

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Mark -The Simple Gospel | Week 42: The Two Most Important Things in Life

Mark 12:28-34 (NLT) The Most Important Commandment

28 One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

29 Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. 30 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’[a] 31 The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’[b] No other commandment is greater than these.”

32 The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. 33 And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

34 Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NLT)

4 “Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.[a] 5 And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. 8 Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Jesus starts with the declaration that there is ONLY ONE GOD (not many) – this is the ESSENTIAL TRUTH about the Creator.

Four significant ideas in verse 30.

- 1. We are called to “LOVE THE LORD OUR GOD.”**
 - a. AGAPE – “the highest form of affection, benevolence, good will, and commitment”; it embraces a profound sacrificial love that transcends and persists regardless of circumstance. It is not an emotion but rather a commitment that moves to act on behalf of another.
- 2. The impulse to Love God does not start with us.**

- a. John 6:44 “ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them...”
 - b. 1 John 4:19 “We love because he first loved us.”
- 3. Our love for God doesn’t start out mature, but we grow in our love relationship with Him as we learn about Him and experience His work in our lives.**
- a. The command to “Love the Lord Our God” declares what God’s MISSION STATEMENT is for every believer
 - b. How we love God is the most important & reliable measurement of success in our lives.
 - c. How we love God is the standard we will be judged by when we stand before Him at the end of time.
 - d. Loving God is to be the one thing we value the most.

Loving God is to be at the center of our lives; in everything we do and how we live.

Loving our neighbors as ourselves is only possible and sustainable by having a love relationship with God.