

The Rev. Jay Lawlor Delivers Message "Love is Our Hope" for 21st Sunday After Pentecost

The Rev. Jay Lawlor returned as guest priest to St. Paul's in Richmond on Oct. 29, 2017

INDIANAPOLIS, IN, US, February 27, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Rev. Jay Lawlor](#) delivered a [sermon](#) titled "Love is Our Hope" for the 21st Sunday After Pentecost on October 29, 2017 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Indiana. The Gospel reading was Matthew 22:34-46.



The Rev. Jay Lawlor preaching at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Richmond, IN

Again, this week, we have Jesus being challenged and tested by the Pharisees. One of them asks him about Torah-based moral principles guiding one's life. They are challenging Jesus as to his knowledge of the Torah and living according to its teachings.

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The Rev. Jay Lawlor

The Pharisee asks: “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:34-40 NRSV)

Jesus does not hesitate in his answer. It is love of God and love of neighbor which matter most of all. Everything else depends these two commandments.

Such a transforming answer. For Jesus, and for us. To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself, changes us. It reorients our way of thinking, our way of doing, our way of being. If what you have is love of God and love of neighbor, then those crowd out hate.

So what Jesus needs most of all are ordinary people who are willing to love. It is, after all, ordinary people who do extraordinary things when living boldly into the love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus knows if you want something done, find a group of people who are willing to embrace the love of God and their neighbor – they will work to make that love known to the world. Don't worry about the others who think they know better. Don't worry about those who say it is foolish to put love first.

It is not foolish to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. It is the only hope we have. It is why Jesus started a movement of God's unconditional love.

In April, the day after Bishop Jennifer's consecration, the Presiding Bishop preached at St. David's, Bean Blossom. Bishop Curry is one of my favorite people in the Church. Not because he is Presiding Bishop. Not even because he was my bishop when I served in the Diocese of North Carolina when he was still diocesan bishop there. Bishop Curry is one of my favorite people in the Church because he loves Jesus and is not afraid to tell the world that it is God's love that matter. He is not afraid to tell the world that it is loving our neighbor as ourselves that matters. And as he told those worshiping at St. David's during his sermon in April, "In the end love wins."

Bishop Curry also pointed out that "[...] we have a world that is trying to tear itself apart. We have to love it back together." Those trying to tear this world apart are missing the crucial understanding that God loves. But we are not to despair. Bishop Curry doesn't despair. He doesn't despair because he knows a fundamental truth about God and those who take up Jesus' message to love as God loves. As Bishop Curry reminded them – and the whole Church, "When we love, God shows up."

The full transcript of the Rev. Jay Lawlor's sermon is available at
<https://www.therevjaylawlor.com/love-hope-sermon-rev-jay-lawlor-21-pentecost-year-oct-29-2017/>

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