

2025 9 7 – homily - wk 23 OT Sun - Lk 14 25-33 hate - love God - cross - sell all -
build tower

Focus: Love God above all

This is a challenging gospel and There is a lot here. I am just going to focus on the first part of the Gospel.

Let's listen:

“Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, “If anyone comes to me without hating His father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:25)

On the surface this Gospel passage makes no sense.

The two greatest commands are to love God and love others! There is no hate.

The problem is the true meaning is lost in translation

In the Hebrew language, hating means to love less. The Hebrew word contains the concept of priorities.

God wants us to love him more than anything else in our lives. God wants us to put him first.

SLIDE

Put God first

This is the greatest commandment. It's recited by observant Jews twice a day. Its found in Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4-5

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with your **whole** heart, and with your **whole** being, and with your **whole** strength.

If we put God first we will obey his commands to love God and to love others.

(pause)

So what's the problem?

The problem is when we make something other than God the center of our life.

Saint Ignatius made this clear in the first principle and foundation of his spiritual exercises -

Let's listen: "we appreciate and use all the gifts of God as long as they help us develop as loving persons. But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and hinder our growth."

"We should not fix our desires

- on health or sickness,
- wealth or poverty,
- success or failure
- a long life or a short one...
- our only choice should be I choose what better leads to God deepening life in me.

This is easy to say but it's hard to do. But given it's the greatest commandment we need to work on it

At the time of the Israelites they put a bull before God. Prior to the 18th century and the invention of the steam engine, the bull was the most powerful thing on the farm. And most people lived on farms.

SLIDE

Show first picture of Bull

I had the opportunity to see this bull at the Israel museum in Jerusalem.

(pause)

Could I see a show of hands?

How many people have a bull at your house that you worship?

Does somebody in the back have your hand up? ... No ... as I suspected no one has a bull that they're worshipping.

(pause)

Now I'm going to show you a modern-day bull that **many** people worship.

SLIDE

Show bull of wall street

This is the bull of Wall Street, located in New York City. Many people put protecting their money in the stock market on a higher priority than following God.

Anything we put before God is an idol.

Some people put protecting their money or power or their before God, when I was young I put accumulating money and power and my job first. It worked for a while but then it all came tumbling down at age 34.

Some people put pleasure before God. Some people put youth sports before God.

What do you and I put before God?