

Theme: The Shema is the most important command in Scripture, and it teaches us that to love God with all our being we must hear and speak God's Word regularly.

I. Intro - Picking Just One

- A. I hate having to pick just one 'favorite' or 'important'
- B. I don't have a favorite song, movie - I love a bunch
- C. Most important Scriptural command? Too hard!
- D. But for Jews there was one - the Shema
- E. What is the Shema? Why is it so important?

II. The Importance of the Shema

A. The importance of the Shema in Judaism

1. Often the first words Jewish children learned **Impress them on your children.** Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:7
2. Recited twice daily by Jews - evening and morning **Impress them on your children.** Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, **when you lie down and when you get up.** Deuteronomy 6:7
3. Placed in phylacteries they wore
Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Deuteronomy 6:8
4. Placed in mezuzah on the doorposts
Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:9



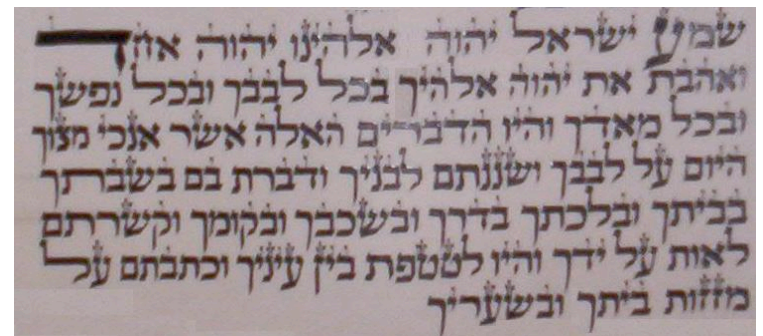
- a. Specifically Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21
- b. Must be hand written by trained sofer (scribe)
- c. The procedure is to hold the mezuzah against the spot upon which it will be affixed, then recite a blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֵּעַ מְזוּזָה

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam, asher qideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu liqboa' mezuzah.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who sanctified us with His mitzvot and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.

5. The dying prayer - especially for martyrs



- a. Last letter of first and last word of Deuteronomy 6:4 enlarged
- b. These letters spell the Hebrew word for 'witness'
- c. Thus these words were your final testimony or witness - especially as you died for the faith

6. These words were the backbone of faithful Judaism!

B. The importance of the Shema according to Jesus

1. Jesus was asked what was the single most important command
2. His answer: the Shema!
 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' Mark 12:29-30
3. Jesus says out of all 613 commands compiled this is the most important
4. Out of all the OT, Jesus says this is most important

III. Shema: Love God By Hearing & Speaking God's Word

A. The Goal - love the One True God

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.
⁵Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deut. 6:4-5

1. V4 - the creed - there is only One True God
 - a. The goal begins with knowing the One True God
 - b. We must know God as He is - not as we make Him

c. This is a claim against all idolatry and false religion

2. V5 - love One True God with all we are

- a. The goal of biblical knowledge is always love
- b. An orthodox 'faith' that does not produce love for God is dead religion, not the living faith of Scripture
- c. The goal of all worship and the habits of grace is to love God supremely and fully

3. The ritual practice commanded by the Shema is for the purpose of fully knowing and fully loving God

B. The method - hearing and speaking God's word

1. God not only gives us the goal (loving Him), but also the method by which we reach the goal (hearing and speaking God's Word)
2. It is IMPOSSIBLE to love and experience God apart from the chief way He has given - His Word
 - a. We say that methods are neutral - but this is a lie
 - b. God not only prescribed the ends, but also the means

C. Hear - personally receiving God's Word

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one....
⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Deuteronomy 6:4, 6

1. V4 - hear - the only imperative verb in the passage
2. 'Hear' is the foundation of everything else - we can't love God supremely, or pass His Word to others until we have received it ourselves
3. To 'hear' is to let God's Word soak into our hearts, so that it flavors all of our life

4. Unless we personally regularly hear, read, meditate, study and memorize God's Word, we will not be able to love God or be used by Him to draw others.

5. Practical ways to 'hear' God's Word

- a. Hear - have Scripture read to you (YouVersion app)
- b. Read - sit and read Scripture - chapters at a time; sometimes use a different version
- c. Meditate - read short passage or verse; spend time thinking it over; opposite of reading
- d. Study - study topic; use notes from website; listen to teachings
- e. Memorize a verse or passage - like Shema!

6. This is easier to do today than ever before in history

- a. Listen while driving, cooking, showering, etc
- b. Read before you even get out of bed in the morning
- c. Listen to podcasts of great teaching to study topic in depth

D. Speak - pass God's Word to others

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deut 6:7

- 1. We don't just take it in - talk to others about it
- 2. True fellowship includes talking about what God is speaking to us from His Word
- 3. Not just in meetings - home; road; all of life!
 - a. Talk about something you read, heard, learned
 - b. Ask each other questions about what you read

c. If married, you can begin with your spouse!

4. This especially applies for parents with their children

- a. Reading Scripture with our kids is NOT an option - commanded by God as part of the greatest commandment
- b. Every parent who has dedicated a child in BRCC has taken a public vow to read God's Word to their children
- c. If we do not regularly read God's Word to our children, we are begging for them to grow up not loving Jesus.
- d. Thankfully, reading Scripture to our kids is easier than ever before
 - 1. Gospel story Bible - see Charlene to get one
 - 2. Read the story at your kids level
 - 3. OT - Long Story short; NT - Old Story New; get the NT to use soon - let your child's teacher/Charlene know; \$10 fee but don't let that stand in the way; we will order soon
 - 4. Free Bible story apps for kids
 - 5. Use the BRCC catechism - questions, Scriptures, songs - everything you need for FREE!
- e. Simply make this part of your routine with your kids - they should not go to sleep without you reading Scripture with them
- f. Also pray with them for their teachers

5. All of us can be part of teaching Scripture to the next generation - volunteer for children's ministry! Seriously consider this and see Charlene Bell

IV. Applying the Word

A. Am I regularly hearing God's Word to me?

1. How often do I take in the Scripture?
 - a. It all begins here - if I am not hearing Scripture, I will not grow in love for God; my love will grow cold
 - b. I need a regular, daily time in the Word
2. Is my time in the Word drawing me close to God?
 - a. Do not just do the same thing - if it is stale, do something different!
 - b. I change my Scripture intake fairly often to keep it fresh

B. Am I regularly speaking God's Word to others?

1. How often do I share what God is speaking to me?
 - a. Talk with your small group, friends, spouse, kids about what you are hearing from God, about the teaching, etc.
 - b. If what God is speaking is not a regular part of conversation, our love for God will grow cold
2. Am I speaking God's Word to the next generation?
 - a. Parents - are you reading Scripture to your kids?
 - b. Use the tools we have given - Bibles, catechism
 - c. With older kids - talk with them about what God is speaking to you, and ask them

C. Motivated by grace, not law

1. This is not about 'taking your medicine'

2. It is about our deepest joy - that for which we were made
3. We were made to know, love, glorify, and enjoy God - and we can only do this as we hear and speak His Word
4. This command is an invitation to joy - not a burden
5. Let's spend 2017 in a radical pursuit of the joy of hearing and speaking God's Word

D. Baby dedication for Nora Kariuki

Shema - Hear and Speak God's Word

Deuteronomy 4:4-9

January 1, 2017

Baby Dedication - Nora Kariuki

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Word of God; marriage and family; means of grace; multi generational perspective and ministry; passion for Christ

The Lord bless you and keep you;²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:4–9