

MARK 12:28-37
“Horseshoes & Hand-Grenades”

Mark 12:28-34: *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”*

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

The 1st Command:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

This is called the Shema from Deut 6:4-5. This is the most popular text for the Jews.

- All your heart, soul, mind & strength here are really one...they are simply overlapping ideas expressing the whole of us.
- Jesus is saying that every faculty and every capacity of our being is meant to express the fullness of our affection for God—the fullness of all the ways we treasure God.
- There isn't meant to be anything w/in us, about us, or from us....that is not loving God.

Simply put this love here is a love that does 3 things:

- 1) It dominates our emotions
- 2) It directs our thoughts
- 3) & it is the dynamic of all our actions

It is a total devotion to God.

The 2nd Command:

“love your neighbor as yourself.”

- A quote from Leviticus 19:18.

Loving people matters to God.

Loving your neighbor is the outworking evidence & expression of your love for God, that you love what He loves...& God loves people.

It is impossible for someone to say that they truly love God while having no love for others.

1 John 4:20: *“whoever does not love their brother & sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.”*

So like 2 wings of a plane these 2 commands are both necessary & inseparable.

The Scribe:

Verse 32-33: *“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”*

3 things we see about this Scribe that makes him close:

- 1) The Scribe had understanding:
 - a. He believes in one God
 - i. Isaiah 45:5 “I am the Lord, & there is no other; apart from me there is no God.”
 - b. He also understands what God requires.
 - i. Loving God with our all.
 - ii. Loving our neighbor
- 2) The Scribe was close b/c He had humility
 - a. He agreed w/Jesus & acknowledged His teaching even when it wasn't popular amongst his peers. He was willing to listen, & he was teachable.
- 3) The Scribe had sincerity
 - a. He understood that true religion – real spirituality began in the heart
 - b. You can look absolutely religious & still not be close to God.

Jesus Response:

Verse 34: *“you are not far from the kingdom of God.”*

It seems as though this Scribe has all the right answers – so what is missing?

Verse 35-37: *“how can the scribes say the Christ is the son of David?” David Himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.’* “David himself calls him Lord. So how is He his son?”

The point Jesus wants to make is “how can David’s son also be David’s Lord?”

Jesus is revealing to them something about this Messiah in asking the question “who IS the Lord God?”

And what Jesus believes about Himself is that this Lord, this Messiah spoken of throughout the Scriptures....is HE....that He is the Lord.

Jesus here boldly puts Himself right in the middle of Israel’s most important confession of faith.

What’s missing?

This is about *faith* in Jesus. He is the dividing line between being in & out.

To step across that dividing line of faith....means that first I believe in this Jesus for my salvation – I believe what He alone Has accomplished for me 1st on the cross – that He is my Savior.....& then it is about living for this Jesus w/my ALL..w/my everything as Lord & king of my life.

- 1) To have faith in Jesus means receiving Him as Savior

We cannot do it.

James 2:10: *“for whoever keeps the whole law, & yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”*

Coming to faith in Jesus....means that you put to death the religion of law-keeping.

- Galatians 2:15-16 says: *“We...know that a man is not justified (or made right) by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ & not by observing the law, b/c by observing the law no one will be justified.”*

2) Faith in Jesus means making Him Lord of your life.

True faith means that we also have a new center for our life...there is a new ruler – a new king. Jesus is now LORD of your life.

The kingdom of God is wherever the king rules & reigns....so to be in God's kingdom...means that Jesus rules & reigns over all of you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith - & this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast.”*

If Jesus did it all...He can ask us for ALL....& He does.

He says love me w/all your heart & All your soul & All your Mind & All your Strength.

HEART: All your thoughts & passions & purposes & will & character & affections. Is Jesus sitting on the throne of your heart?

- Proverbs 4:23: *“guard your heart...for it is the wellspring of life.”*

SOUL: All that is w/in you. This is all of your inner man. What you believe, think, decide on, feel, choose, want & dwell on...your joy & your hope & your peace & your desire...

- Psalm 42:1-2: *“as the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.”*

MIND: This is ultimately about knowing God & truth.

- Hosea 6:3 says *“Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord”*

STRENGTH: This is the expression or outworking of this love in our heart, soul & mind. This means loving God w/all your abilities, skills, resources, time & energy.

- 1 Cor 10:31 *“so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the Glory of God.”*

Whether you are making progress towards Jesus or on the doorstep....to both Jesus says the same thing....you are very close....it's now time to come in. Believe. Lay down your religion of law-keeping, lay down your own self-centeredness & receive Jesus as your Savior & place Him at the center of your life.

Receiving & Loving Jesus is the difference between being close to the kingdom & being in the kingdom. This means that we would rather have nothing – than not have Jesus.

Receive Him as Savior & worship Him as Lord who is ALL w/the ALL of you!