

Matthew 22:34-40: 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?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great & first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Intro: Last Sunday, we saw a confrontation between Jesus & a group called the Sadducees. They denied much of the truth of God's Word, even denying the resurrection of the dead. But Jesus answered their objections with power, beauty, & perfection, speaking like no man ever spoke! We saw that we are to live for another world: heaven; Jesus is God's final Word to us; Jesus is the final & perfect interpreter of God's Word; Jesus is the One Who will fulfill all of God's Word; & Jesus is the greatest joy, pleasure, & treasure of heaven that we are to live for! Pursue the true knowledge of God & His Word, trust & follow Jesus, & you will live forever & never die!

Today, we see the next round of confrontation – this one with the Pharisees. They keep trying to test Jesus, & they ask Him about the greatest commandment in the law.

With God's help, love God with all your heart, soul, & mind, & love your neighbor as yourself: this is everything!

1. The Pharisees Come To Test Jesus Again

Matthew 22:34-36: But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ & one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

The Pharisees had already tried to entangle Jesus in His Words with the question about paying taxes to Caesar. Now they see the failure of the Sadducees, & they want round two! So they tempt again, just like Satan. They send a lawyer/teacher of the law/scribe: an expert in the law – they've been beat up – so they send in the big guns!
- **1 Peter 5:8:** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Asking God questions can be a good, humble action. But it can also be wicked & evil. **GOSPEL!** (New hearts!)

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2. With God's Help, Love God

Matthew 22:37-38: And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great & first commandment."

a. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:4-9: 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. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

“Might” or “mind?”: There is no difference in meaning, the point is love God with all that you are; Jesus is God, so He can change things & add words if He pleases!

Daniel Doriani: In other places, Jesus commands us to love God with heart, soul, mind, *and* strength (Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27). We must not view these slight variations as points of tension or disagreement. The variations show that we should love the Lord with all of our faculties [power; being; all that we are]

b. This commandment shows what is most important to God: What is most important to God? God is! God created us for His own glory (Isa 43:6-7; 1 Cor 10:31); God chose Israel for His own glory (Jer 13:11); God rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt for His own glory (Ps 106); God redeemed us for His own glory (Eph 1); & Jesus is coming back for God's glory (2 Thess 1:9-10)

- **Isaiah 48:11:** For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

c. What does it mean to love God?: 1) True love (for both God & neighbor) is defined for us in God's Word. Anything done in disobedience to God's Word is not loving. Love is guarded & guided by God's Word.

John Piper: 2) What loving God does not mean:

a) Loving God is not meeting God's needs: **Acts 17:24-25:** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

b) Loving God is not love for the gifts He gives us: God gives us some amazing gifts! Forgiveness; Justification; Adoption; Sanctification; Glorification; All the physical & material gifts & pleasures of this world, etc.

c. Loving God is not the good works that love for God motivates you to do: Yes, love does good works. But you can do all kinds of good works, & still not have love: **1 Corinthians 13:1-3:** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

John Piper: Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." This does not mean keeping his commandments is love. It means love is the kind of heart that prompts you to keep commandments. In John 21:15-17, Jesus illustrates this connection when he asks Simon Peter three times, "Do you love me?" When Peter says, "Yes," Jesus does not say, "Good, that must mean you are obeying my commandments, because obeying my commandments is love." No, he said, "Feed my sheep." In other words, if you love me, act like it. Love my flock and feed them. Feeding sheep is the fruit of loving Jesus.

3) What loving God does mean: **John Piper:** . . . love for God is a matter of the heart's esteem for God before it produces anything else. It is something internal and involves spiritual emotions. It is not, in essence, a deliberated choice or a deed. It is more like a reflex of the heart to the perfections of God revealed especially in Christ . . . Loving God is desiring God himself beyond his gifts. Loving God is treasuring God himself beyond his gifts. Love for God is delighting in God himself beyond his gifts. Love for God is being satisfied in God himself beyond his gifts. Love for God is cherishing God himself beyond his gifts. Love for God is savoring God himself beyond his gifts. Love for God is valuing God and prizing God and revering God and admiring God beyond his gifts. All these words are grasping for that essential response of the heart to the revelation of the glory of God, especially in Christ through the gospel. It is a glad reflex of the heart to all that God is for us in Christ.

d. What does it mean to love God with all your heart & with all your soul & with all your mind?: It means desiring God Himself with everything that you are! It means treasuring God with everything that you are! It means delighting in God with everything that you are! It means being satisfied with everything that you are! It means cherishing God with everything that you are! It means savoring God with everything that you are! It means valuing & prizing & revering & admiring God with everything that you are!

With God's help, love God with all your heart, soul, & mind, & love your neighbor as yourself: this is everything!

3. With God's Help, Love Your Neighbor

Matthew 22:39: "And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

a. Jesus quotes from Leviticus 19:18: You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

b. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?: 1) What does loving your neighbor as yourself not mean: It does not mean that you need to learn to love yourself first so that you can love others: This kind of thinking is the exact opposite of what Jesus is teaching! Jesus knows you love yourself!

- **Ephesians 5:29:** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes & cherishes it

Blaise Pascal: All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.

John Piper: Jesus says in effect: I start with your inborn, deep, defining human trait – your love for yourself. This is a given. I don't command it; I assume it. All of you have a powerful instinct of self-preservation and self-fulfillment. You all want to be happy. You all want to live and to live with satisfaction. You want food for yourself. You want clothes for yourself. You want a place to live for yourself. You want protection from violence against yourself. You want meaningful or pleasant activity to fill your days. You want some friends to like you & spend some time with you. You want your life to count in some way. All this is self-love. Self-love is the deep longing to diminish pain & to increase happiness. That's what Jesus starts with when he says, "as yourself."

2) What loving your neighbor as yourself does mean: Love others with as much time, thought, care, passion, creativity, money, help, & delight as you love yourself!

John Piper: As you long for food when you are hungry, so long to feed your neighbor when he is hungry. As you long for nice clothes for yourself, so long for nice clothes for your neighbor. As you work for a comfortable place to live, so desire a comfortable place to live for your neighbor. As you seek to be safe & secure from calamity & violence, so seek comfort & security for your neighbor. As you seek friends for yourself, so be a friend to your neighbor. As you want your life to count & be significant, so desire that same significance for your neighbor. As you work to make good grades yourself, so work to help your neighbor make good grades. As you like to be welcomed into strange company, so welcome your neighbor into strange company. As you would that men would do to you, do so to them: **Matthew 7:12:** So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Loving your neighbor as you love yourself is being just as passionate & concerned with their joy, happiness, & satisfaction as you are with your own joy, happiness, and satisfaction!

It's the child who is just as happy that his sister got the last cookie as if he himself got the last cookie!

It's the single person who is just as happy that their friend got married as if they had been the one to get married!

It's the student who's just as happy for his friend who graduated with top honors as if he was the one who got it!

It's the pastor who's just as happy for the pastor down the street who's church is growing, as if it were his church!

It's the man who loves his unborn neighbor in the same way he was glad he was loved in the womb & born!

The power of being able to love this way is an intense love for God: the joy of the Lord is our strength!

John Piper: Love is the overflow of joy in God that gladly meets the needs of others. [According to God's Word!]

Daniel Doriani: (Love & Law are in harmony): We love parents when we honor them. We love our spouses when we are faithful to them. We love neighbors when we respect their property. We love neighbors when we tell "the

truth to them and about them.” We love them when we will their good “rather than coveting their goods.”

- **1 John 4:20:** If anyone says, "I love God," & 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.

- **Genesis 29:20:** So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

With God’s help, love God with all your heart, soul, & mind, & love your neighbor as yourself: this is everything!

4. All The Law And The Prophets Depend On These Two Commandments

Matthew 22:40: On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.

These two commandments are the foundation & the goal of everything in the Law of God & everything that the Prophets of God have spoken.

1) Foundation: If love for God & others is not present in your obedience, then it’s not obedience. (1 Cor. 13) All the Law & the Prophets depend on this – if you don’t have love, you gain nothing.

2) Goal: The purpose for everything in the Law and the Prophets is that we might love God and love others:

1 Timothy 1:5: The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart & a good conscience and a sincere faith

- **Craig Blomberg:** These two commandments are the greatest because all others flow from them . . . all other commandments are summed up and/or contained in these.

- **R. T. France:** All the other commandments are derived from these two commandments.

- **D. A. Carson:** The entire biblical revelation demands heart religion marked by total allegiance to God, loving him & loving one’s neighbor.

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Let’s look unto Jesus: Jesus is the One Man Who obeyed these greatest commandments perfectly; died on the cross; and rose from the dead so that God might accept & love you even as He loves His own Son!

Jesus Alone Fulfilled The Greatest Commands; Obeying All That God Demands; Then Took His Wrath With Nail Pierced Hands; And Conquered Death – Alive He Stands!

What, above all, does God require
This command is the law entire
Love the Lord with every desire
He'll set your heart and mind afire
In love for Him that does inspire
Your love for others won't expire
For God Himself's your joy supplier
And from this joy you won't retire
For God the Son took all our mire
Doing all God's laws require
And on that cross was lifted higher
Took upon Himself God's ire
So all men would come admire
The risen Christ Who fills with fire
Grants you righteousness attire
For you, eternal life acquire
May He be your great desire
Bow to Him your only Sire
He'll help you do the law entire

All praise to Him with shouts and choir!

Love is central to this command
Without love we cannot stand
We're nothing and God will withstand
We won't enter the Promised Land
Our whole life is sinking sand
We need a Savior – God has planned
To send Him here to hope expand
He met the laws greatest demand
Was slaughtered by His Father's hand
He's the love God did command
So trust in Him – you won't be damned
But in your heart He will expand
To flames of love you will be fanned!

From God's Kingdom are you not far?
Come and trust the Morning Star!
For your sins He took the scar
He became the sin you are!

Come to Him – He'll set you free!
Trust the Son and you will be
Beloved by the great One in Three
For all love He is the key
Since He died upon that tree
And rose to make all death to flee
He'll send you on a loving spree
Your source – His love – an ocean sea!

Christ Jesus Is God's Love Command
Our Great Delight In Whom We Stand
And More Than Any Joy Or Gland
Christ Is All Our Joy Grand
All Things Else Are Sinking Sand
He's The Greatest Love That's Spanned
The Everlasting Time God's Planned
He Died And Bore God's Angry Hand
Who Struck The Shepherd Dead But And
Then Rose Alive To Life Expand
By Faith Alone You're Just And Stand
To Love And Treasure Your God And
To Love Your Neighbor – His Demand
With Heart, Mind, Soul Let's Understand
Love God The Most And Fight, Withstand
The Devil's Evils Bound And Banned
God Loved Us First, So That Command
We Do Through Him Who From His Hand
Grants By His Spirit Each Demand
For Christ Is All Our Wonderland!

With God's help, love God with all your heart, soul, & mind, & love your neighbor as yourself: this is everything!