

THE FIRST OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS MARK 12:28-31

Text: Mark 12:28-29

Mark 12:28-29

²⁸ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? ²⁹ And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

Introduction:

In first 5 books of the Old Testament there are 613 laws given to men. Of these laws, 248 are considered positives in nature while 365 are considered to be negative. That is, some compel men to do certain things while others forbid men from certain activities.

This certainly causes us to think that this scribes question was legitimate.

The Lord takes all 613 laws or rules and regulations and sums them up in 2 great statements.

All the laws, commandments, regulations and all the teachings of the prophets are summed up in one word – Love.

This kind of love is defined and explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. ⁴ Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸ Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³ And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

Paul concludes that the greatest of all that remains is love.

Note:

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS (vs. 29-31)

Mark 12:29-31

²⁹ And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: ³⁰ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. ³¹ And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

A. The Supreme Commandment (vs.29-30)

The Lord is to be loved ahead of everything else in this world and that he is to love the Lord with every faculty of his being.

Notice the areas that we are to love the Lord supremely:

- All Our Heart

What Jesus is saying is that we are to love the Lord without pretense. We are to be genuine in our love for Him and not to just say we love that Lord and then live as if He didn't exist. We are to be genuine in our love and not be hypocrites.

- All Our Soul

This involves the idea of our emotions. We are not to love God with some kind of dry, antiseptic love, but we are to be emotional in our love for Him. That is, our love for God should touch us at our most intimate levels. We are to love the Lord with all our emotional self.

- All Our Mind

This love is not mindless and empty-headed, but we are to love the Lord because we have considered Him, meditated on Him and therefore make a conscious decision to love the Lord. In other words, you shouldn't love God just because the preachers says so, but you should love Him because of who He is and what He has done for you

- All Our Strength

This implies that our love for the Lord is not to be a thing that is done in word alone, but should also see expression in our physical bodies. We have no right to divorce the physical from the spiritual. True love for Jesus is always carried out by the physical man, as well as the spiritual.

Illustration:

"Following a great victory, King Cyrus of Persia took as prisoners a noble prince, his wife, and their children. When they were brought into the leader's tent to stand before him, Cyrus said to the prince, "What will you give me if I set you free?" He replied, "I will give you half of all that I possess." "And what will you give me if I release your children?" continued Cyrus. "Your majesty, I will give you all that I possess." The king questioned him further, "But what will you give me if I set your wife at liberty?" Looking at the one he loved so dearly, the prince replied without hesitation, "If you will restore my wife to freedom, I will give you my life." Cyrus was so moved by his devotion that he released the entire family without asking recompense. That evening the prince said to his wife, "Did you not think Cyrus a very handsome man?" "I did not notice him," she answered, "Why, my dear, where were your eyes?" exclaimed her husband. She replied, "I had eyes only for the one who said he would lay down his life for me."

B. The Second Commandment (vs. 31)

Mark 12:31

³¹ And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Just because this is the second commandment may be somewhat misleading, because both commandments are very closely intertwined.

As a matter of fact it's impossible to do either one without the other.

Jesus is simply telling us that we are to love others with the same love which we bestow upon ourselves. That is, we are to place others in such a position that we are constantly looking out for their best interests, their welfare and their best good.

Philippians 2:3

³ *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Romans 12:10

¹⁰ *Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Illustration:

The true formula for joy is:

J – Jesus

O – Others

Y – You

Illustration:

In sixteenth century England, Oliver Cromwell ordered that a soldier be shot for his crimes at the ringing of the evening bell. But that night at the fateful hour, no

sound came from the belfry. The girl who was to be married to the condemned man had climbed up into the tower and had clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking. Brought before Cromwell to give an account of her actions, she only wept and showed him her bruised and bleeding hands. Cromwell was greatly impressed, and he said, "Your lover is alive because of your sacrifice. He will not be shot!"

2. THE COMPLETENESS OF THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS (VS. 31B)

Mark 12:31

³¹ And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

In Matthew 22:40 the Lord said:

Matthew 22:40

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

What Jesus is telling us is that we can always be assured that we will do the right thing by God and by our fellow man if we will love the Lord supremely, with everything we have and are, and if we will simply love those around us as strongly as we love ourselves.

If we love God and others as we should, we will live our lives in a pleasing fashion!

3. THE COST OF THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS

If we are going to fulfill these Great Commandments, we need to be aware that it will cost us something. It can be done, but the cost isn't cheap!

- If I am going to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, then it is going to mean that I am going to have to place His will ahead of mine.
- It means that I may have to say no to some things that I might want to do.
- It means that I am going to have to seek the Lord's will and make it the priority in my life.
- It may mean that I can't go places others can go, I can watch what others watch, I can't enjoy what they enjoy.

You can either live to please yourself and the flesh, or you can devote yourself to pleasing the Lord

If I am going to love my neighbor as I love myself, it will cost me as well.

- I may have to seek forgiveness when I have done no wrong.

- I may have to sacrifice something I think I need to meet a brother's need.
- I may have to give up time to help someone. I may have to spend time in prayer for them, go to them, and reach out to them.

When I love others as I should, I am simply proving that I do indeed belong to the Lord and love Him.

1 John 4:20-21

²⁰If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? ²¹And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

1 John 4:12

¹²No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 3:14-15

¹⁴We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. ¹⁵Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Close:

Is your love for God all that it should be? Do you pray to Him as you should? Are you in His Word as you should be? Are there people or things that have crept in and taken over first place in your life?

What about your love for others? Is it all it could and should be?