

Mk series pt 49

THUMB –

What everyone in the world gets wrong about morality

Sincere questioner – Jesus gives us the central truth of all morality. It's beautiful. It's life changing. It's almost always ignored in pop-culture. This is what my life is supposed to be about!

Stick to the end? How to get there, if you're not.

Mark 12:28–34 (NASB95)

²⁸One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”

²⁹Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;

³⁰and 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.”

³²The scribe said to Him, “Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him;

³³and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Mark 12:28–34 (NASB95)

²⁸One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”

- He’s just listening, He isn’t hostile.
 - These people are watching... keep them in mind.
 - On social media
 - In crowds
 - When witnessing
 - It’s often for the audience, not the participants
 - Jesus did debate... to an extent.

²⁹Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord;

- Jesus affirms that one command is foremost
 - How this impacts my moral reasoning
 - If we lose this FOREMOST command, all the other commands are applied wrong
 - Man-centered theology
 - A prosperous life in the future is the foremost command of Joel Osteen
 - “we wanna keep you encouraged and inspired”
 - “this is my Bible, I am what it says I am, I have what it says I have, I can do what it says I can do. Today I will be taught the word of God. I boldly confess, my mind is alert, my heart is receptive, in Jesus’ name”
 - It misses God as the object of my supreme love.
- Deut 6:4-5 – Shema
 - God is primary, singular, unique, exalted.
 - Because God is ONE – love for Him is first
 -

³⁰and 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.”

- Lev 19:18
- The primacy of love
 - In ethics
 - Sin involves misplaced passions.
 - Every sin is in some way a failure to love
 - As part of the problem of evil
 - The option of love

-
- The primacy of loving God
 - Over others
 - Over self.
 - Carnality is often disguised as loving self or loving others
 - “doesn’t God want me to be happy?”
 - “God would want them fulfilled! Support LGBT”
 - Loving God first keeps this from happening
 - Prosperity Christianity
 - I look at God’s love as an excuse for the priority of loving myself over God.
 - SO MANY errors of today come from neglecting the first command
 - Hitchens - “what moral thing can a Christian do that an atheist can’t?”
 - Love God
 - Humanism
 - A scary religious trend
 - The reversing of the two commands
 - Man is at the center
- How do I keep from this error when the Bible also teaches that loving God is expressed through loving others?
 - God is the primary object of our love... not them.
 - Love of God is what keeps our love HOLY
 - Jesus said.
 - “hate your father and mother”
- How our culture totally misunderstands this moral priority of love
 - We think it makes things easier
 - We hear “love others” and replace it with “have some element of good intentions”
 - Love is a harder standard than anyone seems to realize.
 - Love others as yourself?
 - No
 - Abstract “people” sure
 - Not really
 - Abortion
 - Jesus’ example
 - The cross...
 - Follow it
 - Love God above even self?
 - No
 - Love means that the libertarian ethic is wrong
 - Perhaps in politics but not in ethics
 - Porn – wrong
 - Prostitution – wrong
 - Lust is adultery
 - THAT’S the love Jesus shows us
- Debunking common confusions and distortions of Jesus’ ethic of love
 - Love isn’t the goal
 - Loving GOD is
 - Loving people is
 - Love isn’t approval and support in life choices
 - Jesus rebuked
 - Approval and support isn’t love

- At best it is man-pleasing
 - At worst it is the abandonment of love toward God and distorted love toward man
- Love isn't about sex
 - Sex is supposed to be about marriage
 - Love is about self-sacrifice, expressing care for others
- Love isn't justification for sin
 - "we love each other" therefore we can sleep together
 - Corrected "we love each other, so we won't sin together"
 - Tempted by a relationship? Get married or break it off.
 - Love NEVER competes with holiness
 - Never.
- Right theology is good enough
 - No. Love.
 - Don't neglect right theology
 - So often this is used as a way of being ok with bad theology
 - But good theology is an expression of LOVE toward God
 - Teaching it to others is love to others
- Heaven is the end goal of the Christian instead of loving God and others
 - Heaven = perfect love
- The 4 ways of loving God
 - Disclaimer – different interpretations of these word
 - Heart and soul
 - Soul = emotions or life
 - "with all your heart"
 - Mind? – but that's expressly in "mind"
 - Emotions?
 - Tricky in application
 - Emotions follow decisions
 - Time and investment
 - "where your treasure is there your heart will be"
 - Sincerity and singleness of commitment –
 - Undivided heart
 - God is chief and first
 - In all things
 - What would you NOT give to God?
 - That is an idol
 - Don't have to get rid of it, change it's place.
 - Music chat - polka
 - "with all your soul"
 - Life?
 - Emotions, feelings, affections?
 - Purpose – what you are about
 - God is not supplemental
 - Purpose
 - What you actually live for
 - The tragedy of retirement
 - Loving God
 - Don't spend your life on lesser things... love God
 - "with all your mind"

- Intellect
 - Where this hits us
 - Thinking biblically
 - Laziness shows your loves
 - What trivia we want shows what we love
 - Theology is worship
 - Or it should be
 - WLC omniscience - praise
 - Another application
 - Gossip – nah
 - Images – nah
 - Preoccupations – nah
 - “with all your strength”
 - Umph
 - Ambitious about it
 - Fresh, on fire, hustle
 - It’s not a regular occurrence, it’s your obsessive pursuit.
 - Where is your umph engaged??
 - Hobby, business, nothing (sad)
 - Ideas come when umph is engaged
 - There are those I must BEG to read the Bible
 - Then there are those I can’t STOP
 - Daniel’s prayer commitment
 - Not a checked off box... an all encompassing mission
 - Is it ok that Jesus use 4 nouns instead of 3 like in Deut?
 - 1- He’s not just quoting, He’s summarizing
 - 2- It emphasizes intellect more
 - 3- intellect is in Deut 6 – just not as emphasized.
- The second command
 - Interesting
 - Parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10)
 - “who is my neighbor?”
 - Humans are our neighbors, whoever we encounter in life
 - Don’t just “care about them”
 - “I love everyone”
 - “Care FOR them”
 - Take care of them
 - **James 2:15–16 (NASB95) ¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?**
 - The Christian church is supposed to be a community where needs are spotted and addressed
 - Not by “official ministries” but by individual believers
 - “bear one another’s burdens”
 - What we miss
 - It is second
 - Love for man outside of love for God is idolatry
 - Improper love
 - Humanism – philanthropy (missing something)

- A puzzling phrase
 - Mt 22:39 “the second is like it”
 - Like it how?
 - 1- it’s love
 - 2- love of others is a natural expression of love for God
- It is a lower love
 - This matters – you aren’t my top priority... neither am I.
 - God is
- It’s a higher love than you expect
 - As yourself!
- People don’t really hate themselves
 - They are frustrated and want to blame, be victims
 - Rather than “I hate myself” we need
 - 1- God I turn to you
 - 2- I trust in grace
- Wow
 - People of love
- We all fall short
 - Love reveals it the most
- How we get this.
 - Being born again AND realizing God’s love for us
 - **1 John 4:7 (NASB95) *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.***
 - Still “put on love”
 - **1 John 4:19 (NASB95) *We love, because He first loved us.***
 - My inspiration – go to this
 - Grateful people love
- Why didn’t Jesus quote the Ten Commandments?
 - He summarized the heart of it.
 - God focused
 - 1 – no other gods before me
 - 2- no idols
 - 3- don’t take God’s name in vain
 - 4- remember the Sabbath
 - Man focused
 - 5- honor father and mother
 - 6- do not murder
 - 7- do not commit adultery
 - 8- do not steal
 - 9- do not bear false witness
 - 10- do not covet
 - Love is the heart of the law, and it remains binding on us today
- Now, let’s look at this guy’s response..
 - It’s neat.

³²The scribe said to Him, “Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him;

³³and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

- Historicity
 - The scribes answer uses 6-7 verses from 5 books of the Bible!
 - A real convo between a Rabbi and a scribe
 - **You have truly stated that He is One,**
 - **Deuteronomy 6:4 (NASB95) ⁴"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!**
 - **and there is no one else besides Him;**
 - **Deuteronomy 4:35 (NASB95) ³⁵"To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him.**
 - Also, Isaiah 45:21
 - ³³**and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength,**
 - **Deuteronomy 6:5 (NASB95) ⁵"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**
 - **and to love one's neighbor as himself**
 - **Leviticus 19:18 (NASB95) "...you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord."**
 - **is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."**
 - **1 Samuel 15:22 (NASB95) ²²Samuel said, "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.**
 - **Hosea 6:6 (NASB95) ⁶For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.**
- This guy is neat!
 - A scribe of the Sanhedrin..
 - No doubt he had heard bad stuff about Jesus
 - But now He sees Him... He likes what He sees
 - Don't assume everyone who isn't Christian is closeminded
 - We get hardened – bitter
 - React to people badly
 - Is that you? Read the Bible – Hear Jesus for yourself.
- What is the purpose of this guy's question?
 - Clues
 - He is hearing them argue (he seems unplanned)
 - He is inspired by Jesus giving GOOD answers...
 - Good answers bring out more questions from the sincere and less from the insincere
 - His response in vs 32 "right, TEACHER"
 - Jesus affirms his sincerity "You are not far from the kingdom of God"
 - He's open, he's inspired by the idea that he might get a good answer, he's ready to see the beauty of Christ
 - Jesus answers according to his heart
 - God deals with us where we are really at.
- What's the flow of Q&A in ch 12?
 - 1- Pharisees and Herodians – Tax question
 - Them - "to trap Him in His talk"
 - A trouble making question – to ruin His reputation
 - Jesus – "knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them, "Why do you test me?"
 - 2- Sadducees – Resurrection question

- Because they are asking riddles about things they don't believe
 - An unbelieving question – to show how stupid those fundy beliefs are
 - 3- a scribe
 - Excited by Jesus' good answers
 - Jesus – just a good answer
- Do I learn something from these commands being “greater”, “foremost” (vs 28-9)?
 - All commands are not the same
 - All sins are not the same
- Progressive Christianity forgets the first command.
 - The second one without the primacy of the first leads to ALL kind of error
- Why does Jesus tell the man that he is “not far from the kingdom of God?”
 - Characteristics of the man.
 - Why “not far” instead of “in the kingdom”
 - Needs Jesus – but he's open.
 - In witnessing, look for these people
- What about a Muslim who loves God
 - They don't
 - “ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own”
 - Don't honor the Son, don't honor the Father
 - Which God are they loving?
 - A false one.
- Characteristics of how Jesus answers the sincere man
 - He just answers
 - Don't annoy sincere people with non-answers
 - We need to relax.
 - We can get fatigued answering trick questions and blow it when we get sincere questions and treat them like tricks.
 - That hurts people
 - He gives the heart in an inspiring way
 - Helping, not just answering
- How is your heart
 - Settle for nothing less
 - Cling to grace
- Next time: Jesus asks a question.
 - Finally, Jesus asks them a question to see how the Bible traps them in good theology about who Messiah is
 - The Messiah's teaching on the Messiah
 - January 3/4th