

Ordinary 30A - 2023

Give It to Me in a Nutshell

"Give it to me in a nutshell" -- an old saying -- it means, Tell me what I need to know, but keep it short. Don't bother me with unnecessary detail. Don't bore me with a long, technical explanation. Just get to the bottom line.

We like things short and sweet. Network television news has time only to hit the high spots and to show us a few pictures, but it gives us the big picture in a few minutes. We like that.

I used to have to sit through weekly staff meetings. Sometimes they would go on for two hours, because everyone wanted to have their say. Then we got a new boss who limited each of us to one overhead slide. Each slide had about ten lines, so each person could show us the status of ten programs -- max. We had to code each program green, yellow, or red.

Green meant that everything was o.k. Yellow meant that there was a problem.

Red meant, "The sky is falling!" Furthermore, we weren't to ramble. Stand up! Speak up! Shut up! Sit down! I loved it, because we got through the meetings quickly, and I could get back to work.

Give it to me in a nutshell! That's what the lawyer said to Jesus -- Give it to me in a nutshell. At least, we think that's what he meant. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? Do you know, or should I call Pew Research?" (by Richard Niell Donovan from *In a Nutshell*)

"How can you say you love me?" (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Hasidic Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of the Ukraine was fond of saying that he had learned the true meaning of love from a drunken peasant. While visiting the owner of a tavern in the Polish countryside, the rabbi overheard the conversation of two men seated at a nearby table. Both had had a fair amount to drink and both were feeling quite mellow. With their arms around one another, they were professing how much each loved the other. Suddenly, the older of the two, Ivan, looked at his friend and asked, "Peter, tell me, what hurts me?" Bleary-eyed but slightly sobered by such a question, Peter looked at Ivan and answered with a question of his own: "How do I know what hurts you?" Ivan's response came quickly. — "If you don't know what hurts me, how can you say you love me?" In today's Gospel Jesus teaches us that the most important commandment is to love God living in others.

Chip It Away!

There is a story about a man who had a huge boulder in his front yard. He grew weary of this big, unattractive stone in the center of his lawn, so he decided to take advantage of it and turn it into an object of art. He went to work on it with hammer and chisel, and chipped away at the huge boulder until it became a beautiful stone elephant. When he finished, it was gorgeous, breath-taking. A neighbor asked, "How did you ever carve such a marvelous likeness of an elephant?" The man answered, "I just chipped away everything that didn't look like an elephant!"

If you have anything in your life right now that doesn't look like love, then, with the help of God, chip it away! If you have anything in your life that doesn't look like compassion or mercy or empathy, then, with the help of God, chip it away! If you have hatred or prejudice or vengeance or envy in your heart, for God's sake, and the for the other person's sake, and for your sake, get rid of it! Let God chip everything out of your life that doesn't look like tenderheartedness.

"That's how God works."

There is a story about a young woman who was in great distress because she had lost a sense of God in her life. She complained to her elderly grandmother, "Why doesn't God let me feel His presence? If only I could feel Him and know that He has touched me." Her grandmother said, "Pray to God, right now. Close your eyes and pray to him. Ask Him to put out his hand and touch you." The girl closed her eyes and prayed fervently. Then she felt a hand on her hand. "He touched me. He touched me," she cried out. Then she said, "You know, his hand felt just like your hand." "Of course! It was my hand," her grandmother said. "That's how God works. He takes the hand that is nearest and uses that." (Fr. Pellegrino) (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Love Is More than We Can See

A man once observed a young boy out in a field flying a kite. He noticed that there was something odd about the way the boy was standing and holding on to the string. He walked up to the boy and then learned that the boy was blind. He said, "Do you like flying kites?" The boy said, "I sure do." This piqued the man's curiosity and he asked, "How is that when you cannot see it?" The boy answered, "I may not be able to see it but I can feel it tugging'!" We may not always be able to identify the love of God in this world. Like the little boy, we may not be able to see love but it has a tug that let's us know its there. (by Brett Blair, www.eSermons.com)