

LOVE LOVE **THY** LOVE **NEIGHBOR**



Love Thy Neighbor

Part 2 - Baby Dedication Sunday

September 10, 2023

The Book of Leviticus 19:9-18, ⁹“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. ¹⁰And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God. ¹¹“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. ¹³“You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning. ¹⁴You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am

the Lord. ¹⁵“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. ¹⁷“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You 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.”

May the Lord add His Blessing to the Reading and the Hearing of His Word, In Jesus Name! Amen!

Last Sunday we began a new series entitled, “Love Thy Neighbor” during which we dissected the teaching of Christ Himself when it comes to the Chiefest of the points of the Law of Moses and what Christ taught publicly to the Hearers of His Message. But where did these teachings come from and why was the Law of Moses, to the Pharisees, so important to constantly reference to?

Friends, the Word of God is the final authority and we glean no authority from any other source that is the bedrock of truth outside of the Word of God. Christ Himself, being the Word made Flesh according to the Gospel of Saint John chapter 1, was the literal manifestation of the Word of God coming to fruition. Jesus was the Living Word of God!

Hence the reason why Christ never contended against the Word of God because He Himself was the Word of God! And it is from the contextual view of Christ that we must understand the Old Testament is not “old” or outdated nor antiquated.

It is not an unnecessary portion of Scripture found within your Bible to take up room. The Old Testament is the New Testament Concealed and the new Testament is the Old Testament Revealed! Church, you will never have a sound Theology without having a sound understanding of the Old and New Testament.

The teaching of Love Thy Neighbor was not a New Testament teaching alone; it was an Old Testament principle. Note verses 16-18, “¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. ¹⁷“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸You 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.”

The point of this grammatical structure of the sentence is that you will do this because you are my people and this is what I expect. It was a Law, a commandment but it was also a definitive framework of a healthy culture within the community and nation. If we do not bind ourselves to the Law of Love then we will find ourselves in the Bonds of Hatred.

1. The Command to Love our Neighbor is More than a Instruction, It is an Expectation of Culture in the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ!

- a. The Gospel of Saint Mark 12:29-34, “²⁹Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.’ ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” 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.”

- b. The instruction for us to Love our Neighbor and see the value in others that God Himself made in His image and in His Likeness is the Culture of the Kingdom! It is a Kingdom Principle!
- c. Note what Christ spoke to when the Scribes responded affirming His teaching, “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.”
- d. Unique that Jesus said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Church, if we are in His Kingdom then His statutes must be embraced, practiced and adhered to. It is amazing that when He challenged His audience to think and rehearse the Word of God that revelation was given when they decreed it out loud. And it was this out loud declaration that caused them all to take pause thus the scriptural notation of, “And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.”
- e. But not only is The Command to Love our Neighbor is More than a Command and the Culture of the Kingdom of God, point #2...

2. **The Command to Love our Neighbor is More than a Commissioning, It is an Admonishment to Protect Body of Christ from Destroying Itself!**

- a. The Book of Galatians 5:13-15, ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”
- b. Friends, if we do not choose to love one another, we will ultimately fall into devouring one another... The Church, though bought and purchased by the Blood of Jesus, can be soured by the sinful affairs of man who fall into the entrapment of darkness rather than cling to the Light of our Christ.
- c. If we choose not to rise in love then we degrade in our devouring and if we do not choose to love, to forgive, to give mercy, to admonish righteousness then we will fail at the great commission and we will fail as the body of Christ!
- d. Church family, love one another for if you do this, you do well! May we be known for our love and our truth that separates us from this present age!

- e. Not that we strive to be better than any other but rather to facilitate the demand of the Scripture of which to be in this world but not of this world!
- f. May we love, serve, and heal; may we never become bound by sin!
- g. But not only is The Command to Love our Neighbor is More than a Commissioning but an admonishment to protect one another, point #3...

3. **The Command to Love our Neighbor is More than a Directive, It is a Royal Law that We should be Willing to Fulfill!**

- a. The Book of James 2:8-13, ⁸“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. ⁹But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. ¹¹For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

- b. Take note with me of verse 8, **“⁸ If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well.”**
- c. Church family, we are doing well when we embrace the Royal Law of the Kingdom and not strive against it. The Apostle James provides for us insight into this truth in this text because without our willing to embrace and submit our lives to His divine instruction, we are not submitted to Christ.
- d. Simply put, how can you say that you are a part of the Kingdom of Christ and yet be found in rebellion against the tenets and statutes of the Christ of the Kingdom?
- e. The Scriptures admonish us to do well but fulfilling the Royal Law of loving our neighbors as ourselves and yet we strive to fight and contend against that law because there are those what you do not want to have to care about.
- f. Friends, the way others act should never contradict or change who we are; when we allow others actions to change the character of Christ in us, that person, their actions, and your emotional response have more authority in your life than the teachings of Christ

g. The Gospel of Saint John 13:31-35, “³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. ³² If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ ³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

h. Church, by this all people will know that we are His Disciples, if we have love for one another... And if we refuse to love one another, then are we truly His Disciples? This was not a suggestion or a request, it was a Commandment. Verse 34, “³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

i. And as the world gets darker, the Light of the Love of Christ must be bright or else the darkness of this present age will cause the Love of many to wax cold... May it not be true of us; God forbid it!