

**CULTIVATING A LOVING LIFE** (MT 22:34-46)  
Sermon given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges  
Sunday, October 26, 2008, St. John of the Cross

- I. Can you recall the Ten Commandments?
  1. Learned these early in life, but hard to remember whole list
  2. Just imagine remembering the 613 commands of OT (365/248)
  3. All equal, no ranking of importance, not even by scribe
  4. Yet Jesus does say the first 2 most important: love God and neighbor & all the rest will fall into place
  5. All 10 based on love of God and neighbor
  
- II. Last week's Clergy Conference
  - A. Bishop Little: More conflicts than ever in the church. Know why?  
E-mail!
  - B. In August, e-mail I sent out: "In your service" rather than in "his"
  - C. Is that a mistake? What's wrong with that? If we are serving God, we are to serve each other. If we are serving each other, we are serving God. Can't separate the two.
  - D. Paul: "Share not only the Gospel, but our own selves"
  
- III. Big question is HOW?
  - A. Paul says "gentleness" and tenderly caring for each other
    1. Contradiction with society where loudest and harshest seem to get attention, served first and get ahead
    2. Gentleness does not seem to be valued or rewarded
    3. Gentleness is a sign of weakness, yet gently is what Paul says
  
- IV. God calls us to cultivate loving lives
  - A. We've seen people who do this, who live this way
    1. Positive outlook, happy
    2. No matter circumstances, don't complain
    3. Don't raise their voices; walk this earth quietly, calmly, peacefully
    4. Attitude of gratitude
  
- V. We are entering a whole season of gratitude
  - A. Stewardship—TTT for which we are grateful
  - B. Thanksgiving
  - C. Christmas
  - D. Lent and Easter
  
- VI. Life of gratitude results in life of love. Love is the guiding principle Jesus offers us for true life. It is what is at the heart of 10 Commandments, and 2.

- A. What is the most loving thing you can do today?
- B. One loving thing per week, then perhaps one loving thing day—all loving acts & attitudes connect
- C. Result: Whole lives of goodness and grace, showing love for God and all people, even enemies
- D. Can you imagine? Caring this much for each other, “Like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children”
- E. What a beautiful vision! Do you believe it is possible?
- F. May each of us further God’s love in our world