

September 8, 2019
(For The Love of God!)
How On Earth Do We Love God?

First Reading ~ *Deuteronomy 30:15-20*

Look, see, today I set before you life and success, or death and disaster. For today I command you to love YHWH, your God, to follow God's ways and keep the commandments, the laws and the customs. If you do, you will live and increase, and YHWH your God, will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your hearts and minds stray and you do not listen to me, if you let yourself be drawn into the worship of other Gods, and serve them, I tell you today, you will not survive (perish). You will not live long in the land that you are now crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and yours may live, by loving YHWH, your God, by obeying God's voice and by clinging to YHWH. For that will mean life to you, a long life in the land which God promised to give to your ancestors, Sarah and Abraham, Rebecca and Isaac, and Leah and Rachel and Jacob.

Second Reading ~ *adapted from Howard Thurman*

I will lift up mine eyes. Scarcely knowing it, I have become increasingly self-centered, my mind focused upon all the details of my little life and the endless trivialities of a daily routine. I hover over all my little aches and pains, my petty annoyances, my little frustrations... Then out of no place comes sometimes a gentle, sometimes startling reminder... and I lift up mine eyes. I will lift up mine eyes to life, that I may read the guideposts along my way and not miss the important turning in the road. I will lift up mine eyes to love, that I may not close the door of my heart to the knocking hand, the tender cry, the anxious reach. I will lift up mine eyes to God, that I may meet the divine spirit not only in the high place, the great moment, the penetrating call, but also in the byways, the little duties, the stinging irritations. And for me, this is enough.

Third Reading ~ *adapted from Carter Heyward*

Love creates justice here on earth. For this reason, loving involves commitment. We are not automatic lovers of self, others, the world, or God. Love does not just happen. We're not love machines, puppets on the strings of a Deity called "love." Love is a choice — not simply, or necessarily, a rational choice, but rather a willingness to be present to others (and present to God) without pretense or guile. Love is a conversion to humanity — a willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world and broken lives.