



Growing in our Passion for God Pt 2: Loving the LORD with all our Strength!

September 13, 2020

Text: Mark 12:28-34

- Last week, we looked at the privilege we have been given to seek the LORD with our hearts.
- We spoke of the “all our” theme; so we are not just to seek Him with our hearts, but with ALL OUR hearts.
- As we looked at Jeremiah 29, we learned that this passionate seeking (or desiring, thirsting for, longing for) of God is based on many things, not the least of which is an understanding of what we truly deserve!
- Like Judah, we too have betrayed God over and over; like Israel, we too are guilty of consistent idolatry...worshipping other gods instead of the one, true God.
- Yet, like Judah, we have been shown mercy in Christ and been made new creatures! Therefore, even in our “cultural captivity,” we have been given the honor of building houses, marrying and having children, and walking in prosperity, with the promise that we too shall be restored to the “good land” one day.
- That “good land,” from a NT perspective is Heaven; the “good landowner” is the LORD:

Hebrews 11:16 (KJV) *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

Philippians 3:20-21 (KJV) *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: **21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

1 Peter 1:3-4 (KJV) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

- Therefore, we determined to seek the LORD and let nothing stop us: **Jeremiah 29:13 (KJV)** *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*
- We determined to allow God to fan the flame of our love for Him that in our hearts, God would have no rivals!
- He is Elohim (Infinite, All-Powerful Creator), El Shaddai (LORD God Almighty), El Elyon (Most High God), and Adonai (LORD and Master). He alone is God...and He loves us!

Thoughts on the Text:

- Today’s goal is to reignite our passion to love the LORD our God with all our strength.
- As the scene unfolds in our Text, Jesus is in Jerusalem. According to Mark, much has happened before we read the magnificent words of the Great Commandment.
- After His triumphal entry, the LORD cleansed the temple (again?) further inciting His enemies to want to destroy Him (Mk 11:15-19), cursed a fig tree and encouraged His disciples’ faith (Mk 11:12-14, 20-26), fought with the chief priests and elders over the matter of His authority

(Mk 11:27-33), and taught the Parable of the Tenants...a judgment upon the people of God who rejected the prophets sent to them and would reject God's very Son (Mk 12:1-12)!

- He also spoke of rendering to Caesar his things and to God His things (Mk 12:13-17), and confronted the Sadducees on their false beliefs concerning the Resurrection (Mk 12:18-27).
- Then one of the scribes (who was a Pharisee, Matt 22) asked a question: what is the Greatest Commandment?
- Our LORD's answer is what we are after today:

Mark 12:29-30 (KJV) And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

- Second part to this commandment is of course loving thy neighbor. Loving God the right way will produce such love for others. (v31)
- To his credit, this scribe affirmed Jesus' answer and received a commendation. (vv32-34)
- What kind of love is God commanding?

1. Love = agapaō.

- This sort of love is hard to define because in Scripture, it is mostly measured by what it does rather than what it is:

1 John 3:18 (KJV) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

- More on this next week. Nevertheless, "The essence of agape love is goodwill, benevolence, and willful delight in the object of love." -GotQuestions.org
- "But LOVE is an all-inclusive affection, embracing not only every other affection proper to its object, but all that is proper to be done to its object; for as love spontaneously seeks to please its object, so, in the case of men to God, it is the native well spring of a voluntary obedience. It is, besides, the most personal of all affections. One may fear an event, one may hope for an event, one may rejoice in an event; but one can love only a Person. It is the tenderest, the most unselfish, the most divine of all affections. Such, then, is the affection in which the essence of the divine law is declared to consist." JFB

2. Heart = kardia. "The seat of man's will and emotions."

3. Soul = psuchē. "Breath, life; the seat of feelings, affections."

4. Mind = dianoia. "Understanding; thoughts; way of thinking."

5. Strength = ischus. "Ability; force; might." This is about effort...

"This commands our energies: Thou shalt put intensity into thine affection - "Do it with thy might" ([Ecc 9:10](#)). Taking these four things together, the command of the Law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy powers - with a sincere, a fervid, an intelligent, an energetic love." But this is not all that the Law demands. God will have all

these qualities in their most perfect exercise. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," says the Law, "with all thy heart," or, with perfect sincerity; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul," or, with the utmost fervor; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind," or, in the fullest exercise of an enlightened reason; and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength," or, with the whole energy of our being!" JFB

- Christians are commanded to love God with every part of themselves and to do so with all our mental, emotional, physical, and willful powers.
- This is a tall order for most, one we can humbly approach from time to time, but the state of which we mostly live beneath.
- **We are commanded to love the LORD with all, with everything, with every fiber of our being in every way and at all times; He is worthy of such! Oh LORD help us to see Thy worthiness!**

Why should I give this sort of effort?

Allow me to attempt to answer this question with a few questions:

1. What kind of God creates Man and puts Him in a paradise called Eden?
 - **Genesis 1:28-31 (KJV)** *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. 31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*
2. What kind of God spares mankind through Noah despite its wickedness?
 - **Genesis 6:5-8 (KJV)** *And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*
3. What kind of God creates a redemptive covenant with a nobody from Ur of the Chaldees named Abraham?
 - **Genesis 12:1-3 (KJV)** *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

4. What kind of God calls a people for Himself and reveals His holy Law to them?
- **Exodus 19:1-6 (KJV)** *In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

The Ten Commandments

- I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
 - II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
 - III. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.
 - IV. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
 - V. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land.
 - VI. Thou shalt not kill.
 - VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 - VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
 - IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
 - X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.
5. What kind of God sends prophets to His wayward people again and again?
- **Jeremiah 7:13 (KJV)** *And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;*
 - **Isaiah 44:18 (KJV)** *They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*
 - **Isaiah 6:10 (KJV)** *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*
 - **Deuteronomy 9:13 (KJV)** *Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:*
 - **Isaiah 30:9-10 (KJV)** *That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: 10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:*
6. What kind of God sends His only Begotten Son to save His people from their sins?

- **Matthew 1:20-21 (KJV)** *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*
- **Titus 2:13-14 (KJV)** *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*
- **Colossians 1:20-22 (KJV)** *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*

7. What kind of God gathers His people into His Church to bless the nations?

- **Matthew 16:18 (KJV)** *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*
- **Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*
- **Acts 1:8 (KJV)** *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
- **1 Peter 2:5 (KJV)** *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*
- **Ephesians 6:11-13 (KJV)** *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

8. What kind of God grants eternal life and promises to come back again so that Paradise lost might become Paradise Restored?

- **John 14:1-3 (KJV)** *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (KJV)** *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ*

shall rise first: **17** Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **18** Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16 (KJV)** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- **1 Corinthians 15:51-53 (KJV)** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
- **1 Corinthians 15:55-58 (KJV)** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? **56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

The Answer: The kind of God that loves you!

You beloved, are loved of God...

- **Deuteronomy 7:7-9 (KJV)** The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: **8** But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. **9** Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;
- **Jeremiah 31:3 (KJV)** The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.
- **John 15:9 (KJV)** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.
- **John 16:27 (KJV)** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.
- **Ephesians 2:4-10 (KJV)** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us. **5** Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) **6** And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: **7** That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **9** Not of works, lest any man should boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Lest the child of God think difficult times means a loss of love from the Father:

- **Hebrews 12:6 (KJV)** *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*
- **Revelation 3:19 (KJV)** *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

Loving the LORD with all our strength is an appropriate response to the OVERWHELMING LOVE of God towards us!

- **Psalms 31:23-24 (KJV)** *O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.*
- **Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (KJV)** *And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?*
- **Deuteronomy 30:16 (KJV)** *In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.*
- **1 John 4:19 (KJV)** *We love him, because he first loved us.*
- **1 John 5:2-3 (KJV)** *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 grievous.*

Closing thoughts:

Loving God with “strength” isn’t legalism or asceticism; but it does involve effort! Grace doesn’t mean to don’t try! To love the LORD our God with all our strength is to:

1. **Refuse** to be ruled by one’s feelings but rather the truth. (2 Cor 13:8)
2. **Press** towards the mind of Christ, thinking more in line with Scripture. (1 Cor 2:16)
3. **Apply** focused effort to meditate upon Him day and night. (Ps 1:2)
4. **Strain** daily in prayer, supplications, praise and worship. (1 Tim 2:1)
5. **Strive** against sin to the point of shedding blood. (Heb 12:4)
6. **Discipline** our bodies and bring them into subjection. (1 Cor 9:27)
7. **Carry** our crosses daily. (Lk 9:23)

Charles Spurgeon said:

“Man, the creature of a day, thou oughtest to love Jehovah for what he is. Behold, him whom thou canst not behold! Lift up thine eyes to the seventh heaven; see where in dreadful majesty, the brightness of his skirts makes the angels veil their faces, lest the light, too strong for even them, should smite them with eternal blindness. See ye him, who stretched the heavens like a tent to dwell in, and then did weave into their tapestry, with golden needle, stars that glitter in

the darkness. Mark ye him who spread the earth, and created man upon it. And hear ye what he is. He is all-sufficient, eternal, self-existent, unchangeable, omnipotent, omniscient! Wilt thou not reverence him? He is good, he is loving, he is kind, he is gracious. See the bounties of his providence; behold the plenitude of his grace! Wilt thou not love Jehovah, because he is Jehovah?"

What is stopping you from a more passionate, intense love for the God who did so much to save you? What is stopping you from a more obedience, zealous, joyful, faithful love towards Him?

Find that thing and kill it. Let us allow nothing to keep us from loving the LORD our God with all our strength!

Amen!