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The Greatest Commandments of All, Matt 22.34-40 II
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Introduction – Today’s sermon is part 2. If you recall last week we simply asked the question what does it mean to love the Lord with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind? And what does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Loving the Lord with all our heart at least means loving God with our deepest affections. Loving the Lord with all our soul at least means directing all our faculties Godward rather than inward. And loving the Lord with all your mind at least means emptying our minds of godless, selfish thoughts and filling our minds with the truths, promises, and hope of the gospel (Col 3.2). Loving your neighbor as yourself at least means since we naturally want what is best for us, we should want what’s best for our neighbor, that is, everyone. What’s best for us is to love God with every part of our being, so that’s what’s best for our neighbor. We should love others in such a way that they are drawn to God.

As introduction today I’d like to ask why would God command us to wholeheartedly love Him? If I were to go around commanding everybody to love me with their whole heart, you would think, “Wow, Wil is an egomaniac!” And that would be true. So is God an egomaniac? Is He obsessed with Himself that He feels incomplete unless everyone loves Him? We must be careful to not place God in our human categories. After all, He is God and we are not. If God is the greatest being and the greatest lover, then our greatest enjoyment in life would be to love Him. As with all of God’s commands, loving Him wholeheartedly is for our good and His glory.

One might also say, “But you can’t force people to love you. That wouldn’t be love.” For example, imagine a young man in high school that is just smitten with a young lady at his school. It’s probably not a good idea for him to walk up to her and say I command you to love me. That’s not going to work. So why does God command us to love Him? First, as we just stated, loving God is the best possible life for us. Loving that young man may not be in the best interest of the young lady, but for her to love God is the best for that young lady. But furthermore, again, God does not fit into our human categories. We can’t force love on command, but God can impart love on command. When God issues a command to His people, it comes with the power and desire to obey it. For example, when

God says to His children, “Believe”, they believe. God’s commands are filled with the power of the Spirit. So when His children hear Him say, “Love Me with all your heart”, we find simultaneously that loving Him wholeheartedly is exactly what we desire to do. Augustine – God commands what He will, and He wills His commands. In other words, God supplies the grace we need to obey His commands to believe in Him and love Him. God enables us to do what we desperately need to do. For that, we are eternally grateful to Him.

First, let’s ask a question of verse 40 and then we’ll ask a question of application.

- I. How Does All the Law and the Prophets Depend on Them?
 - a. In other words, all the laws of God can be placed under these two laws. These two greatest commandments are like hooks, and hanging from these hooks are all the other moral laws of God.
 - i. This is easily demonstrated by the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are a summary of God’s law.
 1. cliff notes
 2. quick guide
 - ii. The 10 Commandments are a quick guide to prove all of God’s laws hang on these two laws. Or to say it another way, all the other laws of God are application of how we go about loving God and loving others.
 - iii. The first 4 commands concern loving God. Here’s how we love God. 1. Worship no other but God. You wouldn’t put someone or something ahead of God if you love Him. 2. Don’t belittle God by trying to make an image of Him. You wouldn’t make a mockery of one you love. 3. Don’t degrade God by taking His name in vain. You don’t degrade one you love. 4. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. God rested from His work of creation on the 7th day to set for us a pattern for our own good and for His glory. The Sabbath rest is meant for worship of God, rest for our bodies, and to strengthen our faith as we look to our eternal rest. Since Christ was raised on the 1st day of the week, as Christians we practice the Sabbath principle on Sunday. Worship, Rest, and Point our lives upward. You wouldn’t disregard someone’s example if you loved them.

- iv. The other six commands concern loving others. Honor your father and mother. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not covet. If we love others, we won't sin against them to cause them harm or to cause them to stumble or to distract them from God.
 - v. Now just as we can hang all 10 Commandments on these two greatest commandments, so we can hang all of them.
 - b. Which brings us to this conclusion: Love is the root from which grows all of God's law. Love is the spring from which flows all of God's law. Keeping the law of God has nothing to do with earning God's favor, He already loves you. Keeping God's law has nothing to do with earning your way your way to heaven, Jesus has done that for you.
 - i. Keeping God's law begins in the heart. It's a matter of the heart, of who you love or what you love. If our hearts are in the right place, then our lives will be pleasing to God.
 - ii. A righteous life is the fruit of a loving heart. But in order for our hearts to love God first and others second, we need a new heart. The heart we are born with is dead in sin, and inclined inward, and rebellious against God. So what does God do – by His grace, through the preaching of the gospel, He transforms our hearts, He gives us new hearts that are able to love and we are meant to love! He wills what He commands!
 - c. But that brings us to another question, a soul-stirring question. What does it mean when we break the commands of God?
 - i. When we break God's commands, it means that we are sinners. Yes, that's true. We've all broken God's commands. We're all sinners.
 - ii. It means none of us are perfect. That's true. We are corrupt. We can't fix ourselves. This is why we need a Savior. We're sinners and we can't correct our corruption. So the only way we will ever have any possibility of reaching heaven is if someone else pays for our sin! Thank God for sending His Son to be our Savior!
 - iii. But as believers, with new hearts, what does it mean when we break God's commands? It means we don't love God and we don't love others.

1. When we put our children or spouse first in our hearts, we are not loving God.
 2. When we lie to our friend, we are not loving them. When we take what doesn't belong to us, we are not loving our neighbor. When we engage in sexual sin by viewing an image or by intimate touch, we are not loving others.
 3. When we as believers realize our self-centered sin is actually a form of hating God and hating others, it should break our hearts and cause us to confess, repent, and get back to loving God and loving others.
 4. Believers cannot be happy knowing we are grieving God and hurting others.
- d. None of us are perfect. We're sinners, even as believers. So there is a very important question we must now ask.

II. How Do We Pursue These Two Commandments? 3 ways

- a. Through Scripture. The Word is the sword of the Spirit in the armor of God. It's how we fight the flesh. The Word is alive and active. It's how we are transformed and empowered. Your Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You. You Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way of sinners not sits in the seat of scoffers but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does, he prospers.
- b. Through prayer. We pursue loving God and loving others by taking God's Word and making it our prayer. III.
- c. Through relying on the power of God's indwelling Spirit.
 - i. Rom 5:3-5.
 - ii. How do we pursue loving God for loving us?
 - iii. How do we pursue loving others as God has loved us?

Conclusion – John 13:31-35, 14:15-16