

Love from the Heart

Matthew 5:27-30

Intro

The Primacy of Relationship

God set His love upon a people for the purpose of having a relationship with them.

God's Law then becomes the centerpiece of the entire Jewish race and religion in the OT.

The Law of Moses establishes God's Standard for life, faith, and godliness.

- The historical books set God's people in motion according to His Law.
- The post-exilic books reestablish the Law as the people of God return to Israel from captivity.
- The poetry books sing the praises of God's Law and lament the violations of God's Law.
- The prophetic books clarify the Law for God's people and call them faithfully follow it.

The Pentateuch: The Gospel of Moses.

The Law is consummated in Christ when He comes.

The heart of the Law is found in Deuteronomy.

The core of Deuteronomy:

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:5-6).

This proves that God is not commanding a relationship be built upon Law. He is calling us to a relationship built upon Love.

God desires a relationship of internal love with His covenant people – not a relationship built upon external law-keeping.

God's Eternal Desire for a Love Relationship Expressed in the Law of Moses

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty and the awesome God.... You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him...He is your praise. He is your God.... You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always" (Deuteronomy 10:12-17; 20-21; 11:1).

"For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his

commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him” (Deuteronomy 13:3-4).

Love for God is supreme.

Love for God must have primacy in our lives or ALL our obedience is for nothing. It is worse than nothing. It is offensive to God.

If our obedience to God does not flow out of our love for Him and our reverential fear of Him as holy God, then our religion is nothing more the empty show.

God’s desire is a love *relationship*; not a performance-based *religion*.

“This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. You have declared today that the LORD is your God, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules and will obey his voice. And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments” (26:16-18).

Chapter 28

All *blessings* come from obedience and all *cursings* come from disobedience.

Chapter 30

God presents His people with a choice:

“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.... But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering.... But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish.... I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days” (30:11-20).

The Ten Commandments were given to Regulate a Relationship of Love.

The central issue for God in the rekindling of His relationship: *THE HEART*.

Redemption preceded Law.

The Law was given to regulate Love.

Love establishes the covenant of God with His people, not Law.

“And he said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God’” (Luke 16:15).

The NT gospel, given in every book, is a unified gospel of *love from the heart*.

Those who love God respond to His Law.

God has always wanted our obedience to come from the heart:

“But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed” (Romans 6:17).

Our obedience to others in authority over us is rendered from the *heart*:

“Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man” (Ephesians 6:5-6).

“addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:19-25).

ALL of our submission to the will of God in EVERY human relationship, both vertical and horizontal, should be done willingly as an act of *love from the heart*!

The Sinfulness of Sin

The only way we can grasp the significance of this biblical gospel is to understand the sinfulness of sin.

“behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23).

Religious pretense cannot stem the tide of a sinful heart. Eventually, sin erupts into action.

External attempts at moral goodness eventually give way to the true condition of the heart, either through the mouth which reveals the contents of the heart (Mt. 12:34), or by actions of the flesh that become irresistible.

“But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death” (James 1:14-15).

God Chastises Those He Loves

The outward manifestation of sin, and the consequent pain and disruption it causes, is God’s *chastening*.

And God’s chastening is a dispensation of His *grace*.

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives’” (Hebrews 12:4-6).

The Pursuit of Love from the Heart

We must “pursue love” 1 Corinthians 14:1).

“pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness”; we are called to “Fight the good fight of the faith” (1 Timothy 6:11-12).

These are things we are required to *strive* for.

- ✓ We are called to strive to “enter through the narrow door” (Luke 13:24);
- ✓ We are called to “strive together” in our “prayers to God” (Romans 15:30), “praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication” (Ephesians 6:18).
- ✓ We are called to “exercise ourselves for the purpose of godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7).
- ✓ We are to “strive to excel in building up the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12).
- ✓ “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11).
- ✓ “Strive for peace with everyone, and for holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

“For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe” (1 Timothy 4:10).

“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me” (Colossians 1:28-29).

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

The goal of our salvation is faithfulness to God from a pure heart intent on pleasing Him by submitting to Him because we love Him.

And so we press on, we toil and labor, striving for the things of God because we love Him *from the heart*.