

THE COMMANDS OF JESUS - WEEK 5

Love: Matt 22:37-39

When a Pharisee asked “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law”, Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Jesus was quoting the greatest commandment from Deut. 6.

WHAT IS LOVE? God IS Love (1 John 4:8). When God lives in us through salvation, His love is deposited into our heart. Love is described as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and is defined in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 as patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not rude, irritable or resentful, does not insist on its own way, does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears, believes, hopes and endures all things. Love never ends.

God’s love in us leads us to deny ourselves and obey his commands and directions, even if they seem overly demanding. Remember when God tested Abraham’s love and asked him to sacrifice his only son Isaac? Abraham had to make a choice that could not be based on feelings. After much struggle, he chose to obey the Lord and was greatly rewarded. And John 15:13 teaches us about loving others when Jesus taught that the greatest love is when we lay down our life for not only our friends, but also our neighbors. Now why did he have to throw “neighbors” into the picture?!! (Matt. 22:37-39)

Has God ever asked you if you love him? After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus tested Simon Peter’s love by asking him and three times in three different ways, “Do you love me?” Jesus went on to give Peter a glimpse of what that love would lead him to, and told Peter, “Follow me.” (John 21:15-19)

No matter what we accomplish in life—how many talents we have, how many friends we have or how much money we have—if we don’t have God’s love inside of us and walk in and live out His love, we are nothing. The greatest of all attributes is God’s love. His love transforms us and transforms others through us. It is His love in us that will cause us to do unusual things. The primary example of this is that God so LOVED the world—that’s us—that he sacrificed his only Son so that we could live eternally if we believe in Him. That is hard to fathom and hard to imagine...that someone would love us that much—that we would love someone that much.

The love of God is why we are alive today. Love is the strongest of tools and most effective of weapons. Examine your heart for areas where love has been replaced with resentment, suspicion, carnality, or any other characteristic posing as the love of God. Then let the powerful love of God purge you.

Questions:

1. What do you sacrifice because of your love for God?
2. How are you doing at loving your neighbors more than yourself?
3. What is the proof of love? (John 14:15 and John 21:17)
4. Has God ever tested your love for him?
5. In closing, read together 1 Corinthians 13.