

The Greatest Commands (Part 1)

(Mark 12)

- Introduction:
1. Did you know that not all of God's commandments are as important as others?
 - a. Jesus spoke of the "weightier" commands (Matthew 23:23).
 - b. However, that is not to say that disobedience to the least command of God does not make one worthy of death.
 2. So, if there are weightier commands, then what is the weightiest or the greatest?
 3. While I know that most people present today know the answer to that question, I am afraid that if truth be told, some present today are failing to obey that command.
 4. Give careful consideration to yourself as we discuss the greatest commandment.

I. Background to the Question Asked of Jesus

- A. (Mark 12:18-34).
- B. The Sadducees test Jesus with a question (Mark 12:18-27).
- C. A "Lawyer" or "Scribe" then asked him "Which is the first commandment of all" (Mark 12:28).

II. The Meaning of the Question

- A. The meaning of the word "first."
 1. The word "first" does not mean chronologically.
 2. The word "first" means priority or preeminence.
- B. This Scribe is not the first person who wanted a condensed summation of what God wants.
 1. The Law of Moses contained 613 laws; 365 "Thou shall nots" and 248 "Thou shalls."
 2. (Micah 6:8) Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.
 3. (Habakkuk 2:4) The Just shall live by faith.
 4. Hillel – "What is hateful to you, to your neighbor do not do. That is the entirety of the law. Everything else is commentary. Go study (Babylonian Talmud).

III. Jesus' Response to the Question

- A. Jesus responded by saying the greatest or first command was to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30).
- B. In other words, he quoted the "Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).
 1. "Shema" means "to hear."
 2. However, it also is the word used for "obey."
- C. Then he provided an application of this command (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

IV. How Are We Fairing?

- A. Do we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength?
- B. I know what it looks like to wholly give yourself to something in life like sports, family, or making money, but does our life with God look like that?
- C. If we see a shortcoming, then determine to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and we do that by getting to know him better.

- Conclusion:
- 1. As we close this lesson, let me ask you another question.
 - 2. What do you suppose the greatest sin?
 - 3. Wouldn't it make sense that the greatest sin is disobedience to the greatest commandment?
 - 4. That thought scares me. While we will never love God as we should, we had better be giving heart, soul, mind, and strength to it.