

The Joke ☺

A teacher asked the children in her Sunday school class, “If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale, and give all the money to the church, would I get into heaven?”

“No!” The children all answered.

“If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the church lawn, and kept everything neat and tidy, would I then get into heaven?”

Again, the answer was “NO!”

“Well,” she continued, “then how can I get into heaven? In the back of the room, a five-year-old boy shouted, “You gotta be dead!”

Friends, you can not buy your way into heaven and you can't count on just doing a few good deeds to get in either.

Key to Heaven

We find the means in which we can gain entry into heaven in the Gospel of Matthew in the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter where Christ talks of the judgement:

35 For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick, and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ MT 25:35-36

40 “...‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

There are two issues layered on each other here. First, the key in this judgement is to believe in Christ, first and foremost. But it does not end there as the deeds of those in need are listed and our actions to such persons demonstrate our love, and therefore true belief, of Christ and how we are called to love others as Christ did through such deeds.

So, one can say we find the entry exam into heave in the Gospel of Matthew, but we find the answer key in today's Gospel reading of John.

And that answer is: LOVE. The love of Jesus Christ. These are not actions or rules that if followed, will gain us access to heaven. Rather, it is our belief in, and love for, Jesus Christ. And, yes, there are ways in which we can express and demonstrate that love in our mortal lives right now.

### Old News

The philosopher Plato wrote that there is no harm in repeating a good thing and such a practice is often used today in politics and in business to convince an audience of a specific idea, need or fact. So, if you have a feeling in your gut that, “we have heard all this before...” then you have been paying attention – this topic is not new or fresh. It is, however, critical and worth yet another visit.

### Acts of Love

In John’s Gospel we hear Jesus talk of His love of God, our love for Him, the love of sacrifice for friend’s, and Christ’s call for us to love everyone. It sounds so easy but most of us fail at this nearly daily as the practical application of this commandment, and it is just that – a commandment and not a recommendation or suggestion, if far less easy to live up to 100% of the time.

### Who Must We Love?

The part of Jesus’ commandment that I truly find as a watershed moment is His call to love all people. Here is the most common area we often fail to succeed. It’s easy to love family, a friend, people we work with, live next to, or even attend Mass with. But Jesus’ actions, as we read in our first Reading of the Acts of the Apostles, demonstrates just how full this call to love really is. Peter enters Cornelius’ house – a prominent Roman which means the occupying enemy, a trained military killer and pagan. There is nothing in the Jewish culture of the day that says this is good or okay.

A good place to enhance your life and live more deeply in Christ’s teaching is to work hard to remove mistrust, suspicion, fear, and hatred of others with love. Sure, it might not be all hugs and kisses, but to move from hate, suspicion, fear, or mistrust to an eventual understanding of the other and a more neutral acceptance represents the beginning steps of move from hate and fear to love and fulfillment of Christ’s call to all of us.

### Four Types of Love

In Jesus’ teachings at the Last Super he touches on at least four types of love that I would like you to reflect upon: Love reveals, chooses, serves and sacrifices.

Reveals – God revealed His plan and desire for us in the Word. Further, God selected a chosen people to bring the Word into the world. This word is God’s loving plan for us all that was then perfected when it became flesh through Jesus Christ. God gave His son as the most amazing gift of love, so we can in-turn love God and be saved through that very same love. Where can you improve your revealed love to a person, or people, that you have not loved as fully as you can in the past?

Homily for Sunday Mass, May 6, 2018  
Year B – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
John 15:9-17  
----Father Mike Cadotte----

Chooses – Jesus chose those dining with him at the Last Supper as His friends and says so right in today's reading, "I have called you friends..." and we are also included in that friendship. In turn, we believe and call Jesus our friend. Love chooses and is never forced or coerced. Don't extend love because you have to but work at choosing to love – it's different and critical to you successfully following Jesus.

Serve – Love does not take, boast or put down others (think of that famous passage in 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of I Corinthians. Jesus lived out this service of love all the time and just before His words in our reading He just finished the humbling act of washing the disciple's feet. How are you serving others for their benefit and not yours? Where can you increase and improve on this?

Sacrifice – We are still in the Easter season and thus the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for our souls is still fresh on our minds. To sacrifice our time, money, to serve and extend love to others is a good start to sacrifice. And for all those that followed in Christ's footsteps in the world and sacrificed their own lives for those they love, whether they knew them or not, may we study their great love of Christ and model our lives after their most blessed example.

I believe we revisit this theme often as we all fall short of the command. Again, I must emphasize that this is a command and not an option. Please, take time this week to reflect on your actions of late and figure out where you failed to love fully another – no matter what they may have done and how justified you were in your withholding such love. Remember, we have all failed God in more ways than any of us would want to count and yet, there God is with forgiving love of us. Let us model on that and work on adding more love into our lives.

To close, let us reflect on St Ignatius Loyola's famous Prayer for Generosity:

Lord, teach me to be generous  
Teach me to serve you as you deserve,  
to give and not to count the cost,  
to fight and not to heed the wounds,  
to toil and not to seek for rest,  
to labor and not to ask for any reward  
but that of knowing that I do your will.

AMEN