

Week 5 – Feb 15

Mark 12:28-34 | Loving God / Neighbor in a Divided World

READ THE TEXT: Mark 12:28–34

THE DRIVING QUESTION

“Which commandment is the most important of all?” (v. 28)

In a cultural moment that feels divided, outraged, and hostile, following Jesus without being swept away by the surrounding culture becomes critically important. Through this question, Jesus clarifies what has always been central: rightly ordered love.

Discussion:

- As you read this passage, what stands out to you about the fact that Jesus summarizes the entire law as loving God and loving neighbor?
- We often want clarity about what matters most. When life feels overwhelming (or the culture around us feels complex), what tends to become “most important” to you?
(For example: Rules? Causes? Theology? Personal morality?)

LOVING GOD FULLY

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all...” (vv. 29–30)

Jesus anchors faithful discipleship in one central foundation: wholehearted love for the one true God. Before action, before response, before engagement — He calls us to hear and to love. As Jesus commands that we love God with all our “heart, soul, mind, and strength,” He is describing a holistic love. Yet we often compartmentalize our devotion.

Discussion:

- As you think about your walk with the Lord right now, which of the four — heart, soul, mind, or strength — feels strongest in your life?
- Which feels weakest?
- What does “partial love” for God look like in practice for you?
- In this season, what might a more holistic love for God look like?

Love for God is comprehensive, not compartmentalized.

LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (v. 31)

Love for God cannot remain internal. Vertical devotion always expresses itself in horizontal love. And this love is not theoretical — it is obedience in action. Notice how Jesus responds to the scribe in verse 34. He makes clear that this is not merely a theological conclusion to admire, but a lived reality to embody. Loving God and loving neighbor belong together.

Discussion:

- What does it show us about God’s command that Jesus refuses to separate love for God from love for neighbor?
- In your current relationships and context, who is easy for you to love right now?
- Who is most difficult? Why?
- What would it actually look like to love that person in a tangible way?
- Again, consider Jesus’ conclusion in verse 34: Where might you affirm this command intellectually, but struggle to live it out consistently?

A love for God always produces love for others. You cannot claim devotion to God while withholding love from people made in His image (James 3:9–10).

GOSPEL HOPE

Jesus reiterates the commands of the law: love God fully and love neighbor faithfully. Yet none of us has ever — nor will we ever — live this out perfectly. This is what makes the gospel such good news. The One who gives this command is the One who fulfills it. He loves the Father perfectly. He loves His neighbor sacrificially, giving His life in our place.

We do not love our way into the kingdom. We love because the King first loved us in the midst of our sin and rebellion (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:19). When the reality of God’s love grips our hearts, loving Him and loving others — even those we disagree with — becomes the overflow of a heart transformed by grace.

Discussion:

- In light of this passage and the truth of the gospel, if you believed more deeply that you are fully loved by God, what might change in the way you love Him and your neighbor?

Closing Prayer