

3 - DIMENSIONAL LOVE


Matt. 22:36-37

Intro.

- A. The nature of people being what it is, there have always been some who love to asked questions that either have no answer, or that are extremely difficult to answer.
1. *Did you ever quit beating your wife???*
 2. The Pharisees knew that Jesus had confused the Sadducees re: their foolish questions re: resurrection.
 3. They sent a lawyer to Christ to tempt him about *the gtest. commandment?*
- B. The scribes & Pharisees put much emphasis on which was the gtest. commandment. mind.
1. They made the command so complex they found it very difficult to answer the ?? raised in people's \
 2. Jesus gave a short & simple answer. (Though vital, its insight & simplicity = startling.)
 3. The whole duty of man (the sum of our obligations) is pressed into the word --- **L O V E**.
- C. There are 3 dimensions of this love:
1. 2 are found in lesson text
 2. The 3rd is found in **Jn. 13:34**

Discuss.

I. THE UPREACH --- “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD”

- A. While Jesus had nothing to add to this command, he did reveal significant truth re: *God's nature* that would make it easier for men to keep this commandment. **Jn. 14:15** 
1. O.T. urges, *Fear God...keep...* (Fear = confused w/ love & love misunderstood. Love is linked w/ obed.)
 2. Love towards God increases our respect for His commandments, & = stronger motivator than fear.
- B. Before you can love God w/ your whole being, a person has to be convinced of God's worthiness of that lov
1. Only in God's Grand Plan of Salvation does one learn of Jesus' uniqueness, & willingness to die for us.
 2. When we begin to comprehend the magnitude of our sin, & the marvel of God's grace, we began to appre. the depth of God's love as extended to us.
- C. Important facts that fertilize our love for God:
1. There are things a loving God absolutely would not do:
 - a. ...make sin an inherited proposition (**Ezek. 18:20; Mk. 16:15-16**)
 - b. Elect certain specific individuals to be saved, & others lost, regardless of action or obedience (**Mt. 11:28-30; Mk. 8:34; Rev. 22:17**)
 2. God's only interest is our well-being (what is best for us), but He will not force us to do His will, **Lk. 15**
 3. When come to know how much He loves us, it's easier (seems less demanding) to love Him, **1 Jn. 4:19**
 - a. (c. **Mk. 12:30**) Loving God w/ ALL of our heart, soul, mind & strength *includes others* @ priority.
 - b. Loving God 1st includes both in a broad, general way, as well as, in specifics!

II. THE INREACH ---- “YOU SHALL LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” (**Jn. 13:34**)

- A. Christ's concern over this dimension of love is obvious in text – 3 X's He urged: *love one another*
1. This is styled a *new commandment*, or *my commandment* **Jn. 15:12**. ... *as I have loved you*
 2. Newness was *in degree & motivation* ... c. **1 Jn. 3:16**
- B. **Love** was to become the “*badge of discipleship*” **Jn. 13:35**
1. The church at Ephesus was instructed to *walk in love*, **Eph. 5:2**
 2. Christians in Rome were told, *Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love*, **Rom. 12:10**
 3. The troubled Corinthian church were taught that **LOVE** = the greatest of all spiritual gifts (**1 Cor. 13**)
 4. John couldn't over emphasize the necessity for love, (33 X's in 23 vss.) /should be
- C. A congregation of people will become sadly bewildered & divided if the inreach of love \leq practiced as it\
1. In our text of **Mt. 22:40**, learn that *the law & the prophets all hang* on this concept of agape love.
 2. The attitude & action of love is primary, & cannot be allowed to be misplaced down stream.
 3. There is a great deal of restoration work for us to do in the church when it comes to loving one another as Christ commanded.

III. THE OUTREACH OF LOVE – “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR.”

- A. One of the foundation stones of the church is that Christianity is world wide without respect of persons.
 - 1. Jesus faced this difficulty, persecuted for His fair & equal treatment of all men & women (c. **Ac. 10:38**)
 - 2. Again, this was an old commandment in Jesus’ time, but the Jews had misinterpreted it.
 - 3. Christ’s teaching about the Good Samaritan challenged their concept of *who is my neighbor to whom I should be responsible?*
- B. Loving your neighbor even includes loving *your enemy!!!*
 - 1. **Mt. 5:11, 12**
 - 2. Loving our neighbor = *the royal law*, **Jas. 2:8**
 - 3. In the 1st Cen., Christianity had to bind up the wounds of those who had been bruised, hurt & left by paganism in order to win the conquest for men’s hearts. This is still true today!
- C. The love of self (e.g., *selfishness*) causes us to leave many *neighbors* lying hurting by the roadside while we continue on our way pursuing our personal SELFISH interests.
- D. Unless & until we release within our own fellowship a love which is greater than hate, envy & resentments, we will be critically limited in our ability to positively impact our culture with the gospel.
- E. There is no truer measure of our love for our lost neighbor than our sacrifice of personal interests, comforts & conveniences for the sake of teaching them the truth! (c. **Jn. 15:13**)

Concl.

- A. When you study about the breadth & height of the Love God described, demonstrated & demands in His Holy Word, we are challenged to admit...
 - 1. God has certainly done His part...
 - 4. Have you done yours?
- B. As yourself: *does my love reach*
 - 1. **upwards**—*towards God, living in obedience to His will* (have you obeyed Him)
 - 2. **inwards** ---*towards all of my brothers & sisters in Christ* (remember, we need each other faithful & strong, working together)
 - 3. **outwards**---*towards a world that is lost in sin without the knowledge of Christ*