

The Great Commandment (*love the LORD*)

Purpose: to encourage our church, as we move toward all that God has promised us, to make loving God our number one priority.

Jesus was often challenged by difficult questions. One day he was approached by a lawyer who wanted to test his knowledge of the law:

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked *Him a question*, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

Matthew 22:35,36

What was His response?

Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. 'This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus was referring to Deuteronomy! What was Moses talking about when he made this amazing statement?

- He was preparing them to go into the land that had been promised to them.
- He was explaining to them what God had commanded them to do.
- He was reminding them what God has promised them if they obeyed:
- Their days would be prolonged
- It would go well with them
- They would multiply greatly

Here is what Moses actually said:

Deu 6:1 - "Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess,

Deu 6:2 - that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Deu 6:3 - Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

Deu 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

Deu 6:5 - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

The last two verses here are considered to be very important. Verse 4 is called the “Shema”, which means “Hear”:

Deu 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!

- This verse was to be read morning and evening of the Jewish prayer service
- This verse expressed the unity of God – one God, self-existent, eternal, unchallengeable, King of kings and LORD of lords.

Verse 5 is called the great commandment:

Deu 6:5 - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

This verse is expressed slightly different in the gospels:

Mat 22:37 - Jesus said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.'

Mar 12:30 - AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'
This *is* the first commandment.

Luk 10:27 - So he answered and said, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,' and 'YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"

Why the slight differences?

- Because Jesus would have said this more than once.
- Because the writers were expressing all of what Jesus meant:
- The heart is meant as the seat of our affection – from a deep understanding of who He is, I love Him.
- The soul is the center of our will and personality – I choose to love him and give my will to Him.
- The might is the requirement of all of our energy, vigor, effort and force – I give Him my best with fervency

This is the first and most important exhortation that Moses gives in his final address to God’s people.

Moses tells them this just before they head into the promised land.

But how do we love God? Jesus said:

[Joh 14:15](#) "If you love me, keep my commands.

Obedience – when you love someone, you will do what pleases them

Gratitude – when you love someone, you are thankful for having them in your life

Willingness to serve – when you love someone, you will want to help them
Desiring their presence – when you love someone, you want to be with them

Deu 6:6 - "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

Deu 6:7 - You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Deu 6:8 - You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Deu 6:9 - You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deu 6:10 - "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,

Deu 6:11 - houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full—

Deu 6:12 - then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deu 6:13 - You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

Deu 6:14 - You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you

Deu 6:15 - (for the LORD your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

Deu 6:16 - "You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah.

Deu 6:17 - You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Deu 6:18 - And you shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers,

Deu 6:19 - to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

Deu 6:20 - "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?'

Deu 6:21 - then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;

Deu 6:22 - and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.

Deu 6:23 - Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.

Deu 6:24 - And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day.

Deu 6:25 - Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

Conclusion

As we move prepare to leave the wilderness and head into all that God has promised us, let's be sure to make loving God our number one priority.

