



THE PASTOR'S PEN

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Loving God

What were your first words this morning?

A few years ago, a radio station ran a contest. Disc jockeys invited their listeners to tune in their clock radios, "Just for fun," they said, "When you wake up to the sound of FM-106, call and tell us the first words you spoke when you rolled out of bed. If you are our third caller, you will win \$106.00."

It did not take long for the contest to grow in enthusiasm. The first morning, a buoyant disc jockey said, "Caller number three, what did you say when you rolled out of bed this morning?" A voice said, "Do I smell coffee burning?" Another day, a sleepy clerical worker said, "Oh no, I'm late for work." It was a funny contest and drew a considerable audience.

One morning, however, the third caller said something unusual. When asked the usual question, a voice with a Bronx accent replied, "Shema, Israel...Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."

There was a moment of embarrassed silence. Then the radio announcer said, "Sorry, wrong number," and cut to a commercial.

What did you say when you rolled out of bed today? Chances are, those words set the tone for the rest of the day. For the pious Jew the first words of each morning are always the same, and they were the words first spoken by Moses, who said, "Keep those words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Teach them to your children and talk about them when you lie down and when you rise." (Deut. 6:7)

Loving the Lord our God with all our heart is not merely a command for pious Jews - it is also for every Christian (Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). These words name our primary allegiance and bind us to our greatest responsibility: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart."**

Tonight, think about what your first words will be tomorrow!

**God Bless,
Paul**