

I. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT DEFINES GOD’S MAIN PRIORITY

Mat 22:37-40 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. '38" This is the first and great commandment. 39 "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- A. One of the most important questions to ask God is, “What are You looking for before anything else?” *When we find what God is looking for, then we will find what we are looking for.*
- B. God’s first desire is to love. The unspoken truth in *1 Jn 4:19* is God inviting us to be loved by Him. It takes the love of God to love God back and He gives us the Holy Spirit to help us.
1 Jn 4:19 “We love Him because He first loved us.”

II. LOVING GOD WITH ALL OUR HEART MEANS WE ADDRESS & OVERCOME OFFENSE

- A. One of the primary foundations of God’s kingdom is that Jesus’ leadership is good. Jesus uses His power with perfect love and infallible wisdom. No one improves on it or comes up with a different way of doing His plan to make it better. This truth fills us with trust and thankfulness in and for His leadership.
- B. We love Jesus to the degree that we trust Him and are thankful. Satan wants to hinder us from loving Jesus by accusing Jesus’ leadership. Satan will accuse God and His leadership by saying He is neglecting you by doing or not doing a thing in your life.
- C. Even sincere believers can have a small residue of offense at Jesus’ leadership. This effects the ability to love Him. This will be one of the major battlefronts at the end of the age.
- D. Jesus warned John the Baptist’s disciples to not be offended at His leadership in John’s life. Many are offended at Jesus both for what He does and what He does not do.

Mt 11:2-6 John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” Jesus answered ... “Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk [Isa. 35:5-6; 61:1]; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”

- E. John the Baptist’s unwavering commitment is vindicated by Jesus as He sets him as the model of spiritual violence. Spiritual violence is required to overcome offense toward the way Jesus leads.
Mt 11:7-12 Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind [a man wavering under pressure]? ... A man clothed in soft garments [a man seeking comfort]? ... Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist ... From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers [allows] violence, and the violent take it by force.

- F. Jesus offends our mind to reveal our heart. This causes our hunger to grow, brings our offenses with Him to the surface to be healed, and frees us to love Him with all of our heart.

Jn 2:15-20 When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple ... poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables ... Jesus answered ... "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

- G. Trusting Jesus' leadership before we see the final outcome of a situation releases a blessing from Him. You and I have this one time in history to express this aspect of love to Jesus.

Jn 20:29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

III. ABOUNDING LOVE MEANS WE ASK GOD TO HELP US OVERCOME ALL OFFENSE

- A. We pray that our love would abound as we set our heart to confront all offense in our heart.

Phil 1:9-10 I pray that your love may abound still more and more ... ¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be ... without offense till the day of Christ.

- B. We ask the Spirit to reveal pockets of unperceived offense working in our heart.

Ps 19:12-13 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret (unperceived) faults. ¹³ Keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins ... Then I shall be blameless.

IV. OUR CONFESSION TO WALK FREE OF OFFENSE WITH JESUS IS ROOTED IN MERCY

- A. Our anchor is that "the Lord is good; His mercy endures forever." The good leadership of Jesus is perfect love and infallible wisdom. His mercy enduring means that no one is disqualified from the benefits of His leadership if they come to Him.

- B. This song was sung at strategic times throughout biblical history. It was sung at the dedication of the tabernacle of David (*1 Chr. 16:34, 41*), temple of Solomon (*2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3, 6*), and in the war led by Jehoshaphat, which prophetically foreshadows the Armageddon campaign (*2 Chr. 20:21*). The end-time battle comes to a head at the Valley of Jehoshaphat (*Joel 3:2, 12*), or the Valley of Berachah (*2 Chr. 20:26, 16*), also called the Valley of Decision (*Joel 3:14*).

2 Chr 20:21-22 He [Jehoshaphat] appointed those who should sing to the Lord ... they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever." ²² When they began to sing ... the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon.

- C. Our confession is that Jesus' loving leadership works all things for good in our life. Jesus overrules evil that others plan against us (*Gen. 50:20*), as well as our own bad choices.

Rom 8:28 We know that all things work together for good to those who love God.

Song 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was love.

- D. We say out of our mouths that Jesus is worthy of our trust and sacrificial obedience. He is the only one who can have all power and authority and not be corrupted by it. He is worth all the Father has to give Him. He is not for His own, His love is defined by making others great, at His own expense. He knows everything about you but will not confront you until you are ready because He is not a manipulator to get His way out of selfish desire.

Rev 5:12 Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power ... and honor and glory.

- E. Our view of Jesus' leadership comes to the surface as we see His redemptive judgments at the end of the age.

Rev 15:2-4 Those who have the victory over the Beast ... ³ saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works ... Just and true are Your ways ... Your judgments have been manifested."

- F. This confession is our war cry against the Antichrist's accusation about Jesus' leadership. This is not about profanity. Antichrist will try and show Jesus as false by saying He isn't good, He doesn't do anything to help, that He doesn't move in His power by love and wisdom to keep us from loving walking out the first commandment. This is all to keep us from living how we were created to live.

Rev 12:6-7 He [Antichrist] opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name... It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome [physically] them.

Rev 12:11 They overcame him [Satan the accuser] by ... the word of their testimony.