



CHRIST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
MILFORD

October 3, 2021  
20<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost

## REFLECTION

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### **Celebrating Jesus Christ in the Greatest Commandment: The Law of Love**

Before the foundation of the world God loved us;  
His love is the root of all things:  
the fount of every blessing, the comfort in every pain,  
the hope for every last thing out of joint in the world!

The law of love is the law of the world,  
And God calls the redeemed to live that law—  
to love him more than we love all others,  
and loving him,  
to love all others as they need to be loved:  
as we love ourselves.

Praise be to Christ the Son for his everlasting love!

Blessed be his name,  
for the love revealed in the cross exposes all counterfeit loves. Let us glory in our high  
privilege of bearing Christ's goodness to a world fascinated with love—and starved of it.

O Lord, we bless you for your love!  
Work in us the love you command;  
receive our worship through Jesus Christ!

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### TWENTIETH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

Advent + Christmas + Epiphany + Lent + Easter + Pentecost

### **Gathering Hymn**

Here I am to Worship

Light of the world;  
You stepped down into darkness  
Opened my eyes let me see  
Beauty that made;  
This heart adore You  
Hope of a life spent with You

### **Chorus:**

So here I am to worship;  
Here I am to bow down  
Here I am to say that You're my God  
And You're altogether lovely;  
Altogether worthy  
Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days;  
Oh so highly exalted  
Glorious in heaven above  
Humbly You came;  
To the earth You created  
All for love's sake became poor

### **Chorus**

And I'll never know how much it cost;  
To see my sin upon that cross (repeat)

### **Chorus**

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

### **Call to Worship**

Psalm 18:1-2, 31-32:

I love you, O LORD, my strength.

The LORD is:

**my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.**

For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?—

**the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.**

1. Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor, all for love's sake be -  
 2. Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing, all for love's sake be -  
 3. Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we

cam - est poor; thrones for a man - ger didst sur - ren - der,  
 cam - est man; stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing,  
 wor - ship thee. Em - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing,

sap - phire - paved courts for sta - ble floor. Thou who wast rich be -  
 heav'n - ward by thine e - ter - nal plan. Thou who art God be -  
 make us what thou wouldst have us be. Thou who art love be -

yond all splen - dor, all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.  
 yond all prais - ing, all for love's sake be - cam - est man.  
 yond all tell - ing, Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

## Invocation

**Praise Hymn**      Thou Who Wast Rich beyond All Splendor

**New Testament Lesson**      Matthew 22:34-40, Romans 13:8-10

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

## Confession of Sin

Lord, we confess to you our sin of greed.

We confess that we have tried to serve two masters.

We have said that we love you, but our actions have displayed a love of worldly possessions instead. Our selfish greed has consumed time and attention that should have gone to those we love.

It has squandered resources that should have been given to those in need.

It has stolen the tithes and offerings and acts of devotion that should have been yours.

We ask you, Lord, to forgive us of our greed and self-centeredness. Search our hearts and show us where we have been blind to our sin. Bring us to repentance and cleanse us, so that we will serve you and others, with undivided hearts.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

## Individual Confession

**Absolution**      Psalm 103:8, 10-13

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

    so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

As a father shows compassion to his children,

    so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

**Thanksgiving Hymn**      O Come and Mourn With Me A While

    O come and mourn with me awhile,

    O come ye to the Savior's side

O come, together let us mourn,  
Jesus our Lord is crucified.

Seven times He spake seven words of love;  
And all three hours His silence cried  
For mercy on the souls of men;  
Jesus our Lord is crucified.

### **Chorus**

O love of God! O sin of man!  
In this dread act Your strength is tried;  
And victory remains with love;  
Jesus our Lord is crucified!

O break, O break, hard heart of mine!  
Thy weak self-love and guilty pride  
His Pilate and His Judas were:  
Jesus our Lord is crucified.

A broken heart, a fount of tears,  
Ask, and they will not be denied;  
A broken heart love's cradle is:  
Jesus our Lord is crucified.

### **Chorus**

## **Old Testament Lesson**

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

## **Peace of Christ**

The peace of the Lord be with you!      **And also with you!**

## **The Gospel Song**

Holy God in love became, Perfect Man to bear my blame  
On the cross He took my sin, By His death I live again

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

1. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, Vast, un - mea - sured, bound - less, free,  
 2. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus - Spread His praise from shore to shore!  
 3. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, Love of ev - ery love the best;

Roll - ing as a might - y o - cean In its full - ness o - ver me.  
 How He lov - eth, ev - er lov - eth, Chang - eth nev - er, nev - er - more;  
 'Tis an o - cean vast of bless - ing, 'Tis a ha - ven sweet of rest.

Un - der - neath me, all a - round me, Is the cur - rent of Thy love;  
 How He watch - es o'er His loved ones, Died to call them all His own;  
 O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, 'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;

Lead - ing on - ward, lead - ing home - ward To my glo - rious rest a - bove.  
 How for them He in - ter - ced - eth, Watch - eth o'er them from the throne.  
 And it lifts me up to glo - ry, For it lifts me up to Thee.

**Sermon Text**                      Isaiah 63:7-19  
This is the Word of the Lord!              **Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**              God's Gut-Wrenching Love | Pastor J. Nelson Jennings

**Response Hymn**                      O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Bringing Our Life to God**                      Prayers | Collection | Profession

**Prayers of the People**

**Collection**                      text **MNA 1708** to **76959** and follow the prompts  
or visit [give.pcamna.org/to/1708/](http://give.pcamna.org/to/1708/)

**The Lord's Prayer (Lascoe)**

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Your name  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread, Forgive our debts as we forgive  
And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from all evil  
For Thine is the kingdom, Thine is the power  
Thine is the glory, Forever and ever                      Amen amen

**Confession of Faith**                      Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

**Q1.** What is your only comfort in life and in death?

**A.** That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul,  
in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.  
He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood,  
and has set me free from the tyranny of the devil.  
He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head  
without the will of my Father in heaven;  
in fact, all things must work together for my salvation.  
Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit, assures me of eternal life  
and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.

## **Communion in Christ Jesus**

*All Christians are invited to receive Christ's presence of bread and wine. When directed please take your bulletin, stand and form a circle around the worship space. Whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle. If you are not able to stand, please move your chair into the circle. We serve wine in the outer rings of the tray in the Lord's Supper, believing it to be the Biblical element used. We provide grape juice in the inner rings for those who, out of conscience or for health, do not drink wine.*

## **Communion Hymn**

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go (verses 1-3)

O Love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray,  
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
May brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
And feel the promise is not vain,  
That morn shall tearless be.

## **Prayer for those searching**

*Oh God, I am discovering that the more I have, the more I need to have, the more I am loved, the more I need to be loved, the more I achieve, the more I need to achieve. Nothing seems to satisfy me. Could it be, as someone once said, that "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." Dear God, if this is true, and if as the Bible teaches there is life and life eternal in Christ alone, please guide me to Him. Open me to the reality of the One who alone can satisfy my restless heart. Give me the courage to believe that which I cannot see but can understand, feel and touch through the Word, sacraments and church family. Lord I want to believe, help my unbelief! Amen.*

— God + calls + cleanses + speaks + strengthens + sends —

**Coronation Hymn**            O Love That Will Not Let Me Go (verse 4)

O Cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
And from the ground there blossoms red  
Life that shall endless be.

**Benediction**            2 Corinthians 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

NOTES

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## REFLECTION

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### Love and the Commandments

Jesus shatters many common notions. For example, one notion is that commandments and love don't mix. You don't command someone you love. And you don't tend to love one who commands. Commanding connotes military hierarchy, not relationships of love. We tend to think that commanding restricts winsomeness and willingness both ways. And this is often true. Paul wrote to his friend Philemon and said, "though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do that which is proper, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you" (Philemon 8-9; see also 2 Corinthians 8:8). Paul probably meant his love and Philemon's love. So it's true for love's sake that a person in authority may chose not to command.

But Jesus shatters any absolute dissociation of commandments and love. He says "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments...He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father" (John. 14:15,21). "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love" (John. 15:10). Thinking in terms of commandments and obedience did not stop Jesus from enjoying the love of his Father. And he expects that our thinking of him as one who commands will not jeopardize our love relationship with him either.

This is crucial to realize because the covenant relationship that we have with God through Jesus Christ is not a covenant without commandments. The basic difference between the old covenant offered by God and through the law and the new covenant offered by God through Christ is not that one had commandments and the other doesn't. The basic difference is that in the old covenant the gracious enabling power to obey was not poured out as fully as it is since Jesus. "To this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know or eyes to see or ears to hear" (Deut. 29:3). What's new about the new covenant is not that there is no law, but rather God's promise, "I will put my law within them, and on their heart I will write it" (Jer. 31:33). "I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes" (Ezek. 36:27).

What makes love possible between us and God who commands is that he does not speak from a distance and leave us to our own resources. He draws near and gives us Himself as he gives us his commandments. The new covenant, sealed by the blood of his Son (1 Cor. 11:25), is a commitment to put his Spirit within us. Paul said it is a "new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). When the law, written on stone, meets an unwilling heart of stone, all it does is condemn and kill. But when that same law is written on hearts made soft by the Spirit, the result is life.

Therefore we do not need to shrink back from the "commandments" of God as though they were cold, distant demands from an impersonal sovereign. We can embrace the full New Testament teaching that the commandments of God are utterly crucial in living the Christian life. Yes "keeping the commandments of God" really matters!

— John Piper, *Future Grace* (1995)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**Community Group:** Meeting tonight, October 3, 5:30-7pm at the Bishop house (21 Green Street) for a picnic and community building time. Check the weekly email for a link to sign up to bring a dish, drink or side. Feel free to invite family, friends, and neighbors!

**Men's Breakfast** – Wednesdays at 7am, Pop's Restaurant (134 Old Gate Ln, Milford, CT 06460). We meet with no agenda but to create space for guys to form a strong community where important questions can be discussed and answered. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors.

**Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting** – 7-7:50pm. Regular prayer for each other, our community, our world and the redemptive work of God is essential to our mission. Please join us as we follow a short prayer and scripture liturgy and pray for each other. [Zoom link](#) | Meeting ID: 899 5618 6470 | Passcode: 355978

**Sunday Worship** – We'll be meeting at the MAC (40 Railroad Ave., Milford, CT 06460) through October 24th. October 31<sup>st</sup> will be at the Fowler Building, 1 Shipyard Lane, Milford, CT 06460.

**Men's & Women's Monthly Bible Study** –Women's Bible Study reconvenes October 16<sup>th</sup>, 9 to 10:30am. RSVP to [info@cpcmilford.org](mailto:info@cpcmilford.org). Details for the Men's study will be forthcoming.

**Men's & Women's Monthly Fellowship** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays, rotating months, starts in Oct.

### Contact us

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