**The Law and The Christ**

Based on [Matthew 22:34-46](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Mt22.34-46)

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There are two teachings in today’s Gospel. First Jesus teaches that the true foundation of the Law is Love. Second, he teaches that he is is both the Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also the Son of Man, born of the Virgin Mary. These teachings come together in the knowledge that the Love that the Father and the Son have for one another; is the same love we should have for one another. The Son loves us through obedience to the Father; we love our neighbor through obedience to the Son.

A Lawyer asks Jesus, “**Which is the great commandment in the Law?**” He answers--not with this command or that one--but with a summary of the Law…Love. Because l**ove is at the root of every command that comes from the mouth of God.** It is the “why” for everything God commands. *Why* should you have no other Gods? Love. *Why* should you not commit adultery? Love. *Why* should you not covet? Love. *Why* should you comfort sinners the news of forgiveness? Love. *Why* should you warn sinners of death and damnation? Love. With Jesus’ one answer, he covers the whole conspectus of everything God has ever commanded his people.

Love is a way of life. God says in the OTL, “**what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your Good**.” Jesus says elsewhere, I am the **way**, and the truth and the life. Christianity was first called “**The Way**”, because it called for ones entire life to be dedicated to God. And the life dedicated to loving God is a life dedicated to loving your neighbor, that’s what the Christian is called to do.

All things God commands of us are summarized in loving Him with all your being, and loving our neighbor as yourself. So everything you do, do it in obedience to God. If you sin, repent and turn to God. If you work, work as an honest laborer. If you teach, instruct as one who has learned from God. **If you are a husband, cherish and protect your wife. If you are a wife, submit to your husband and honor him. If you are a child, obey your parents and desire to please them.** If you are unmarried or widowed, avoid temptation and live in simple obedience to God. These are examples of love as a way of life, by avoiding worldly temptations and dedicating your life to the only thing that matters, the approval of God and the salvation of your neighbor.

Jesus says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it:** You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ***On these two commandments*** depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

There is a reason that the love of God is listed as the ***first greatest commandment***. Only if we love of God do we care to listen to His commands; and it is only through his commandments that we can know how to love our neighbor…what is good for him and what is bad; what will help him or what will hurt him. As Jesus says, “**The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life**.” Because, there is no shortage of opinions as to how you love someone, but only God’s opinion is truth.

We do not love our neighbor apart from God’s commands, but through them. And this touches on our modern situation, so that with a right understanding you are not tossed about by every wind of doctrine. There is a deceitful spirit at work in the world that convinces unsuspecting Christians that you love your neighbor by accepting him for who he claims to be, or by not judging his or her choices. Do not be deceived. **You cannot love your neighbor by approving of his same-sex union. You cannot love your neighbor by putting him out of his misery. You cannot love your neighbor by holding her hand through an abortion.** It is popularly thought and taught today that Jesus died so that you don’t have to take God’s Law so seriously, and to give people the wiggle room to make their own mistakes, rather than warning them to avoid them in the first place. “Lighten up, live in freedom of the Gospel. Don’t worry that you might trash the room. Jesus paid the deposit.”

This false Gospel teaches, at least in spirit, that Christ died so that you are not constrained by commandments, but are free to act in a way you feel is right in that situation. The law is relaxed, so that you can act in love. But, Jesus says, “**Whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven**.” You cannot love your falling neighbor by relaxing the law of gravity. You don’t have the power. In the exact same way, you cannot love your sinning neighbor by relaxing God’s commands, you don’t have the authority. **You truly love your neighbor by keeping Jesus’ commands from the heart, and teaching others to do so.**

After Jesus sufficiently answers the lawyer’s question, he moves on to ask the Pharisees a question of his own. “**What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?**” Peter had already confessed, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”**. Jesus Christ is the son of God…that is right. On the other hand, the Pharisees, answer by saying that the Christ is “the son of david”, the son of an ancestral man. They are not wrong either, but the whole picture requires both confessions.

Jesus Christ is both. He is true God, begotten of his Father from eternity; and he is also true man..born of the virgin Mary. He is both David’s son who was born of the virgin Mary; and David’s Lord who was begotten before the foundation of the world. **This is why Jesus teaches with authority. This is why this young thirty-something Rabbi can presume to teach his elders.** Because, in truth, he has no elders. He is the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end. Before Abraham was, He IS the word who was God, and with God in the beginning.

This is the mystery that Jesus reveals from the Psalm: God is Triune, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons; one eternal God. Hear this; believe it; and confess it as the first greatest mystery above all things. Because God’s love for his son, and Jesus’ love for the Father is the Love we are called to have for one another. So I leave you with the words of Jesus, words that shows that love and the commandments are like a vine to the branches…like Christ to his disciples…like a spring to a river. “**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”**