

## Love God; Mark 12:28-33

### I. Relationships

- A. Christianity has always been more than just coming to church on Sundays and Wednesdays
- B. Christianity has always been more than a system of behavior
- C. First and foremost, Christianity is a relationship with God
- D. Unfortunately, we seem to miss the relationship in the midst of our behavior and attendance
  - 1. We focus on the do's and don'ts and miss the greatest commandment
  - 2. In this commandment we don't see a system of behavior modification
  - 3. We see a desire for God to be our Father, and for us to be His Children
  - 4. The relationship between a father and their children

### II. Hear

- A. The Lord our God, the Lord is one
- B. This is an affirmation of the "Shema" (to hear, so as to do) quoted from Deuteronomy 6:4
  - 1. It has become the Jewish affirmation of monotheism.
  - 2. It is prayed daily by faithful Jews and on every Sabbath.
  - 3. Jesus quotes a Scripture that is binding on all Jews (his audience)
- C. This is not something that can be argued by the Pharisees and scribes
  - 1. This statement is born out of an argument with the Sadducees over the resurrection
  - 2. Matthew 22:34–35; <sup>34</sup> But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup> And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.
- D. Even though this scribe brought the question up to test Jesus, his understanding of God and God's commandments spot on
  - 1. Mark 12:33–34; <sup>33</sup> And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup> And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.
- E. This scribe had "ears to hear;" he understood the "Shema," "to hear so as to do"
  - 1. To hear something with the intent of understanding and completing the action requested
  - 2. "Roger, wilco and out" is a standard response to a message over the radio. It means I heard and understood the message (roger) and I will comply with the instructions (wilco); no more instructions necessary, I'm off to complete the task given (and out)
  - 3. I can see this scribe's response, "Roger, wilco and out"
- F. Are we hearing the instruction that Jesus gives us?
- G. What is our response?

### III. Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength

- A. While these are readily understandable as individual words, they make up the whole person
- B. In this we see that God is not satisfied with just "partial devotion"
  - 1. There really cannot be such a thing as "partial devotion" they contradict one another
  - 2. Yet we would try to give "partial devotion" to God by not going "all-in"
  - 3. "All-in" is a phrase from the card game Texas Hold-em
    - a) When you bet all your chips
    - b) Win or lose there is no holding back, you bet all you have

- c) There is nothing left in front of you, it is all in the pot
- C. Jesus describes the kind of relationship that God has always wanted with His people
- D. One where we give up everything we are to become what God wants us to be
- E. 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- F. Luke 11:33–36; <sup>33</sup> “No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. <sup>34</sup> Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. <sup>35</sup> Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. <sup>36</sup> If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”
- G. We should be “all-in” when it comes to God
  - 1. A complete relationship, wholly committed to Him
  - 2. No “partial devotion” but total commitment
  - 3. A relationship, not a system of belief and behavior
- H. Love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength
- IV. Love Your Neighbor
  - A. Love your neighbor as yourself
  - B. Again, Jesus quotes the old law (Leviticus 19:18)
  - C. It is impossible to love God and hate those made in His image
    - 1. 1 John 2:9–11; <sup>9</sup> Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
    - 2. 1 John 4:20; If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
  - D. It is impossible to love your neighbor as yourself if you do not love yourself.
    - 1. There is an appropriate self-love which is based on God’s priority love for mankind.
    - 2. We are His creation, fashioned in His image (Gen. 1:26-27).
    - 3. We must rejoice in our giftedness and accept our physical, mental, and psychological makeup
      - a) Psalm 139:13–14; <sup>13</sup> For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. <sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.
    - 4. To criticize ourselves is to criticize our Maker! He can transform our fallenness into a reflection of His glory (Christlikeness).
  - E. Not far from the Kingdom
    - 1. The scribes answer shows how close he came to the Kingdom
    - 2. Yet he failed to completely understand Jesus’ words
    - 3. We come to understand the glory of the truth of Jesus, the Son of God
    - 4. But the path to acceptance is hard, blocked at times with difficulties and oppositions
    - 5. We are led to believe in the idea of “partial devotion”
      - a) “I can have Jesus and the world too”
      - b) I’ll just come to church on Sundays... maybe Wednesdays if it is not too inconvenient

- c) I'll live my own life the way I want it and give some time and effort to God when it is convenient
  - d) This is a lie that Satan wants you to believe
- F. The truth is that we need to be wholly devoted to God through His Son, Jesus
  - 1. This means loving the people created in His image even when it is hard or inconvenient
  - 2. This means sacrificing our personal desires so that others can see Jesus in us (we can be the light)
  - 3. This means going "all-in," leaving nothing at the table
  - 4. Giving up your life for that of our Savior, Jesus the Christ
- V. Love God
  - A. To hear so as to do
  - B. A completely devoted relationship with God
  - C. A love for those who are created in His image