

And You Shall Love; Mark 12:28-31

I. God's Love

- A. We talk a lot about God's love — we talked about God's 'lavish love' last week
- B. About how His love manifested itself in the sacrifice of His Son
- C. How do we respond to such an act?
- D. Better yet, how is it that God wants us to react to such 'lavish love?'

II. Testing

- A. Matthew 22:34–36 (ESV); ³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"
- B. While Mark does not give us the motivation of the scribe (lawyer) that asked the question, Matthew does
 1. This was a test to try and trip up Jesus
 2. The Sadducees had finished trying to test Jesus about the resurrection (the Sadducees believe there is no resurrection of the dead)
 3. Jesus silences them with the statement, "He is not God of the dead, but of the living"
 4. Jesus' words to this scribe changed him somehow
 5. Mark 12:32–34 (ESV); ³² And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. ³³ 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." ³⁴ 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.
 6. You can almost see the recognition and understanding in the scribe's response
 7. The scribe even quotes 1 Samuel 15:22 when God rejected Saul and King over Israel (could the scribe be alluding to the fact that the Pharisees were rejecting Jesus as King?)
 8. 1 Samuel 15:22–23 (ESV); ²² And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king."
 9. I think the scribe heard Jesus' words as He quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and responded to them
 10. Jesus "saw he answered wisely" and even stated, "you are not far from the kingdom of God"
- C. We must be like the scribe and hear what God is saying to us and respond to it

III. Love

- A. Deuteronomy 6:4–5 (ESV); ⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.
- B. I think that all these things, heart, soul, might (strength), and mind is simply a way of saying "with your entire self, your whole being"
- C. Love should be the motivating factor in everything we do — here are a few examples
- D. In Worship
 1. Worship is an expression of loving God with our whole being
 2. If we love him (truly) then we worship him as he wants us to (in spirit and in truth — John 4:24)
 3. We look at this gathering as an opportunity to commune with the Father through the Son and in the Spirit as well as a time to fellowship and encourage each other

4. It is not an obligation that we bear out of necessity, but a privilege in which we are honored to participate
5. It ceases to be an interruption of our weekend and becomes the purpose of our week
6. We start preparing for Sunday worship on Monday morning!

E. In Giving

1. Giving is an expression of loving God with our whole being
2. Unfortunately, there are many examples of “evangelists” and “preachers” who have taken advantage of communities and guilted people into giving for their own personal gain
3. This is a far cry from the attitude of the congregations in the New Testament — they were begging to participate in giving
4. 2 Corinthians 8:1–5 (ESV); ¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ² for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³ For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴ begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— ⁵ and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.
5. This was not a burden to them, but love
6. Philippians 4:18 (ESV); I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

F. In Obedience

1. John 14:21 (ESV); Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”
2. Somehow we (in Christendom) have decided that we have the freedom to love God any way we want — we choose who, what, when, where, and how to obey Him
3. We think that the freedom we have in Christ is to obey him how we want to
4. Paul opens (and closes) his letter to the Romans with the idea of obedience
5. Romans 1:1–6 (ESV); ¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship **to bring about the obedience of faith** for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,
6. Romans 16:25–27 (ESV); ²⁵ Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶ but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, **to bring about the obedience of faith**— ²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

G. Our response to the Gospel is to love God

IV. And You Shall Love

- A. The Gospel should fundamentally change us (as it did the scribe)
- B. We love God with our entire being
- C. We worship the way He wants us to
- D. We give the way He wants us to
- E. We obey according to His will
- F. That is the response that God wants from His kingdom citizens