

The Second Greatest Commandment

Mark 12:29-31

As we learned a few months ago the Jews were forever rankling about which of the commandments were the greatest or most important. So one day someone decided to get Jesus involved in this great theological debate. So they put the question to him. "Which is the greatest commandment?" To which Jesus responds immediately that to love God with all of ones heart and soul and strength was the most weighty of all the commandments. And we spent three month covering the first of these. Now we come to the second commandment given by Jesus as like the other. That is that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Taken from Leviticus 19 Jesus raised this seaming insignificant command to the place of second among them all.

This is all Scripture in a nutshell; the whole law of human duty in a portable, pocket form." Indeed, it is so simple that a child may understand it, so brief that all may remember it, so comprehensive as to embrace all possible cases. And from its very nature it is unchangeable. It is inconceivable that God should require from his rational creatures anything less, or in substance anything else, under any dispensation, in any world, at any period throughout eternal duration. He cannot but claim this—all this—alike in heaven, in earth, and in hell! And this incomparable summary of the divine law belonged to the Jewish religion! As it shines in its own self-evidencing splendor, so it reveals its own true source. The religion from which the world has received it could be none other than a God-given religion! JFB

Now I find that we tend to have more problems with the second than the first of these commands. The reason is that loving God is fairly abstract while loving our neighbor is much easier to see.

We must love our neighbours as ourselves, which we shall easily do, if we, as we ought to do, love God better than ourselves. We must wish well to all and ill to none; must do all the good we can in the world and no hurt, and must fix it as a rule to ourselves to do to others as we would they should do to us; and this is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Havner's story of the great old preacher; I guess he just loved us.

Romans 13:8-10 (NKJV) 8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

"A new commandment I give to you," Jesus said, "that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35)

Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV) For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you

have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

1 John 3:23 (NKJV) And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

1 John 4:7 (NKJV) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:21 (NKJV) And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Colossians 3:12-14 (NKJV) 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Philippians 1:10 (NKJV) that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,

1 Peter 1:22 (NKJV) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

Matthew 5:44 (NKJV) But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

Romans 12:20 (NKJV) Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

Galatians 6:10 (NKJV) Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

It is clear that righteous, godly love is much more than emotion or feeling. As see in the Galatians passage just quoted, love begins with "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." But it also and always finds ways to "do good" to those whom we love, whether they seem to deserve it or not. MacArthur

Godly love includes ministering to the physical and financial needs of others, unbelievers as well as believers. That truth is the central point of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). MacArthur

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NKJV) 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Galatians 5:13 (NKJV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Romans 14:21 (NKJV) It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV) And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:2-3 (NKJV) 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The greatest test of godly love is its willingness to sacrifice its own needs and welfare for the needs and welfare of others, even to the point of forfeiting life if necessary. "Greater love has no one than this," Jesus said, "that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). MacArthur

Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV) 1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

1 John 3:16 (NKJV) By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Ephesians 3:17-19 (NKJV) 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NKJV) But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

1 John 4:16-21 (NKJV) 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

Colossians 3:14-15 (NKJV) 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.