

Christian Character – Love Mk. 12:28-34

Introduction:

Col. 3:12-14 - Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; {13} bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. {14} But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Much of our lesson will come from the book of John and I John. Remember that John calls himself “the disciple that Jesus loved” (**Jn. 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20**).

I. Love is the greatest commandment.

- A. We are commanded to love God.
 - 1. This is a command originally given to Israel.
 - a. **Deut. 6:4-5** - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! {5} You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
 - b. **Deut. 10:12-13** - And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, {13} and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?
 - c. **Deut. 11:1** - Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.
 - 2. It is also a command that we are given today.
 - a. **Mk. 12:28-30**
 - 1) Jesus has been questioned by the Pharisees and Sadducees in an attempt to trap Him in His words.
 - 2) This man saw that Jesus was answering wisely and asked Him what the greatest commandment was.
 - b. To love the Lord our God is the greatest commandment that we have.
- B. We are also commanded to love our neighbor (**12:31**).
 - 1. Again, this command was originally given to Israel.
 - a. **Lev. 19:18** - You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
 - b. There was no command to love their enemies, but they were commanded to love their neighbor (Israelites).
 - 2. We, today, are also commanded to love our neighbor.
 - a. Jesus commands us to love one another.

- 1) **Jn. 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.
 - 2) **Jn. 15:17** - These things I command you, that you love one another.
- b. **Rom. 13:8-10** - Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. {9} For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." {10} Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
- c. This would even include our enemies.
- 1) While it is not expressly mentioned in our text, Jesus still commands us to love our enemies.
 - 2) **Lk. 6:27** - But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
 - 3) **Lk. 6:35** - But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.
- C. We are commanded to love God and our neighbor.
1. Even those that questioned Jesus understood that this was the greatest commandment.
 2. **Mk. 12:32-33**

II. Notice what is it means to love God.

- A. If we love God, we will be obedient to all of His commandments.
1. Notice what Jesus says in John 14.
 - a. **Jn. 14:15** - If you love Me, keep My commandments.
 - b. **Jn. 14:21-24** - "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." {22} Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" {23} Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. {24} He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."
 2. Notice what John says in I John.
 - a. **I Jn. 2:4-5** - He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. {5} But

whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

- b. **I Jn. 5:2-3** - By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. {3} For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
- B. If we love God, we will do good to others when we have the opportunity.
1. **I Jn. 3:17** - But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?
 2. **Pr. 3:27-28** - Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. {28} Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.
- C. If we love God, we will be willing to sacrifice of ourselves.
1. **Rom. 12:1** - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
 2. **Jn. 15:13** (the ultimate sacrifice) - **Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**
- D. Love is the most important thing that we can have.
1. Remember what Paul says.
 - a. **Col. 3:14** - But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.
 2. **I Cor. 13:1-3** - Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. {2} And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. {3} And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.
 3. The main idea of all this is that if we love God and one another, our actions will show it.
 - a. **I Jn. 3:18** - My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

III. Notice how we know love.

- A. We know what love is because God loves us.
1. **I Jn. 4:10** - In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 2. **I Jn. 4:19** - We love Him because He first loved us.
- B. Christ demonstrated that great love towards us.
1. **I Jn. 3:16** - By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.
 2. **Rom. 5:8** - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Conclusion: