

**Proper 22B – 2024 – Commitments  
St James & Good Shepherd  
Laconia, NH**

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How do you feel about commitments? There are many forms of commitment in our culture. When we get married, when we have children, when we sign up for Netflix, when we pledge financially to a church, when we are a member of a church or a community or other organization. At Baptism and confirmation, we make a commitment to God to walk our life as a Christian. Oh, and lest I forget, some of us are committed to a team. I forget about this one because I am not a big sports fan. But team commitment is really important to some!

When I was ordained, I made a public commitment to God, and more specifically, the Episcopal Church. I promised to follow and obey the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church. When I became a Pastor to a Lutheran Church, I made a commitment to honor that tradition as well.

So, when you start to think about it, we make a lot of commitments. Some short and some hopefully life-long. Some important and some not so important. Some commitments take serious consideration and others you may do on a whim. Hopefully, those done on a whim are easily reversible, like a subscription to Netflix! Though it gets harder and harder to unsubscribe to anything!

Today's readings are about commitment. Job is committed to God, in fact he is so committed that we are still reading about him all these years later! Job's commitment is legendary. He suffers all sorts of difficulties and yet is still faithful and fast to God. I was trying to think of a commitment like that today and I thought of a sports team. Some are so committed to their team that no matter how bad they are and for how many years they lose, they still sport their team's gear! You know who you are, you are the modern-day Jobs of the sports world. On a more serious note, when in your life have you stayed committed against all the odds? It was hard right? Commitment is hard, it means you stick it through the tough times and the good times.

Jesus talks about the commitment of marriage. This too can be hard. For those of us married many years, I am sure there were times when we wondered “What am I doing?” or “How did I get here?”. But you stick it out if you can and things usually improve. When it works, marriage is a wonderful gift. It enriches your life in so many ways, but when it doesn’t, it may need to end, and that commitment you made is dissolved. We hope our commitments will last, but sometimes it is best if they don’t.

I think the point Jesus is trying to make is that commitment is important, but so is living a good life filled with love and joy. That good commitments help us to live better lives and be better people. So, treasure your commitments. They can be life giving and life strengthening. If they are not life giving, then you may need to make an adjustment. Not all our choices work. Jesus is not saying stick it out at all costs. Jesus is saying commitments help us live our best life. Commitments help us enjoy the really good times, and hang in there in tough times. Being a person of faith is not always easy. It takes commitment to show up here on Sunday mornings, but commitment to God should give your life meaning and purpose. Commitment to God should make you stronger and give you strength when things are hard.

God’s love knows no barriers, so no matter what life may throw your way, God walks with you. Sometimes we forget that, but we just have to remember Job, if anyone had a reason to give up on God he did, but he held fast, and we are all enriched and inspired by his witness. Amen