The 11th & 12th Commandments

**Read:** Matthew 22:15-40

**Text:** Matthew 22:37 & 39 “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. ”

**Introduction:** It seemed that everywhere Jesus went people were trying to catch Him with a question that would prove that He was a mere mortal fallible man. The scribes and Pharisees wanted to discredit him. The common people were confused by Him; they liked what he said and the fact that it seemed miracles were performed by Him said that he might actually be the Messiah. Then those who He had personally ministered to wanted to prove that He was of divine origin. Mark recounts three such inquiries. First there is the issue of taxation. Secondly there is the Woman married to seven brothers and the question of marriage in heaven. The third question is presented by a lawyer trying to ensnare Him.

**I. The Question:** “Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?” When we talk about the 10 Commandments, most of us have a hard time remembering most of them. (Ask the congregation to give some of them). If you were limited to the 10 which would you think was the greatest? Jesus provides an answer that reveals several significant truths that we need to know.

**II. There are more commandments than you know.** Jesus passes over all of the commands that most of them are familiar with. He reaches way back to Deuteronomy chapter 6. The great commandment is: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” That was not what the lawyer was expecting. For such a judgmental group of leaders this was one that they would have a hard time judging. How can you tell the level of a person’s love for God? How is it possible to determine if a person’s commitment is 100% or if it is only 75%? How do even these self-righteous leaders determine the extent of love from heart, soul, and mind?

The flip side of this coin is that as they examine their own heart they will come up wanting. As the lawyer looks at his own life he finds that he is in violation of this commandment. He knows that there is not a temple official who can pass that test of love.

**III. The commandments have more depth than you can imagine.** As Jesus adds the second greatest commandment His absolute wisdom is revealed: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” It is so easy to let these words roll off of our tongue, but do we really understand the concept found here? What do these words mean? If our neighbor needs food how do we respond? If they need money how do we respond? Two brothers played football in the NFL. One a Raven and the other a Steeler. The Steeler got sick and needed a kidney. Needless to say his football career is over. His brother quit the Ravens and donated a kidney. He is no longer allowed to play in the NFL. When asked why he would do such a thing his response was: “He’s my brother and it is my responsibility to care for my brother.” Wouldn’t it be wonderful if the church would ape that behavior?

**IV. No one can summarize things like Jesus.** Jesus concluded the conversation with these words: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Which of the other commandments is it even possible to break if you are keeping these two? You can’t steal or commit adultery if you love your neighbor as yourself? You won’t have any false gods or bow to any other master if you are loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind. It is as if He is saying that you really don’t need to memorize the Ten Commandments if you are keeping these two. He shut the lawyer up! You and I will not be con-demning others as long as we are following these two commandments. When we see someone who is not behaving as the scriptures tell them to we will love the Lord God with all our heart, soul, and strength and love them as much as we love the person we see in the mirror. We will not say that their sin is Ok for that would violate the 11th command but our approach to them will be with a tender heart so that we demon-strate number 12.