

THE MOST ESSENTIAL THING
Follow Christ
Banská Štiavnica, 29th April 2018

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| <p>Οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἐφίμωσεν τοὺς Σαδδουκαίους συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, ³⁵ καὶ ἐπηρώτησεν εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν [νομικὸς] πειράζων αὐτόν· ³⁶ διδάσκαλε, ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ; ³⁷ ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτῷ· ἀγαπήσεις κύριον τὸν θεόν σου ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ καρδίᾳ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ψυχῇ σου καὶ ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ διανοίᾳ σου· ³⁸ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μεγάλη καὶ πρώτη ἐντολή· ³⁹ δευτέρα δὲ ὁμοία αὐτῇ· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν· ⁴⁰ ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς ὅλος ὁ νόμος κρέμαται καὶ οἱ προφῆται.</p> | <p>Mt 22:34-40 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And 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. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."</p> |
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0. INTRODUCTION:

0.1. TEMPTING THE MESSIAH

- Jesus and the law of Moses (forgiveness? → John 8)
- "All commandments are equally important" (**Jas 2:10-11** For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.)
- "Just listen to me" (**Lk 10:42** ...one thing is necessary...)

0.2. THE TEST OF FAITH

- relating to *a system*? → NO, relating everything to THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD & MEN...
- What is *God's mind* about a particular matter? → technology only is concerned with *how to get desired results*...

0.3. OUR TECHNOLOGICAL TEMPTATION

- Ernst JUNGGER once wrote that technology is the real metaphysics of the twentieth century

- ELLUL: the essential tragedy of a civilization increasingly dominated by technique... Progress then consists in progressive de-humanization – a busy, pointless, and, in the end, suicidal submission to technique.
- The allure of technology
 - a Utopia of easy living – no work [effortless]; no pain [pleasure]; no loss [endless getting];
 - LENIN: Communism = electricity + soviet rule
- Information technology
 - fragmented, chaotic, shallow world of info-tainment and meaningless technological possibilities
 - overwhelmed by data

0.3.1. INFORMATION

- **without understanding**
- → little or no time for digesting, meditation, emotional experience
- **Prov 12:18** There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

0.3.2. INTERACTION

- **without commitment**
- → no need to meet people; little time to prepare oneself to be seen and experienced

0.3.3. EMPOWERMENT

- **without service**
- → little or no others-oriented motivation

0.4. THE SOLUTION?

Unfortunately a correct diagnosis does not necessarily mean an easy cure. Unless men are moved to the depths of their souls—that is, far below the reach of their conscious knowledge—by the present crisis, there is little hope that they will meet its challenge in the only spirit that will ensure their survival and renewal.¹

... "What is Discipline?" ~ Amy Carmichael

When I refuse the easy thing for the love of my dear Lord,
And when I choose the harder thing for love of my dear Lord,
And do not make a fuss or speak a single grumbling word;
That is discipline.

1. DEFRAGMENTATION

- life and thought
 - [Matthew 22:40 κρέμαται]
- to hang, hang up, let hang down*: *to hang up by a thing, c. gen.*; *κρεμάσαι τὴν ἀσπίδα to hang up one's shield, i. e. give up war*: so in Med., *πηδάλιον κρεμάσασθαι to hang up one's rudder, i. e. give up the sea.* II. Pass. *to be bung up or suspended, to swing from, hang down from.* 2. metaph. *to be in suspense.*
 - **Rom 13:9** ...any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
 - → relate all things in life to this one purpose
 - the "three sieves" of Socrates: "...If the story you're about to tell me isn't (1) true, (2) good or (3) necessary, just forget it and don't bother me with it."
- 1.1. LOVE → THEOCENTRIC
 - How does the thing/event/person relate to God?
 - **1Jo 4:16** ...God is love ... **1Jo 4:19** We love because he first loved us.

¹ MUMFORD, L. *The Condition of Man*, London : Martin Secker & Warburg, 1944.

1.2. LOVE → SACRIFICIAL

- Does it require commitment/sacrifice?
- **John 3:16** God so loved the world, that he gave...

1.3. LOVE → SERVICE

- Whom am I going to help with my enhanced ability, technological possibilities?
- **Mk 9:35** If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all (εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι, ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος καὶ πάντων διάκονος)

2. THE LAW & THE PROPHETS

- the Bible and theology related to the Great Commandment

2.1. THE BIBLICAL CANON / THEOLOGY

- The two parts of the Old Testament ⇒ the whole of the Bible has this main purpose → the love for God and men
- **Rom 3:21** ...the Law and the Prophets bear witness...

2.2. EXEGESIS / EXPOSITION

- **Lk 24:44-45** Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.
- Reading, understanding, explaining specific texts...
- example: the extermination of the Canaanites...

2.3. SPIRITUALITY

- Testing spiritual guidance by the Great Commandment
- (1) God? (2) salvation of man? (3) the characteristics of love

3. GOD & MAN

- God ↔ man relationship → relationship with God is decisive!
- Truth is more than *correspondence* with reality → hierarchy of values

3.1. THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

- Hierarchy of values TRUTH → more than the ARISTOTELIAN definition...
- Love God *first* → this love gives content to your love of human beings
- Humans and animals → food and religion

3.2. THE VALUE OF A HUMAN BEING

- → Redemption;
- **Mark 8:37** For what can a man give in return for his life? (τί γὰρ δοῖ ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ) →

3.3. THE MEANING OF WORK

- unemployment because work is meant only for profit
- not just for *survival*, or *creativity* → BUT *service of love*...

4. TO REMEMBER

- Our life need a centre, the most important thing to which everything else is related.
- Jesus puts the relationship with God and man in the centre of our life and thinking.
- The life of love begins with God loving us (1J 4:19) and continues with self-discipline.