

## **Emmanuel October 25, 2020**

### **Love One Another – Susan Peyton**

“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.”

I have been thinking a lot about change the last few weeks. Okay, so actually our lives have done nothing but change in the last 6 months. But I’ve been thinking how different things have changed due to the pandemic, some for good, some for not so great. So I started thinking how much telephones have changed thru the years. I don’t remember party lines because I don’t think I was allowed to answer the phone. Growing up we had one phone line with two telephones, the one in the kitchen was white. No one ever called during dinner. We didn’t have telemarketers or political calls. We didn’t have caller ID or a voice mail. If there was a storm, we weren’t to use the phone. Because Mom said so. The phone did not dictate our life. They were simply a convenience, not to design our life around. And because the phone wasn’t portable, anyone in the family could hear what you were saying. Early Parental control. And in the last six months, residents of nursing homes and their families have a way to see each other and talk to each other, thru tablets and iPhones.

Last weekend Doug and I went away for a few days. And because the hotels weren’t full, and the antique malls weren’t full, I was a little more observant of changes. Unlike years ago, I didn’t get the AAA guidebooks to find out about the hotels in the area, I didn’t even call to make a reservation. Good old internet, and I made changes as I needed to. Before leaving, I kept checking the COVID numbers for our destination, and made sure Virginians could travel into West Virginia and Maryland and we wouldn’t need to isolate upon our return. And I really started thinking about jobs that have been affected by the corona virus. Like the hotel housekeepers. Once the hotels started encouraging people to use their towels at least two days, I’m sure many housekeepers either were laid off or had fewer hours to work. And certainly during the pandemic even more aren’t needed.

Life is a constant journey of change. I’ve decided covid is like learning how to drive a stick shift, use a computer and read Japanese, Russian or Greek, all in the same week. There is a constant stream of webinars available on how to take care of ourselves during this pandemic. Heck, I know all the symptoms, everything I’m supposed to do, but the reality is I can’t get caught up at work, and everyone wants to rehash all the things wrong with our lives. And my brain is certainly not as clear as it once was.

By chance, one of the suspense adventure books I read had a number of statements that described our current world. It was written in 2012 by Davis Bunn, [Hidden in Dreams](#). I guess I’d describe it as Christian fiction meets adventure suspense. It reassured me that it’s okay to feel confused, frustrated, not in control. So here are some quotes from the book, again, it was published in 2012. “ Why is this happening to me .I want my life back under control. I want to feel safe, I want to take care of my family. She felt no guidance... nor any sense of genuine peace. You are seeing the

herd mentality at its worst. We could be looking at a new depression. Twisted in every direction, out of control, no one knowing what just happened or what's coming next. Faith vs religion. How distant God seems, how nothing is the way I want. And I finally realized that this isn't about me at all. I need to do God's will. He's taken me out of my comfort zone. "

It's not like there is any confusion about what God wants us to do. His will is certainly contained in His commandments, Love God, Love yourself, Love your neighbor. And everything in our lives depend on us to live out those commandments. And it's not like these are anything new. These commandments about been around over 2000 years. They have not changed, nor will they ever change. We are the ones who keep focusing on changes, bemoaning change.

As Episcopalians, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has made it very clear, we are called to live the Way of Love. He has called us "to have a revival of love. As a way to a liberating and life-giving relationship with God with others, with all creation on the planet we call Earth." Shelby talked about the different parts of the Way of Love in her sermons: Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest. There is a multitude of resources on the Way of Love and becoming beloved community, online thru the national church. Our diocese has been having an online adult offering this fall called "Living the Way of Love." Each week they focus on one of the practices of the Way of Love and how we can incorporate that practice into our daily life.

A newer piece of the Way of Love is Living the Way of Love during Pandemic. The introduction says: "In every season of life and every situation — especially in times of crisis, uncertainty, and loss — we return to Jesus and his Way of Love in order to stay centered on God and live with hope, compassion, and wisdom. The principles and practices may help you/us to follow the Way of Love in the difficult days we now face."

I am currently reading Michael Curry's latest book, released earlier this year. [Love is the Way Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times](#).

As usual, it is filled with his wit, wisdom and stories. And quotes from those he looks up to. Like Booker T Washington "Never let anyone drag you so low as to make you hate them." And Dr Martin Luther King, who said "we have two choices before us, chaos or community."

And I'll close with a quote from Bishop Curry's book." And love-unselfish, sacrificial, unconditional, and liberating love – is the way, frankly the only way, to realize God's dream of the beloved community, on earth as it is in heaven. It's the only thing that can, and that ever will, make the world a better place."

Amen.