

Theme: Can you summarize what God's law commands you to do? All the law is summarized in these two commandments: You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

I. Intro - Celebrity Jeopardy Easy Questions!

- A. A recurring SNL skit to make fun of Celebrity Jeopardy
- B. Easy categories: sounds that kitties make; twinkle, twinkle little _; states that end in Hampshire; what color is green - and they still could not get them!
- C. Writing a catechism was tough - but not this question!
- D. Question 10 - Jesus answered this for us!
- E. Why did Jesus say this? How do we apply this?

II. The Pharisees Test Jesus

- A. A continual attempt to trap Jesus
Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Matthew 22:34-36
 - 1. The Sadducees had tried - and utterly failed!
 - 2. The Pharisees test Jesus to see His knowledge
 - 3. A classic question - the greatest commandment
 - a. Many had answered this before
 - b. Psalm 15; Micah 6:6-8; other passages offered
 - 4. How will Jesus answer this question?
- B. A test - and an opportunity

- 1. They are testing to see if Jesus knows as much as He seems to
- 2. They want to bring Him down (a futile hope!)
- 3. But Jesus sees an opportunity to instruct us and to summarize the whole law for us.

III. Jesus Summarizes God's Law

- A. Jesus summarizes the law in just two commands!
Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:37-40
 - 1. The greatest command is to love God fully (v37-38)
 - 2. Jesus adds a second - love neighbor as self (v39)
 - 3. Not just the greatest - the hinge on which all else hangs!
 - a. Not just the greatest - first and second
 - b. The whole OT hangs on these two commands!
- B. Why these summarize the whole Law (and Prophets)
 - 1. This is two commands from the Law
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:18

2. The greatest command is from the Shema
 - a. Repeated by Pious Jews every day
 - b. This was their central Creed, center of their faith
3. These two commands summarize the Ten Commandments (Table)
 - a. Catechism Question 54

Question 54: How are the Ten Commandments divided?

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts; the first teaches what we owe directly to God, and the second teaches what we owe to God in the way we treat our fellow humans.
 - b. Love God (commands 1-4)
 - c. Love neighbor (commands 5-10)
4. Note: negative commands include the positive opposite
5. These two commands thus get to the heart of what God's Law was all about, and therefore also summarize the message of the prophets which was to call the people back to embracing God's Law.

IV. The Heart of God's Law

- A. The foundation of everything is love for God

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38

 1. This is the first and the greatest commandment
 2. The second commandment flows from and depends on the first commandment

3. Many want to remove this commandment today and just call for loving our neighbor, but they can not be separated. We can not fully love those who are the image of God without loving God first.
4. To love God is to obey God. There is no love for God that does not issue in growing obedience to God's commands.

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." John 14:21
- B. We are called to love God with our entire being

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with **all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**" Matthew 22:37

 1. We are to love God with everything in us - heart, soul, mind, body, emotions - everything!
 2. God is so great that a half-hearted love will not do!
 3. God is not looking for me to give Him increasing parts of myself and my life - He is looking for ALL of me and ALL of my life to be consumed with a passion for Him.
 4. To love God fully means that God, His Word, and His will have the primary place in my life and motivate my thoughts, desires, words, and actions.
- C. We are called to love our neighbor

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:39

 1. Jesus hangs these two commandments together

2. Jesus teaches that love for God is false or unformed if it does not usher in love for my neighbor.

3. The Apostle John is very blunt about this!

We love because he first loved us. ²⁰ If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 1 John 4:19–20

4. Those who claim to love God must love their fellow humans. It is not enough to have no other gods, idols; we must honor our parents, not sin sexually, not steal, not lie, etc.

D. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:39

1. The measure of our love for our neighbor is the amount and type with which we love ourselves

2. This is the basis of the story of the Good Samaritan

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" ²⁷ He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." ²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers... Luke 10:25–30

a. The lawyer wants to inherit eternal life, and Jesus asks him to summarize the law (vv25-26)

b. He gives the same answer Jesus did in our text!

c. Jesus tells him to do this and He will live! He does this knowing that all of us fail, and it should drive the man to Jesus for grace. (v28)

d. But the man does not let the law do its work, because he wants to justify himself! (v29)

e. He tries to reduce the demands of God's Law by restricting the command to love his neighbor.

f. The parable of the Good Samaritan tells us our neighbor is anyone with whom we come into contact, and true love treats that person as we would want to be treated - positively working good

g. The priest and Levite claimed to love God, but their actions towards their neighbor showed they did not really love God as they claimed. But the Samaritan, despised by Jews, truly loved God and neighbor.

3. True love for neighbor is treating others the same way we want to be treated, loving them in the same manner and to the same degree we love ourselves.

E. Love is the fulfillment of the Law

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Matthew 22:40

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:8–10

1. Love is the fulfillment of God's Law and His call for us from His Prophets.

2. Paul summarizes the 2nd table of the Ten Commandments by the command “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
3. If we love God we will do as He commands, and if we love our neighbor as ourselves we will work for their good, not their harm.
4. False religion is about self-justification through rule keeping; true faith is about gratitude for grace that prompts love for God and neighbor.

V. Applying the Word

A. Do I see how I fail at these two commands?

1. Some act as if the call to love is easier than keeping the other laws, but this is false!
2. We don't keep the individual laws because we don't keep the law to love!
3. We do not love God with everything in us, and thus we prefer created things rather than the Creator, and slavery to sin rather than the freedom of obedience to God.
4. Once again, the law drives us to despair of justifying ourselves, and points us to Christ, Who alone loved God and neighbor perfectly!
5. Look to Christ for justification, not yourself!

B. Do I see we were created to love God and one another?

1. God's Law is a reflection of God's character, creation, and our nature!
2. We were created to love God and one another!

3. We were made to Love Our God & Connect With Others!
4. True love also prompts us to SERVE & REACH!
5. This is not an arbitrary rule or a guilt trip - it is how we were made and it is therefore the path to joy!
6. How the Spirit works stir up my love for God
 - a. Gather with the Church to LOVE and worship God each week!
 - b. Spend daily time with God in His Word, prayer, and worship!
 - c. Reveals a particular area where He wants me to grow in loving obedience for my own good!

7. How the Spirit works to stir up my love others?

- a. Gather with a CONNECT group to grow in relationships with others and to pray and care for them - you can't love people unless you are with them!
- b. SERVE others when we gather to help them grow closer to God - love produces concrete actions!
- c. Reveals a particular person or opportunity to serve others, expecting nothing in return - for my own good!
- d. Opens doors for me to REACH others with the Gospel - the greatest love we can give to them!

C. The Table of love

1. This is the Table of God's Love for us!
2. This is the Table to renew our love for God & others

The Summary of God's Law

Matthew 22:34-40

October 27, 2019

Communion

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

Teaching keywords: Catechism; God's Law; law and gospel; love

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. 1 Thessalonians 3:12–13

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:34–40