

Text: Matthew 22:34-40

Meaning: Jesus said the Christian life is explained by one word: love

Big Idea: I want the hearers to understand and live out the purpose of their existence and the reason for their salvation: to love

Objective: I want the hearers to live out their purpose

Theme: What does it mean to truly LOVE GOD AND LOVE PEOPLE?

Why am I here?

What is the purpose of my life?

Purpose of our existence: TO KNOW GOD'S LOVE

Purpose of our salvation: TO KNOW HIS LOVE AND EXPRESS HIS LOVE TO OTHERS

Lawyer – an expert in Jewish Law. So, an Old Testament expert. This man most likely could quote entire sections, possibly even entire books of the Old Testament by memory.

TEST – to obtain information to use against someone. To try and get them to make a mistake.

Jesus doesn't make mistakes!

The question demonstrated the way the religious leaders looked at the law. In their tradition, they had reduced the law to 365 negative and 248 positive commandments. They spent much time trying to prioritize these innumerable technicalities. They thought they could trap the Lord of the law.¹

¹ Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 358.

On top of that they added their oral traditions and interpretations of that law and believed good Hebrews were to follow their interpretations of that law.

Interesting fact : The Pharisees crucified Jesus not because he broke the law but because he went against the oral traditions of the Jewish leaders.

Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it – that word fulfill means he came to perfectly express how to live out that law and he came to correctly interpret the law for us. So here, Jesus takes the expert on a lesson in correct interpretation of the law of God.

JESUS QUOTES DEUTERONOMY 6 HERE

The Torah is considered the weightiest section of Hebrew Scripture – the first 5 books of the Bible – the books of Moses

Deuteronomy is considered the weightiest book in the Torah – being Moses farewell address to the people and his summation of the law.

In fact, the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament is the book of Deuteronomy – and Deuteronomy is the most quoted book by the Lord Jesus Himself.

(<https://www.crossway.org/articles/the-gospel-in-deuteronomy/>)

Deuteronomy 6 – considered the weightiest passage of the weightiest book of the weightiest section of all of Scripture.

It's referred to as the **SHEMA**, which is translated "hear" in English.

SHEMA EXPLANATION

Shema Yisrael, or the Shema, is the central affirmation of Judaism. The Shema was the first thing you said when you get up in the morning, and last thing you said when you go to bed at night. It is the first thing you want to teach your children once they learn to talk.

The prayer expresses belief in the singularity of God, that is, in God's oneness and incomparability.

It is traditionally recited twice a day, as part of the morning and evening services at the synagogue.

It serves as the climax of the liturgy on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. It is also customary among devout Jews to recite the prayer at bedtime and as one's final dying words. And if at all possible, it is to be the last thing you say before your death.

SHEMA

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

For the Hebrew – EVERYTHING FLOWED OUT OF LOVE FOR GOD, OR AT LEAST IT WAS SUPPOSED TO.

SO – JESUS TELLS THE EXPERTS, THE THEOLOGIANS, THE PROFESSORS OF DOCTRINE, THE REVERED TEACHERS OF THE BIBLE IN ISRAEL – REMEMBER THE FIRST THING YOU LEARNED AS KIDS.

Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation, Baptism

HOW TO BE GREAT:

1. PUT WORSHIP BEFORE WORK

Everything Christ talks about here is INTERNAL. Heart, soul, and mind. The Shema lists strength in place of understanding, but the point is still the same. He's not trying to speak of the compartmentalization of our person. He is referring to our WHOLE PERSON BEING IN LOVE WITH AND IN SERVICE TO CHRIST!

So – PUT THE VERTICAL BEFORE THE HORIZONTAL, THE INTERNAL BEFORE THE EXTERNAL. Who you are on the INSIDE is infinitely more important than who you are on the outside. And who you are on the INSIDE is what informs and directs who you are on the OUTSIDE.

ALL – HOLOS, where we get our word WHOLE. It speaks of completeness, loving God with each and every part of you. So, love God with your WHOLE SELF. This is an all-encompassing love. Nothing is excluded. Nothing is held back. Everything is laid on the table for Christ to do with it what HE desires.

WE LIKE TO TALK ABOUT PRIORITIES. God first, Family second, church and friends and job and hobbies, and so on and so forth in the PROPER ORDER.

What Jesus is saying here is THERE IS ONLY ONE PRIORITY. In fact, He adds the word FIRST here to his answer. Not only is this the GREATEST COMMAND, it is the FIRST IN THE LIST OF ALL OTHER COMMANDS. SO, EVERY PRIORITY IN OUR LIFE IS TO FLOW OUT OF THIS FOUNDATIONAL LOVE.

So, Jesus is to be OUR ONLY PRIORITY, and all other aspects of our lives are ordered based on His will and desire for my life.

ALL YOUR HEART – speaks of the causative or motivational part of you. All our thoughts and desires are to be surrendered to Christ.

ALL YOUR SOUL – speaks of the totality of one’s personhood. So, your actions, decisions, your priorities of life must all be driven by love for Jesus and the promotion of His glory.

ALL YOUR MIND (MIGHT) – this is understanding, so all your focus and attention committed to Jesus. Deuteronomy 6 puts the word STRENGTH, which carries a second idea in the Hebrew of our financial means as well. So, we must love God with our wealth and our possessions.

ALL IN – Vision campaign

GOD IS INFINITELY MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR CHARACTER THAN YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. HE LOVES YOU JUST AS YOU ARE AND WANTS YOU TO JUST LOVE HIM RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.

GREATNESS IS KNOWING AND BEING KNOWN BY GOD. IT IS LOVING AND BEING LOVED BY GOD. IT IS RESTING IN HIM AS OUR ALL POWERFUL, ALL KNOWING, EVERYWHERE PRESENT CREATOR WHO MADE US TO ENJOY ALL HE HAS MADE.

Psalms 46:10 – Cease striving (Be still) and know that I am God.

We are not the sum total of our accomplishments or what we have accumulated in this life. We are not the combination of others opinions or expectations of us. Neither are we the sum total of our failures. TODAY – JUST LOVE AND BE LOVED. THIS IS SALVATION. LET YOUR SOUL BE DELIVERED FROM ALL THE STUFF THIS WORLD THROWS AT US TODAY, AND EVEN ALL THE STUFF THAT ORGANIZED RELIGION SOMETIMES THROWS AT US – BE DELIVERED FROM ALL THAT IN JESUS NAME!

2. PUT PEOPLE BEFORE PREFERENCE

Jesus says the second greatest commandment is like the first – LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Again He quotes a well known Old Testament command to the expert – Leviticus 19:18.

AGAPE

Jesus here uses the word AGAPE to speak of the kind of love we are to show others. This was the most common word for all forms of love in the New Testament; yet, it was one of the least common words in classical Greek. The few occasions it occurs, it is the highest and noblest form of love which sees something infinitely precious in the one loved.

According to W.E. Vine’s Classic Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, the word AGAPE is used:

(a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, **John 17:26** the human race, generally, **John 3:16**

and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly, **John 14:21**

(b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, **John 13:34**

and toward all men **1 Thessalonians 3:12**

(c) to express the essential nature of God, **1 John 4:8**

When AGAPE is used of GOD, it expresses the deep and constant “love” and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Jesus said – WE ARE TO LOVE PEOPLE LIKE HE LOVES US!

How did Jesus love me? HE LOVED ME IN SPITE OF ALL MY FAULTS AND ALL MY FAILURES AND ALL MY INSECURITIES AND ALL MY DOUBTS AND ALL MY WANDERINGS.

Don't size people up based on what they've accomplished or accumulated in this life. Be impressed more with integrity and character than with money, possessions, and notoriety. Don't judge people based on their political stances. Don't let culture or where you're from cause you to look suspiciously at someone else. Don't let someone's race

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 13

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends....¹³ So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.