

Title: "Are You in Love?"

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Mark 12:28-34

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Event: Sunday Morning Service

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Deuteronomy 6:4-5: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."*

Mark 12:28-34: *"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question."*

Love can only be known by the actions it prompts. The word love in the New Testament is used as *agape* which is the purest form of love. It isn't based on feelings or emotions. It begins with God himself. I John 4:8 says *"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."* Three things we'll notice about God's Love:

- a. God's love is seen in the gifting of his son (John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*)
- b. God's love is proven on the cross by the sacrifice of His son
- c. Love has its perfect expression through his son (Ephesians 5:2 *"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."*)

We see two things about love in the verses in Deuteronomy and Mark:

1. True Christian love has God for its number one object. We express our love to God by showing him that he's number one. It's not a selfish love, but a faithful one.
2. Christian love is evident within us as to how we treat other people. We are to love them neighbor as ourselves.

Three Areas of Love that Involve our Lives:

1. **Love for the Lord:** Mark 12:30 *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."* Later Paul would write in I Corinthians 8:3 *"But if any man love God, the same is known of him."* We need for God to matter in EVERYTHING. We don't need to have matters that don't involve God. Love is such a by-word for us. There are four thoughts about loving God that we need:
 - a. A loving relationship involves commitment and loyalty. This doesn't mean a commitment to church, but to GOD. He deserves all of us. All of our time, efforts, thoughts, etc. Everything we do in life should be devoted to Christ.
 - b. A loving relationship involves trust and respect.
 - c. A loving relationship involves surrendering one's interests. Are you selfish? Does God have the freedom in your life to change what your plans are?
 - d. A loving relationship involves sharing it with others. We must share Christ with others. He is the joy that we have in our lives. We should want to share it with others.

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2. **Love for the Church:** Matthew 16:18 *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* In Hebrews 10:25 it says *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* How much do you love going to church? If you don't have time for church, you don't have time for God. There's a change in our perspective of going to church. In Malachi 3:6 it says *"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."* God hasn't changed, so why do we think there's less importance on serving him?
3. **The Compromised Love for the World:** I John 2:15-17 *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."* Over the years Christians have compromised much of what they stand for and believe.
 - a. Are you more in love with possessions than with God? Is there something that you've got and God asked you to give it up, would you argue with him? Most of us secretly hope that God will never ask us to give up our stuff.
 - b. Are you more in love with money than with God? You don't have to have 1 dollar to be in love with money. If we don't tithe and give, we are robbing God.
 - c. Are we more in love with self-pleasures than we are with God? 2 Timothy 3:4 says *"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"* Americans give 3.5 billion dollars to their church annually, but spend over 150 billion every year on the following things:
 - 14.5 billion on liquor
 - 3 billion on boats and jet skis
 - 5 billion on TV's
 - 5 billion on entertainment such as movies and concerts
 - 2.5 billion on music purchased by young people

Matthew 16:26 *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* Are you in love with God enough to do the things that he asks of you?