about how we are to treat our neighbor. He is going to execute justice in regard to our neighbor, it will happen on the last day! But until then, how are we supposed to treat our neighbor? This is also a requirement God has for us. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

We need to remember that nothing we have is our own. All we have is God’s possession, has simply given us stewardship of it all. I pray that you understand that even your own bodies are not your own, they were bought with a price, paid by the Son of God with his own flesh given unto death upon the cross.

God’s requirements of you in regard to your neighbors are truly clarified when Christ Himself declares, “As you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto Me.” (Mat 25:4)

So then, I ask you again. What does God our Lord require of you?

You shall serve Him and hold fast to Him. He is your praise! He is your great God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things as your eyes have seen.

Our text was Moses word to the Israelite as they were to enter Canaan. Not all of them were present almost 40 years earlier when they came out of Egypt. Neither they not you saw all 10 of those plagues with your own eyes – but you have read of them and heard of them, you know them. So yes, you have seen them with your own eyes!

Neither of you looked up at the waters of the Red Sea parted as you walked between them as they towered on either side of you – but you have read of it and heard of it. So yes, your eyes have seen this too.

What great and terrifying things have you seen?

How many times have you seen the water, and heard the word declared that a child is baptized into Christ's death and Resurrection?

How many times have you heard it said that your sins are forgiven, paid for by the blood of Christ shed for you?

How many times have you come to the table of the Lord and eaten of His flesh; drunk of His blood; and at that meal been joined with all the saints gathered around His table in heaven?

You have seen the great and terrifying acts of God done for your salvation. You have been granted to be united with Christ, a participant with Him as the body of Christ.

 As you are now one with Christ, who is your righteousness, salvation, and life, how will you then live?

What does the Lord your God require? What does He require of you? Do as know He requires, abiding in His grace, abiding in His Christ now and forever more. Amen.