Love the Lord Your God with All Your Heart

Mark 12:28-44

Key Verse: Mark 12:30-31

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

The word ‘Love’ which is made only by four letters has changed the history of the world. For example, King Henry VIII of Empire Great Britain fell in love with Anne Boleyn. As a result, England abandoned Catholicism and carried out the reformation in the whole Europe and the world. Also in the Bible, when Adam and Eve doubted God’s love and lost their love toward God, they ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Eventually mankind lost the paradise, and the curse was placed on death. Jesus told his disciples that when the world ends, the love of most will grow cold among the things that will happen.

Therefore, in a way, even if the word ‘love’ is a very simple word, whether we keep this love or not, it can change not only my own life but also human history.

Through today's passage, I pray that we may learn what the importance of love is and and how we should love God. As we love God truly, I pray that we may make wonderful happy change in ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and our nation.

Look at verse 28.

*One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus.*

What kind of person is this teacher of the law referring to here? In order to become a teacher of the law, he had to memorize the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and practiced every single law written in them every day. But this teacher of the law who came to Jesus was different from other teachers of the law. Why? Look at the second half of verse 1.

Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

At that time, the ordinary teachers of law did not ask this question because their concern was not heart toward God, but only outward acts. However, this man wanted to give his heart to God by knowing and keeping what God is most pleased with rather than doing just the ritual practices.

So, what was Jesus’ answer to this teacher's question which is the most important commandment? Look at verses 29, 30.

*29 “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’31 The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

What does this mean? God was not just one of the many idols at that time which were nothing but dead trees or stones that cannot hear or speak, but God is the one and only God who speaks and lives by himself. What does this mean to us?

Many times in our lives we encounter difficulties that we cannot overcome on our own such as illness, job loss, children's problems, financial problems, etc. In these difficult situations, we want to have someone to depend on. There is only one person on whom we can truly depend and who can save us. There is no one but the Lord our God.

This God is the heavenly Father who wants to save us from sin and death by sending his only-begotten Son, Jesus. He is a shepherd who knows all our suffering, and wants to help us with compassion, and has prepared the eternal dwelling places in heaven where there is no sin, sorrow and death. He is the heavenly father.

What should we do with this God? Look at verse 30.

 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

1. Love the Lord your God

Jesus is telling us to love the Lord our God. The most important thing in the law here is to love God. The fundamental principle of the law is love, and all practices of the law without love are nothing. What happens when we love? Many scientists have discovered that when we love, amazing changes occur in our body. When we love, it gives us the incredible power to value our existence, to discover our purpose and meaning. When we love, we can forget or overcome our present difficulties and pains, and no matter how difficult the situation may be, we will never lose our happiness. Also, when we love, we can feel secure, satisfied and less stressed in any situation.

However, these days the most serious problem of people is that they easily become stressful, anxious and depressed. Does anyone here have feelings of anxiety, worry, stress, or loss of joy in your heart?

If you have it, it is because you don’t have love or you are lack of love in your heart. When we love God, we find peace, joy, and security in our hearts. When we love God, we experience amazing things that the world cannot give. It is eternal peace, joy, happiness, security, and hope. Of course, there are joys or pleasures that material things or other funs in this world give us. But they are only momentary and not forever, and when they are gone, we become anxious and depressed again.

PSALM 144:15

*“Happy are the people whose God is the LORD.”*

But if you love God, joy and happiness last forever. Before we love God, we didn’t do anything righteous that deserved his love. When we were still sinners and still disobeyed and resisted God, God loved us first unconditionally. God took the cross for our sins and went up to Golgotha carrying our cross. He poured out all of his precious blood and paid the price for all our sins giving his life so that we could come to the throne of God without fear and be restored as children of God and become servants of God who carried his mission. Although we were not worthy to love God, we could love God because God loved us first so much to endure the death.

1 John 4:19

*“We love because He first loved us.”*

2. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. How does Jesus tell us to love God?

First of all, loving God from our whole heart. Our heart is simply the seat of our emotions. But our emotion is a part of our heart, but our heart also includes our mind, will, and conscience. When we’ve done something wrong, our feelings, thoughts, decisions, and the sense of condemnation or guilt all arise from our heart. In our experience, we know our heart loves many other things besides God. If we love anything other than God, our hearts will not be able to fully love God. Therefore, in order for us to love God with all our heart, we must first find out whether there are other things we love more than God and remove it first so that our heart fully love God.

Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:15-16 saying that we really have to discover all veils which blocks our eyes not to see God and take them away so that our heart turn to the Lord and love God wholeheartedly .

*“A veil lies on their heart; but whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”*

When the veil is removed, we can see the Lord again. We see His beauty, His virtues, and how wonderful He is. Then He infuses more of what He is, including love, into us. In this way, our love for Him grows.

Here, an act of discovering and removing all veils is confessing our sins and repenting our sins. If you cannot love God with your whole heart, then we must first find out all veils which love anything more than God, and repent it. After our true repentance, our heart will turn away to God, and we can love God wholeheartedly and purely.

Second, loving God from all our soul.

Our soul is translated to our spirit. So we must love God in spirit and truth. Also we must love with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit.

Third, loving God from our whole mind

Our mind is translated as understanding. It set what we decide and what we do. One way to set our whole mind to love God is to read the Bible. God’s Word reveals who Christ is to us. When we use our mind to read the Word, we come to know more about who God is and who his only begotten Son Jesus is. The more we know God, the more we love Him.

Hebrews 3:1

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.

Fourth, loving God from our whole strength

Our whole strength refers to the physical strength of our body. When we turn our heart to the Lord and set our mind on Him, our body will follow. As love for the Lord leads our heart and soul, even the outward actions of our body will be affected. Our attitude toward the things that used to occupy our time, interest, and energy will also change. We love the Lord and want more of Him. So even our physical strength, that is, our time and energy, will be spent on pursuing Christ.

To love God with our whole being requirees exercise. We don’t always wake up in the morning with our heart inclined toward the Lord. But we can start the day by turning our hearts to our dear Lord Jesus. We can say to Jesus every morning, “Lord Jesus, I turn my heart to You this morning. I love You!” We can tell the Lord we love Him every single day.

We can also pray, “Lord Jesus, help me to love You more today than I did yesterday. I want to love You with my whole being.” He will surely answer such a prayer.

3. Love your neighbor as yourself (31-34)

In verse 31, Jesus said, “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” Of course, loving God is first, but it is also essential to love one’s neighbor. When we truly love God we will love other people as well. Again, the word translated “love” in this verse is “agape” in Greek, which refers to the love of God. Out of our love relationship with God, love flows to other people. If we say we love God, but hate others, we are not telling the truth (1 Jn 4:20). Another question is “How much should I love my neighbor?” Jesus says, “as yourself.”

How did the teacher of the law respond to Jesus’ words? He accepted them and agreed with Jesus. He demonstrated that he understood the essence of faith in God, and in loving God and others. Jesus said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Knowing is one thing. Doing is another thing. We must practice the love of God and the love of others. We must do this. It is a command to be obeyed. There are no hypocrites in the kingdom of God. Only those who truly love God and others will be in the kingdom of God.

Mark 12:35-44 testifies that the teachers of the law at that time were full of hypocrisy without heart even though the essence and principle of the law is love. When David confessed that the Messiah was my Lord, even though the Messiah was his grand grandson, he was confessing something spiritual beyond human relationship. However, teachers of law at that time looked for more recognition and power from the world and wanted to gain them. Even if they wear fancy clothes at the market place and offer a lot to the temple treasury to get people's respect, if they don't have love and heart for God, God doesn’t recognize it. Also, the poor widow who offered two very small copper coins with love and heart receive more recognition and rewards from God than the teachers of law.

While I prepared this passage, I found out that the love of God had been cold and almost disappeared from my heart and life. As I lost my love for God, I found that my heart was gripped with anxiety, depression, and darkness so that I didn’t want to wake up. I realize that my current problem are not a problem of money, health, children, and fruit, but lack of love, I repent I lost love toward God in my heart even though God loves me so much to give his life to the point of death. I pray that my heart may be filled with the love of Jesus and the love of a broken shepherd heart for those who are wandering because they have not heard the gospel and are heading to hell. I pray that I do not choose to worry every day, but choose to be filled with love for God Jesus and the sheep. God loved me to the point of giving His life. And God loved me first humbling himself and carrying my cross.

I pray that my heart may not be filled with anxiety or darkness, but with the love of Jesus until I participate in the final wedding feast with Him in the eternal home.

In conclusion, through the passages, we learned how important it is to love God with our whole being. If anyone loses happiness, peace, joy, and security in your heart, love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. When we love God with all our heart, we can become happier, secure, and joyful in difficult situation. If we love with all our heart, God helps us and loves us and gives us the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of God. I pray that joy, happiness, peace and victory may overflow within us as we love God with all our heart daily.