
Follow Me: The Gospel of Matthew

Victory Life Church

Sunday, April 4, 2020 — Part 6, The Great Commandment

Introduction

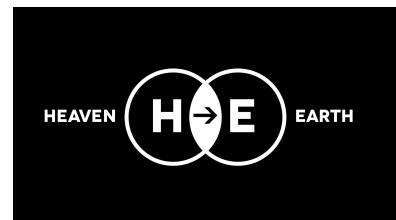
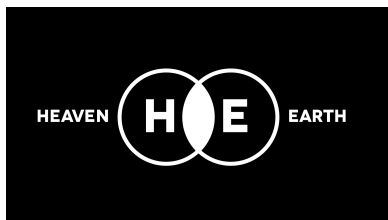
Matthew 22:34-40 (ESV) But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart 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."

Matthew 5:17 (ESV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Jesus is the climax and fulfillment for the Old Testament story.

The Law and the Prophets — Israel's Story

Exodus 19:5-6 (ESV) 'Now therefore, if you will indeed **obey** my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests** and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."



Deuteronomy 4:5-8 (ESV) See, I have taught you **statutes and rules**, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be **your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples**, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has **a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us**, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has **statutes and rules so righteous as all this law** that I set before you today?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV) "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Israel's faithfulness to the covenant will be an act of *listening* and *loving*.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is a crucial text that has become a daily prayer in Jewish tradition: the *Shema* (Hebrew for "listen"). There is no separate Hebrew word for "obey," rather the word *shema* is used: see Exodus 19:5 ("if you listen and keep my covenant..."). The words refers both to "hearing" and "responding" to what one hears.

"Yahweh alone" (Literally in Hebrew: "Yahweh is one"). This is not a statement about God's essence, but an assertion that Yahweh is the one God of Israel, not any of the Canaanite gods in the land to which they are going (see the context in Deut 6:13-15).

"Love" = Hebrew *'ahavah* (The word occurs 25x in Deuteronomy, 2nd highest in the OT!) It can refer to affection (see Genesis 22:2), but more often it's the word that expresses **acts of devotion**, and so it's synonymous with obedience and loyalty (see 5:10 and 7:9). Love means to will and act for the good of another.

Love is the true motivation for obedience. You don't really listen and obey without love, and you don't really love if you don't listen and obey.

"Heart, soul, strength" = the center of your existence, your life energy, and all the potential of your being.

Israel's obedience to the laws of the Torah is how God's blessing will come to Israel so that it can come through Israel to the rest of the world, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) of how his family will be blessed to be a blessing, God's blessing will come to the world through his family.

Leviticus 19:15-18 (NLT) "Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. "Do not stand idly by when your neighbor's life is threatened. I am the Lord . "Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly. "Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives. Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin. "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

(Full Context is Leviticus 19:1-18)

Jesus and the Love of God

Mark 12:29-30 (ESV) Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

1 John 4:7-10 (ESV) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The character and nature of God is love.

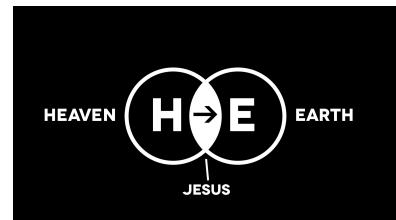
God proved and revealed His love in Jesus.



1 John 4:11-12 (ESV) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

God's character of love is now revealed to the world when we love one another.

Love means to will and act for the good of another.



Love and God's Continual Story

Matthew 22:37-40 (AMP) And Jesus replied to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others].' The whole Law and the [writings of the] Prophets depend on these two commandments."

Love means to will and act for the good of another.

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

God's character of love is now revealed to the world when we love one another.

Loving one another is how the world sees Jesus.

1 John 4:20-21 (ESV) If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, **he is a liar**; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen **cannot** love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.



Romans 13:10 (ESV) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Conclusion

Matthew 22:40 (ESV) On these two commandments **depend** all the Law and the Prophets.”

Matthew 22:40 (NKJV) On these two commandments **hang** all the Law and the Prophets.”

Like the sun in the solar system, the center of gravity of God’s story (the Law and the Prophets) is love. Without love, there is no story. Without love, obedience to rules won’t mean anything. Love is how obedience is possible. Love is the true motivation for obedience.

John 14:15 (ESV) "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

1 John 4:20 (ESV) We love because he first loved us.