

Second Hand Preacher 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time 9 10 17

Romans 13:8-10

Sometimes I wish I was Greek. I love gyros, baklava, and dancing on tables. Well maybe not the third one, but I do like things festive. I also like their language, which I wish I would have studied. I know a handful of words that are more specific than English. Love is a great example. Eros is the sexual love that many people feel in attraction to someone. Pilio is the love between friends or sometimes siblings. Agape is the highest form of love given to us from God. We pray that married couples have agape love. The same can be true of parents and children. We can share that agape love with each other as we grow deeper with our community of faith.

Agape love is what St. Paul is talking about when he writes the Romans. He wants them to be a close-knit community that has the highest regards for each other patterned after the great agape love God has for them. He points out that the commandments can be answered with love. Paul wants the Romans to keep the law of love given by Moses to all his chosen people. Jesus called upon Paul to spread this unconditional love to the Gentiles. This was Paul's mission.

When we see the commandments, they look like a bunch of "no's" that restrict us. We learn from Romans that really by keeping these commandments we love our neighbor. Building virtue gives a greater capacity to love. Paul wants us to share that love and use it to connect with one another. We may not always feel mushy with love, but hopefully we can have a love based on mutual respect and understanding. The law of love should capture our hearts and help us to always turn to God. This can be difficult, but we have the capacity to achieve that kind of love. We can do this because we were created in everlasting love.