

10-31-21

Sermon: The Values Of Kingdom People

Scripture: Mark 12: 28-34, CTW: Ps 146: 1-10

Hymns: 147, 463, 698

Theme: The values of the kingdom are different than the values of this world. Do people recognize you are a disciple of Christ? It should be evident by your love for others. Yes we should have an active prayer life. Yes we should allow the gifts of the Spirit to operate in us and in our church. People need to be able to recognize us by our love for God and love for others.

I. Introduction: You Are Not Afar From the Kingdom of God.

It is a pretty interesting scene that was happening in this chapter. Jesus was surrounded by a crowd of people. There were some who were just curious to hear what He had to say. There were others like the religious leaders (the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes) who were there to challenge Him. It was a common scene.

A. So here Jesus was. Answering one question after another astounding the leaders. In this chapter alone He pegs the leaders as wicked tenants who were missing the very purpose of Jesus coming. They were getting increasingly irritated at the things Jesus was saying. Look at **Mark 12:12**

“Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.”

Later in the same passage, another one would step up trying to stump Him. This time they asked questions about taxes. The question was whether they should pay taxes at all.

Jesus asks for a coin and asks, “Whose image and inscription is this?”. So they answer “Caesar’s”. Then remarkably He says “Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and unto God that which is God’s.” The Bible says next, “And they marveled at Him”.

B. Then the Sadducees give it a shot. They did not believe in the resurrection. So they challenged Jesus on the law that required that a woman with no heirs, if her husband dies she must marry the brother who is not married. Well if this happened a few times who would be the wife's husband in the resurrection? Believing they have stumped him, Jesus answers,

Mark 12:25-27 ²⁵ When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ²⁶ Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Finally we get to our opening passage. In our passage for today a scribe came to him. They were the ones who were supposed to have a better understanding of scripture.

Mark 12:28-34 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the most important commandment of all?"

²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'^[a] 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.'^[b] ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^[c] There is no commandment greater than these."

³² "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. ³³ To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

First, he perceived something about the answers of Jesus. Jesus had "answered them well".

So he asks, which is the greatest commandment. We know there were 10 listed in Exodus 20 plus some say there are over 600 listed in the OT. Then you have the 1000's that had been passed down from the religious interpreters of the scriptures...called the Torah.

II. So which Commandment IS the greatest?

Jesus sums them up by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4 about our relationship with God. Then combining all the other commandments on how to treat your neighbor.

A. There is One God and He is Lord: Jesus says: "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. (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."

He is the Lord, He is our God. This is a personal relationship between a worshipper and his God. It is a daily experience. We are related to Him; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. Therefore, we should love, adore, and worship Him.

He is one Lord. He is the focus and concentration of our life, attention, worship, love, and praise. He is the only Subject of our devotion. There is no reason, no excuse for distraction by any other subject. He is the One Lord, the only Subject.

B. We are to Love that One God

This is a personal relationship, not a distant relationship. God is not impersonal, far out in space someplace, distant and removed. God is personal, ever so close, and we are to be personally involved with God on a face to face basis.

The command is to "love the Lord thy God." Loving God is alive and active, not dead and inactive. We are, therefore, to maintain a personal relationship with God that is alive and active.

We are to Love God With All Our Being. Specifically this is broken down into parts:

1. With all our Heart – emotion “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”, “where your treasure is there will your heart be” **Matthew 6:21**

2. With all our Soul – your essence, who you are, what separates you from the animal kingdom, Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. **Psalm 103:1 (NIV)**

3. With all our Strength – this requires action “Faith without works is dead” And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. **Philemon 1:6**

4. With all our Mind – Intellect “Think on these things” **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.

These values are not worldly values but kingdom values. It is what we are challenged with daily. Our daily walk is concerned about 1) loving (talking, relating, respecting) God and 2) loving our neighbors.

C. We Must Also Love One Another

It is not just about loving God. This is primary but you cannot separate your love for others.

1. John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

This is the crux of our relationship with God. To love God and to love others. It is interesting how this forms a cross.

These are what I call the values of the kingdom. How we treat God and how we treat others?

This is not limited to those who are like us but includes everyone. Not just people that we like or in our family but anyone we come in contact with.

This is the biggest challenge. Jesus gives us some deep values to put to work.

Telling us things like “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”

2. Matthew 7:12 says: Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

This admonition from Jesus is familiar to people the world over, and it is generally known as:

III. “The Golden Rule.”

A. Jesus’ prescription for living with others is foundational to maintaining good relationships, and the basic morality of the statement is appealing to a wide variety of people. What sets this statement apart from similar statements from other teachers throughout history is the positive framing of Jesus’ command and the call to be **proactive in our goodness** toward other people.

The difference in this and what is the common law of humanity is the action word, **Forgiveness. We are to “forgive as God has forgiven us”.**

Forgiveness is a release of debt from others. When someone hurts us or makes us mad. We don’t hold a grudge but we release the debt. Why? Because we have been released from a greater debt.

“If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.” (**Matthew 5:39**).

B. Throughout His ministry, Jesus often directed people to do things that were nonintuitive. The commandment to “turn the other cheek” is one example.

Because of our human nature, revenge and anger seem the most natural reactions when someone wrongs us. But Jesus asks us to

deny our natural tendencies in order to display a godly attitude. Rather than repay evil with more evil, we are to react with humility and repay evil with blessing **1 Peter 3:9**.

It is no wonder that Jesus tells us to be able to be part of the Kingdom of God we must be "born again". It is no wonder that we are told that when we are saved, we are now a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. There is something different. Something out this world.

C. We are also to Love Ourselves- We are never told in scripture to not have self-love. In other words, we need to have a healthy love for ourselves. This means we are not to get down on ourselves.

We should not carry guilt or regret. We know our identity in Christ and that we are His creation. Yes, we have made mistakes but we have been forgiven by God.

We know the difference by not letting it be **ALL ABOUT US**.

In other words, the sacrifices Christ asks us to give are not like the ones under the old law. They have to do with how we live our lives to show others the kingdom of God-"**Kingdom Living**".

IV. In Conclusion, Jesus is asking us to always be mindful what others see when they look at how we live out our faith.

A. Do people recognize you are a disciple of Christ? It should evident by your love for others. Yes we should have an active prayer life. Yes we should allow the gifts of the Spirit to operate in us and in our church. But people recognize us by our love for God and love for others.

B. Do You Have the appearance of a "New Creature"?

2 Corinthians 5:17 ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

These passages are to be food for thought, and words of action for every Christian.

Amen? Let us Pray...