

Greetings to you! In the past week we celebrated All Saints day on the 1st November and we gave thanks to God because God is glorified in his saints, in whom we see the riches of his grace. Saints are basically sanctified sinners. Today is also Council for World Mission Sunday and we think about the Great Commission that our Lord has given us to go out into the world and preach the good news, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This morning our theme is also that, "Love sums up and fulfils every law." When we look around in our world today what is lacking among people is the love for God and the love for one another. Love is so desperately needed in our community because it is the oil which heals wounds and restores relationships.

In our readings for this morning we look at the book of Deuteronomy where Moses reminds the people of God saying, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees." If we look at this text the requirement of Yahweh is clearly spelt out. The first and foremost thing is to fear the Lord. Throughout the Wisdom literature we note that the key phrase that keeps coming again and again is that, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom." What kind of fear are they talking about? Fear is not in the sense of being afraid of God but rather an attitude which is deeply conscious of God's presence. This makes one to respect and revere the covenant made with the Lord and walk after him faithfully. The second attitude that Moses says is to walk with the Lord. Walking is a habitual action and therefore Moses is encouraging the people of God to continuously walk according to Yahweh's ways. This is the phrase which summarises best what we mean by OT ethics. Thirdly, he talks about loving God. Love was meant to be the driving factor in all that they did. Love was meant to express covenant loyalty and obedience flowing out of gratitude. Fourthly, Moses reminds them to serve God. Just as they were bonded labourers in Egypt now they were to surrender themselves out of their own free will to Yahweh, since he was the one who delivered them from bondage. Finally, they were to observe his commandments. This was to give carefully, conscientious and constant attention to the terms and stipulations of the covenant relationship.

The challenge for us also is the same because love sums up and fulfils every law. Our obedience to him must be out of love and gratitude for all that he has done for us. We too are called to fear him and to walk after him, serving him and keeping his commandments.

In the New Testament reading Jesus is asked by an expert in the law saying, "Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbours as yourself." Jesus says that the entire law and the prophets hang on these two commandments. It is only by loving God and loving others as ourselves will we indeed bring love and peace in our communities which are desperately needing God's love. We as the community of faith are expected to show the love of God by our practical ways so that others would come to the knowledge of Jesus. May God help us truly to be filled with his love because love sums up and fulfils every law.