

OT 16th Week Friday Year I 2021

399

EX 20:1-17

PSALM 19:8-11

MATT 13:18-23

*Take out the papers and the trash
Or you don't get no spendin' cash
Get all that garbage out of sight
Or you don't go out on Friday night
And when you finish doin' that
Bring in the dog and put out the cat
Yakety yak. Don't talk back.*

I'm sure those of you of a certain generation remember that little ditty from 1959 performed by the Coasters. I think all too often we think of the Ten Commandments in those same terms: Crime and punishment; carrot and stick.

But that's not the God I know and that I know loves me. God did not intend His Commandments to be threats. He did not give them to us to take away our fun or to make life bleak and miserable. Quite the contrary! God loves us and therefore gives us all lives that He intends to be eternally joyful and happy, but not as this world defines happy. God offers us a different kind of happiness. He offers joy that penetrates the soul and lifts the spirit. God's Ten Commandments were given as prescriptions for joy and happiness—sort of a guide to living life to the fullest with joy in our hearts. The Ten Commandments were just beautifully described in the Psalm just proclaimed:

- The Law of the Lord refreshes the soul;
- The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

In our time and place, I wonder whether God might share His prescriptions for joy and happiness with us this way.

- I long for you to invite me into your life. I long to be in a loving relationship with you such that we always address each other in endearing ways. I want to be the centerpiece of your life like your life is to Me. Enter into relationship with Me and you will be forever joyful.
- Work hard, but take time for yourself to refresh yourself. Therefore I give you the Sabbath, a time to rest; a time for us to be in Communion; a time to nourish yourself on My love for you. My Sabbath is open to you 24/7.
- Take care of your Mom and Dad. Listen to them. Cherish them. Their partnership with Me was responsible for your creation. Honor Me by honoring them. A loving relationship with your Mom and Dad will always lift your spirit.
- Be life-giving to all around you. Never take away life or denigrate life or dishonor life. Protect life, especially the lives of those more vulnerable than you or weaker than you. Help your community to not only live, but to thrive in My love. Love and cherish My Creation that I entrust to you and you will experience all the joys My Creation has to offer.
- Love, cherish, and respect every relationship into which you enter. Be loyal and faithful. The joys of such relationships are indescribable.
- Respect the rights of others. Never take what does not belong to you and generously share with the world the gifts I have given to you.
- Raise up other people. Never tear others down. If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. Allow yourself to humbly decrease so that others may increase.
- Cherish the gifts that have been given to you and don't judge or be concerned with what I have chosen to give others. Allow Me

to be the judge of who needs what gifts, and trust that what you have been given is sufficient for your happiness. I give everyone the greenest grass. There is no greener grass anywhere else.

May living God's Commandments lead you to discover the joy and happiness that God intends for all of His people.