

## Matthew 22:35-40; Romans 12:1-2; 13:8-10

### LESSON: LOVE FULFILLS THE LAW — August 28, 2016

#### INTRODUCTION:

**22:34** But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Jesus had just met his third group of challengers, the Sadducees. He had silenced and they were in retreat. We are in the final week of Jesus' life before the crucifixion. The Pharisees, the strict religionist of that day, heard about Jesus conquering His challengers again (the Sadducees). The Pharisees try once again to test Him, "...they gathered together." The word "they" seems to indicate that the Pharisees and Sadducees met together in council to determine the next step to take, for the purpose of trying their hand at putting Jesus into a precarious position. In their minds, His threat to their security had increased. All three attempts [Chief Priests and the Elders (21:23); Pharisees and the Herodians (22:15); Sadducees (22:23)] to discredit Jesus had failed. This was the last attempt of the religious leaders at questioning Jesus.

#### LESSON: I. THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS Matthew 22:35-40

**22:35** Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,— They took a different approach this time. Over the last few hours they challenged Jesus as a body of questioners, now they have chosen from among their body, one who was most brilliant and versed in the law. They sent a lawyer (22:35) tempting to trap Jesus in a question of theological law. The "lawyer" (legal expert) that asked the question was an expert in the Mosaic Law. He and his colleagues often debated which commandment was the greatest. To Jesus he addressed this same question.

**22:36** Master, which is the great commandment in the law?— "Master" (teacher of the law), was a term the Jewish leaders used in the hopes of flattering Jesus and getting Him off His guard.

#### POINT:

*Through the years Jewish teachers had set up six hundred commandments. No one could keep them all, so the question was often asked and discussed: Which commandment or commandments must be absolutely obeyed? Which ones are important and which ones are not? If a person keeps the greatest of the precepts, can he be excused for his failure to keep others? Some believed that it had to do with circumcision, others with sacrifices, and still others with the Sabbath. The Pharisees were trying to turn the people against Jesus.*

All of God's laws are equally important. We may think that if we keep the greater laws, we do not have to pay much attention to the lesser. We may think that if we break the lesser laws we can be excused. Such thinking is false. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" James 2:10. Just because we may deny the importance of some laws does not make them unimportant. They still condemn us.



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**22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.** Jesus' answer is far more than a clever summary of all the commandments. He did the opposite of what the Pharisees expected Him to do: He quoted Moses directly from the Pentateuch (Deut. 6:5). *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God..."*

- First, love God! This is a personal relationship, not a distant relationship. Loving God is alive and active.
- Love God with all your being. Christ breaks our being into three parts; the heart, the soul, and the mind.
  - A loving relationship involves commitment and loyalty, heart, soul, mind.
  - A loving relationship involves trust and respect for the person loved; it's loving the person just for who they are. We love God because of who He is: Creator, Sustainer, Savior, Redeemer, Lord, King, with our heart, soul, and mind!
  - A loving relationship involves the giving and surrendering of oneself to the other, heart, soul, and mind, not to take and conquer.
  - A loving relationship involves knowing and sharing, heart, soul, and mind.

**...with all thy heart,— Heart:** the seat of man's affection and will (devotion). The heart causes us to give either good things or bad things. We are to focus and attach our heart, our will, and devotion to God.

**...and with all thy soul,— Soul:** is the life of a man, the consciousness, the breath, the essence, the being of a man. We are to love God with all the breath and consciousness, all the life and awareness we have.

**...and with all thy mind. Mind:** the seat of reasoning and understanding, God has given us; where man thinks, reasons, and understands. Christ says our minds and thoughts are to be centered upon God; love God with our entire mind.

So what does it mean to love God with our heart, soul, and mind? Everything we do, say, think, or ask needs to be in line with what God has commanded us through His Word. That means we need to be avoiding sin at all cost. *"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight"* Eph. 1:4 NIV. The heart must be united to love God, in opposition to a divided heart. And *"whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men"* Col 3:23 NIV. Whether we're at our job, helping others, or doing something for ourselves, we should do it to the best of our ability, like we are doing it for God Himself.

**22:38 This is the first and great commandment.** — And where does that commandment come from? It comes from God. So, to be the greatest commandment comes from a place of love. It doesn't matter how we feel. It comes from a place of choosing to obey God. To make something great means that a good result has already been prepared from the heart of God. This is the first and the greatest commandment that we would ever have to live by.

**Love is Keeping and Obeying His Commands:** *"For this is the love of God, that we keep (obey) his commands..."* 1 John 5:3. 50. When we do the things God has told us to do, we are showing Him we love Him. And why should we do what God tells us? Because when we are saved, we *"are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God..."* Romans 6:22 NLT. God is our master and we are His servants. We were *"bought*



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*with a price, therefore, honor God with your body" 1 Cor. 6:20 NIV. As the Father first loved us and showed His love first, this should be our first and the greatest commandment of all that we tell and show to others.*

**Love is Telling Others:** You can show total love for God by telling others about Him and about how much He loves us. *"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" John 15:13 NIV. 2000 years ago, **God committed the Greatest love act ever.** "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" John 3:16. The Son went to the cross and gave His life. But that's not how the story ends. Three days later He rose again. That's Love!!!*

## **22:39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. —**

**Love is Spending Time:** When we love someone, we want to spend time with them, that is putting others first. In fact, it would be hard to love someone that you never talk to! If we are going to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, then we have to talk to Him in prayer; also by reading our bible.

### **POINT:**

*Imagine you are driving in your car and it is completely dark outside. Now, think about what it would be like to drive without your headlights on. You couldn't – at least not for long. You wouldn't see turns ahead, you wouldn't see animals, or shredded tires, or any other obstacle in the road, and it would be very hard to even drive in a straight line! A car's headlights are completely useless if they are turned off! It is the same with the Word of God. God has given us this light for our path, but it's useless if we don't read it and know what it says. We see that the Bible helps us to know what is right and wrong. Therefore all the powers of the soul must be engaged for Him, and carried out toward Him.*

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The love of God must be first before anything else can be claimed, even before the second (love thy neighbor). However, the second is like unto the first. If you can't love the neighbor, you do not love God. Many of us have tried it, and the Spirit of God convicts us and lets us know that our love walk is not where it's supposed to be. Jesus was calling for *"agape"* love— a sustained and conscious choice to graciously serve God, neighbor, and self, and expecting nothing in return.

The lawyer had not asked for the second greatest commandment, only the first. See the cleverness of Jesus? If Jesus is going to touch you, He's going to touch you all the way. If He's going to enlighten you, it will not be with a flicker, but with a lamp to your feet and a light to your pathway, for you to truly get it! Praise God! Professed love without demonstration is empty, therefore:

1. **The command is to love ones neighbor as oneself.** It is not an option. When a man really sees the love of God for himself, he cannot help but love God and share the love of God with his neighbors. For us, it is the love of Christ: His death and sacrifice that compels us to go and love all men everywhere. Yes, that's our neighbor—all men everywhere; no matter their status, their condition, or their circumstance.
2. **We are to love ourselves.** This is not self-love, where you want all attention centered on you. This is a godly love for self that stirs a strong self-image, confidence, and assurance. It's a love that even



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helps in preventing some illnesses such as ulcers, tension, and high blood pressure, where you want the best for yourself. The godly love comes from knowing three things:

1. That one is actually the creation of God; the highest creation possible.
2. That one is actually the object of God's love; the most supreme love possible.
3. That one is actually the trustee of God's gifts; the greatest gifts possible.
  - a. The traits of godly love of self:
    - i. Esteem others better than self.
    - ii. Look on the things of others.
    - iii. Walk humbly before others.

**22:40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.** Jesus uniquely joined Deuteronomy 6:4 and Leviticus 19:18 into one universal commandment; neither love of God nor love of neighbor can be separated from each other. The "*law and the prophets*" refers to the Old Testament. The entire Old Testament hangs or hinges\* on these two basic, interconnected commandments. What good is knowing the contents of the Old Testament without living out the Great Commandment? Jesus says that love includes and embraces all the commandments.

## NOTE:

\* Hinge —a basic metaphor is about a hinge: A door cannot open without two hinges on it. Only when there are two hinges can a door swing in and out. To love the Lord our God and to love our neighbor are the two necessary hinges on which the whole Bible swings. Without the hinges, the Bible/the door is relatively useless. The Bible becomes effective in a person's life only when the two hinges are in working order. The sum and substance of all that God has said and done is love

## II. LIVING OUT THE FIRST COMMANDMENT Romans 12:1-2

**12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,**— In the last eleven chapters of Romans, Paul has taken his readers through heavy doctrine. But, doctrine is never taught in the Bible as an end in itself. It is always taught in order that doctrine may be translated into practice. It is now Paul's purpose to tie together all the doctrinal material he has presented as he urges, pleads (*I beseech*), appeals with them to hear him; to get in line with God to living the perfect will of God. To bring all this together he says the word "**therefore**" (and so) the message of God is, "**brethren.**" He addresses them and wants them to know that they are all Christians whether Jews or Gentiles **by the mercies of God**—All those gracious, extravagant, divine graces we have because we are in Christ Jesus. Now, what does Paul want them to do?

1. Give God your body (**12:1**)
2. Give God your mind (**12:2**)
3. Give God your service (**12:2b**).

**12:1b ...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,**— This is where the practice comes to fruition. You see under the Old Testament, God accepted the sacrifices of dead animals, but because of Christ's ultimate sacrifice, the Old Testament sacrifices are no longer of any effect. There are no more dead sacrifices. But our physical bodies will be presented as a sacrifice that's alive unto God. "*Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?... 1 Corinthians 6:15.*" We must "*yield the members of our bodies as instruments of* <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>



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*righteousness*" (Rom.6:13). One example is Isaac. God told Abraham to take his only son Isaac whom he loved and offer him. Isaac may have wondered where the sacrifice was, but he willingly laid on the altar as his father bound him. The other example is Jesus Christ as the father gave His Son and the Son willingly gave His life on the cross. As we willingly follow our example of Christ and give our body as a living sacrifice, our speech, our walk, our way of life will change; will be holy and acceptable to Him. For those in Christ, the only acceptable worship is to offer ourselves completely to the Lord.

**12:1c ...holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** As we present out bodies to God, Paul stresses two ways our bodies are to appear before God to give Him service. **1.** Holy—consecrated, without blemish and **2.** Acceptable—pleasing to God. 1Corinthians 6:19 *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"* We are living sacrifices. There is no other way to live when you're in Christ. Our reasonable service for all He has already done for us is our spiritual service; our spiritual worship unto God. This is a commitment we make daily to God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.** *"You"* is understood in this scripture. You have to want to be transformed, so as not to be conformed to the world's way (system); beliefs and values. And it's all in the mind. Paul just dealt with the outward part—the body, now he's dealing with the inward part—our minds. Transforming the mind has to be renewed because of old habits. It's only done by you yielding to the power of the Holy Spirit. It's nothing we're cable of doing on our own. God will always give us the help; the tools in order to complete His purpose. He wants us to *"prove; discern what is the perfect Will of God because the perfect Will of God is good, and acceptable.*

## III. LIVING OUT THE SECOND COMMANDMENT Romans 13:8-10

**13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** An inward mind of Christ changes our inward lifestyle of love. Your body will show it; your mind will repeat it; your service toward others will exemplify it. This verse comes at the heel of verse 7 about *"paying one's taxes to whom taxes is owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, and honor to whom honor is owed."* We know those things are a test in the Christian life, so, Paul gets down to the second commandment of *"loving your neighbor as you love yourself."* You know a lot of people don't love themselves which makes it impossible to love or treat others well, accept you first put the first commandment into play. God will show us how to love others without us putting a guard up first. God will show us how to pay our taxes without being shady. God will show us how to not squander our revenue. God will show us how to respect others and not be antagonistic. God will show us how to honor others by putting them first. God put His Son first. He gave Him to the world. Loving Him with all our heart, soul, body, and mind is the first step. Owing no man anything except to love him is what Christ did. It was a catch twenty-two for the Jews because Paul says you have fulfilled the law. He knew they knew the law. So



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if you want to fulfill the law, they have to fulfill loving one another.

**13:9** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Paul completes the fulfillment of the law by citing five of the Ten Commandments dealing with human relations and ties them in with an overlapping New Testament command (Gal.5:14). He quotes 1.) don't commit adultery, 2.) no killing, 3.) no stealing, 4.) no bearing false witness, 5.) no coveting, and any other commandment say it this way—"love your neighbor as yourself" (Gal.5:14). Such love is produced by the Holy Spirit.

**13:10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. In love there is no ill-will toward his neighbor. No man will commit adultery, murder, or theft, bear false witness, or covet his neighbor if the love of Christ motivates his heart. Therefore, the fulfillment of the law is LOVE! Love transcends borders, regions, atmospheres, dialects, human will etc. John 13:35 says "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*", not how you quarrel, criticize, and backbite. This makes us free to serve one another.

## SUMMARY:

**Matthew 22:35-40.** A lawyer sent by the Pharisees to ask Jesus a question to test Him. The test pertains to the Law. He calls Jesus "*Master*", which is "*Teacher*", asking which is the great commandment of the Law? Jesus told him to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. And He resounds that this would be the great and the first commandment. But, Jesus adds a second command, and that is, to love their neighbor as they love themselves. On these two commandments that deal with love, encompasses all that's dependent and consistent with the law and the prophets. God's Law is the law of Love. They are inseparable.

**Romans 12:1-2.** Paul makes a plea by the mercies of God to the brethren to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to be holy and acceptable unto God which would be their reasonable service. They are not to be conformed to the world's ways but they are to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, to prove what's good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**Romans 13:8-10.** So, owe no man anything except to love him. This is what Christ did, for He loved others and thereby, satisfied the law. Paul cites five of the Ten Commandments dealing with human relations, and then sums it up with "*love for their neighbor as they would love themselves*." Knowing the great love that God has for us should give us the incentive to also love our neighbor.