

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift that your faithful people offer you true and laudable service: Grant that we may run without stumbling to obtain your heavenly promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

LOOK

Share a specific moment when you felt loved. What was happening? Who was present? What did you think and feel?

BOOK

Mark 12:28-34

One of the scribes came near and heard the Sadducees disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the

strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ —this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

- 1) The Jewish audience to whom Jesus spoke would have been familiar with the first commandment, the Schema. How were the Jewish people instructed to show that they loved God?
- 2) Jesus expanded the boundaries of who was entitled to be loved. How did he do that? Why was that an unpopular position?

TOOK

Jesus is not talking here about a warm fuzzy feeling of love, but a commitment, a decision to act a certain way. Have you ever made a decision to love someone when you don’t like them? How did you act? How did you feel?

You and someone you love disagree vehemently about something. What is a loving response? How do we act lovingly *and* with integrity?

‘You only love God as much as you love the person you love the least.’ Dorothy Day Can we love God and hate any part of God’s creation? Discuss.

COVID, racial injustice, politics – all present us with opportunities to choose love. In what situations are you finding it hard to choose love right now? What does look like post-COVID?

The Place Where We Are Right

by Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
Flowers will never grow
In the spring.

The place where we are right
Is hard and trampled
Like a yard.

But doubts and loves
Dig up the world
Like a mole, a plow.
And a whisper will be heard in the
place
Where the ruined
House once stood.