



# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

**THIS SUNDAY April 22 & BEYOND"**

## **Threats and Ultimatums from God?**



“Look. You either increase your sales by 25%, or you are fired.”

You could call it a threat. You could call it an ultimatum. Some people would call it a “conditional” manipulation. One way or the other, I’m sure you’ve heard it before, either in

your own life in work, or in a different form being spoken by someone with whom you were in a relationship. Or are still in a relationship.

You know, there are pros and cons. A positive is if you are working in sales and you increase your sales by 25% you are going to increase your personal income from commission by 25%. The negative may be that you are already working at your personal capacity, trying to keep everything in your life in balance. Adding 25% more may mean forcing you to neglect your personal relationships which you value. And then you might get some pushback, something like, “If you don’t cut back your work time away from home by 20%, then this relationship is over.”

This may be splitting hairs if you’ve got some personal hurt right now, but I see the first statement as usually a manipulative threat, and usually generated by greed. And I see the second statement as a “conditional” statement, usually based on a prior agreement. I could be wrong on the first one. It is quite possible it is also a “conditional” warning. Perhaps coming into that sales job you agreed to sell 1000 widgets every month, because you were quite sure you could do it. But over 6 months so far you’ve averaged 800. That means you’d have to increase by 200 widgets to get to the agreed upon 1000, or a 25% increase. So is that a threat? No. Ultimatum? Probably, based on the prior agreement. Conditional? Absolutely. Your employment, to which you agreed, was conditional on that level of sales.

Well, those are a lot of ethical considerations. Nothing is simple, I suppose. In the Bible, with the teaching of Jesus, many people have criticized Jesus' teaching as containing all of these things: threats, ultimatums, conditional.

I'm going to go at this, though, from the idea of having or establishing a relationship with Jesus. There certainly are the consequences explained by Jesus for those who choose not to believe. But, you know, at some point in our lives -- bullying aside -- we have to understand that when we make decisions we also choose the risk of certain consequences. I say risk because there are lots of people who do things or don't do things they shouldn't or should, and have never had to suffer consequences. That's when we say the world is not fair! Yes.

In this case, too, consequences are part of the decision, not payment for the decision. Jesus tells us these two things in particular: if you will [repent and] believe in me, you will receive eternal life. And then he said, also several times, what we hear in the Sunday Gospel reading for April 29, 2018, "if you love me you will obey my commandments, and my Father in heaven will bless you for it."

First, the relationship with God is not conditional in the sense of you having to become sales-worthy, or sales-competent, or sales-proven. If you will believe that he is risen from the Dead, then you have made exactly the right choice, and the relationship is eternally made. The blessing of eternal life with God awaits you. And second, the relationship with God is enhanced (not proven) by your following his commandments. The clear implication from the text is a desire to follow his commandments BECAUSE you love him. Sure. If you say you love him, but you are not following his commandments, you are not showing him that you love him. But you are not being asked to love him or follow him 25% more, or else.

And believe me, if you show God you love him by following his commandments and were to do that with even more of a desire to show your love, the people and the job and the relationships you have are only going to benefit, not become deficient. And the consequences are all out of this world.

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

## CALENDAR

**SUNDAY:** The Fifth Sunday of Easter

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue*—

*Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.*

**MONDAY:** 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

**TUESDAY:** Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

**FRIDAY:** AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)

**SATURDAY** 11:00a Rosary (St. Mary's Chapel)

11:30a Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

Noon Potluck Lunch (Parish Hall)

An Anglo-Catholic Parish in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego  
[www.allsaintschurch.org](http://www.allsaintschurch.org)