Discussions With Lawyers

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle B

Por: Father David Daly, LC | Fuente: Catholic.Net

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, “Which is the first of all the commandments?” Jesus replied, “the first is this: Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.” The scribe said to him, “Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, He is one and there is no other than he. And to love him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, as I prepare during this Lent to celebrate the great mystery of your resurrection, I come before you in prayer so that you can form me and direct me. I long for the sinfulness of my life to be burned away so that I can glorify you with a pure and contrite heart. You know my sinfulness. You know my pride and sensuality. I offer you my prayer today as a small token of my love. My hope is that from the little I am able to love, you will teach me to love with a magnanimous heart. I want to be part of your Kingdom. I do not want to be on the fringes but to plunge myself into the depths of your love.

Petition: Lord, teach me to love you with my whole heart, soul and mind and with all my strength.

1. The Proper Hierarchy of Laws: The question concerning the first of the commandments was debated much by the scribes and Pharisees. There is a human desire to know what is first and what is second: to be able to put things in order. We are often attracted to the promise made by this or that guru about the one secret that will make us happy, healthy, or successful in business. So, our natural curiosity is attracted to know what the first commandment is, what we must do above all. We want to say, “Just tell me plain and simple what I must do, and I will do it.” Here Jesus lays out, plain and simple, how we must live our lives: loving God with everything we are and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Does his command resonate in my heart and actions?

2. Love Goes Beyond Formalism: The scribe comments that these laws are greater than any burnt offering or sacrifice. A sacrifice or burnt offering without love is empty. It is love for God and neighbor that gives all of our sacrifices, trials and good works their value. Love is at the heart of our perfection, and when we are keeping this greatest of the laws – to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength – then all of the lesser things in life will fall into place. Does my life give evidence to this hierarchy of values? If not, what specifically do I need to do to bring about the proper order?

3. Longing for the Experience of God’s Love: Jesus congratulates the scribe for his understanding and tells him that he is not far from the Kingdom of God. It gives us occasion to ask ourselves, “How far am I from the Kingdom of God?” This scribe’s knowledge was not merely book knowledge, for it is not in simply knowing a certain number of truths that we obtain the Kingdom of God. Rather it was an intimate knowledge of love – knowing in a practical way how to give one’s heart, soul, mind and strength to God. Is drawing closer to the Kingdom of God my biggest priority? What do I need to do to get or stay on track? Have I humbly, confidently and fervently asked Our Lord for the grace to help me? Do I ponder on and recognize every day God’s loving presence and providence in my life? Do I realize and thank God for his love?

Conversation with Christ: Lord, help me to keep in mind your commandment of love and to live it with all my strength. I do not want to live my faith with a mere intellectual knowledge of your commandments; I want to live it with a deep intimate knowledge that bears fruits of true holiness.

Resolution: Before beginning each activity of the day I will stop and ask myself how I can live it with love.