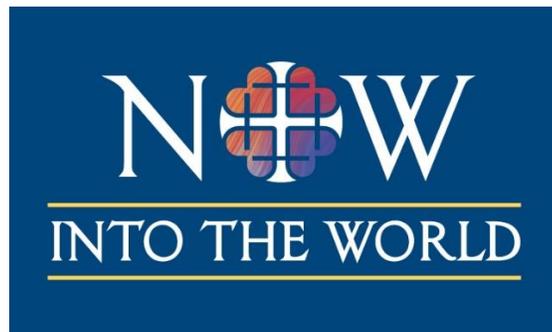


# Love Makes the World Go 'Round

"Which commandment is the first of all?"



**Reflection by  
Richard Jones –**

Here's a trivia question for family and friends during your Thanksgiving gatherings and celebrations: Which 1961 Broadway musical featured the song 'Love Makes the World Go 'Round'? The answer is 'Carnival', although the song achieved much greater popularity as a hit for Perry Como.

There's a very real sense in which love does make the world go 'round'; love is that powerful dynamic which can (and does) motivate all sorts of people to act in extraordinary ways; ways which might be selfless, sacrificial, generous, kind, caring; in acts that are quiet and gentle and brave and bold too. And, so to add another overused cliche, 'love can make the world a better place'.

Mark's gospel account describes how a scribe (having heard Jesus answering the questions of others), poses some simple, straightforward, but rather fundamental questions to Jesus. Was he hoping to test Jesus or perhaps cut through the complexity of the wider conversations and arguments? – Who knows? Jesus chooses to answer simply and clearly. He refuses to be drawn on the relative importance of the commandments; he quotes Deuteronomy and Leviticus to his questioner, almost as though he is embarrassed to be asked such an elementary question. But he does so with a small, but

significant, modification. Deuteronomy makes no reference to 'mind'; that is Jesus own addition. Perhaps it was a sly way of rebuking his questioner!

Long before Jesus, Jewish commentators had wrestled with the meaning of this text. They had no difficulty with loving God with 'heart' and 'soul', but 'strength' caused them a few problems. One school eventually decided that it could be interpreted as 'wealth', or 'money', so perhaps we're not stretching things too far to see this as an encouragement by Jesus to his disciples to use their minds in their handling of wealth, as we, following the injunction in today's Epistle, 'serve the living God'.

We are joined together in love in this life of giving. A principle of interconnectedness and interdependence underpins authentic and distinctive Christian giving and stewardship; a relationship of mutual giving and receiving, between all people and from and to a loving and generous God.



Because we are united in worship of that generous and loving God, we are invited to model our behavior on the same pattern, sharing what we have received. Christian stewardship asks us to assess what we have received, and, in the light of that, what we are called to give.

**November 4<sup>th</sup> 2018**

Proper 26 | Mark 12:28-34

## Reflection Questions

- Paint your giving portrait as it looks now. Start with a review of how and why you give.
- How does it feel to give?
- How does it feel to receive?
- Consider: do you give financially and also with my time and talents? Is it a good blend?
- Ask yourself some questions such as: could you do things differently, be more creative, push your boundaries? Does your giving stretch you or does it feel comfortable? Is giving a priority in your life?
- Is your giving planned and regular or is it spontaneous? Has it become too structured and so lacking in love and creativity? Or has it become too random and haphazard and do you need to be more organized and intentional?

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*He has previously served within two dioceses within the Church in Wales; altogether working with matters of generous giving and stewardship for eighteen years.*

*He is passionate about resourcing the mission and ministry of the church, especially the rural church – which is fortunate as he now serves in the most rural diocese within all of the Church of England!*

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