

[122] **TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME A**

FIRST READING

If you have not warned the wicked,
then I will hold you responsible for their death.

A reading from the book of the prophet Ezekiel 33:7-9

The Lord said:

“Ezekiel, you are a mere human,
but I have chosen you to be a watchman for the people of Israel.
So listen to what I say
and then warn them for me.”

“When I tell evil people that they will die because of their sins,
you must try to make them turn from their evil ways.
If you don’t warn them,
you are responsible for what happens to them.
If you do warn them to turn from their evil ways, and they don’t
then they will die.
But you won’t be responsible.”

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

95:1-2, 6-7abcd, 7e-9

R. (8) If today you hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts.

Sing joyful songs to the Lord!
Praise the might rock
where we are safe.
Come to worship him
with thankful hearts
and songs of praise.

R. If today you hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts.

Bow down and worship
the Lord our Creator!
The Lord is our God,
and we are his people,
the sheep he takes care of

in his own pasture.

R. If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.

Listen to God's voice today!
Don't be stubborn and rebel
as your ancestors did
at Merbah and at Massah
out in the desert.
For forty years
they tested God and saw
the things he did.

R. If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts.

SECOND READING

Love is the fulfillment of the law.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

13:8-10

Brothers and sisters:

Let love be your only debt!
If you love others,
you have done all that the Law demands.

In the Law there are many commands, such as,

“Be faithful in marriage.
Do not murder. Do not steal.
Do not want what belongs to others.”

But all of these are summed up in the command that says,
“Love others as much as you love yourself.”
No one who loves others will harm them.

So love is all that the Law demands.

The word of the Lord.

ALLELUIA

2 Corinthians 5:19

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

God was in Christ, to reconcile the world to himself;
and the good news of reconciliation he has entrusted to us.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

If your brother or sister listens to you,
you will have won that person back.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 18:15-17

Jesus said to his disciples:

“If one of my followers sins against you,
go and point out what was wrong.

But do it in private,
just between the two of you.

If that person listens,
you have won back a follower.

But if that one refuses to listen,
take along one or two others.”

“The Scriptures teach that every complaint must be proven true
by two or more witnesses.

If the follower refuses to listen to them,
report the matter to the church.”

“Anyone who refuses to listen to the church
must be treated like an unbeliever or a tax collector.”

The gospel of the Lord.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Prayer:

Dear Lord,

Sometimes it is hard to love. Help me to love everyone as I love myself and as you love me.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Readings:

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7abcd, 7e-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18: 15-17

Reflection and Discussion:

"I have chosen you to love others as you love yourself." This is what God is teaching us today. Specific examples are also given in today's readings. We are told that we must tell people when they are doing something wrong and help them do what is right. That may not seem like a "loving" thing to do. It will make the person angry and hurt. They won't "feel" loved...at least not at first.

What is love? (Let the children give several answers).

The word "love" can be used as a noun, a thing. It is a feeling. The word "love" is also a verb. It is something you do.

Loving someone is different than just feeling love for them. It is doing something.

Parents want their kids to feel loved. Do children feel loved when their parents let them do whatever they want so they can have that warm, fuzzy, happy feeling? What would you think if your parents let you do anything you wanted? (Let the children answer). It would be fun at first but what about when you got hurt or sick? Would you still feel that warm, happy, loving feeling? In reality, kids think that their parents don't love them if they let them do anything they want. Parents must set rules because they love their kids, to keep them safe, healthy, happy and to teach them how to grow up into healthy and happy adults. Making sure their kids follow the rules is not always fun and it doesn't always give the parents or the kids the warm, fuzzy, happy feeling but it is the way that parents love their children.

"Love your neighbor as you love yourself." How do we love ourselves? Do we go around kissing ourselves and telling ourselves that we love us? We would look pretty silly! We love ourselves the same way that our parents love us. We take care of ourselves to make sure we grow up healthy and happy. That means we take care of our bodies by eating the right foods, exercising, and getting enough rest. It means taking care of our minds by working hard to learn in school. It means taking care of our spirits by choosing good friends and being a good friend to them and by praying and going to church.

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If we are doing all of that to love ourselves, God says that we must also do all of that to love everyone else. As the scripture readings today tell us, that sometimes means letting another person know that they are doing something that is not loving.

Discussion:

Using the word "love" as an action word:

1. How can you actively love your family?
2. How can you actively love your friends?
3. How can you actively love some of your classmates whom you may not really "like"?

Activity:

Create "gift cards" for the children to fill out, decorate and give to someone they love.

A Loving Gift Card	
To:	_____
From:	_____
To Show You I Love You, I Will	_____.