

Loving God Series Part 2 - Loving God with all your Soul!

Mark 12:28-31

V.28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.' And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Jesus tells us that of the 613 laws - and the 10 commandments God gave to Moses - the most important is to love God.

A) *But Jesus doesn't leave it at that. He also tells us how to love God... We're to love the Lord in 4 ways...*

**With all our heart (or our desires)
With all our soul (or our emotions)
With all our mind (or our thoughts)
With all our strength (or our actions).**

B) Last time we looked at what it means to love God with all of our Heart –

1) Our Desires- Loving God enthusiastically - - Passion

C) It is making our relationship with Him / our service to Him / our desire to glorify him our Priority.

D) It is when there is a sense of desperation in our hearts to **Know Him be close to Him –**

1) Connect with Him

That in a nut shell is what it means to Love God with all of your heart.

A) What does it mean to love Him w/ all of our soul?

B) Think of the word soul – what comes to your mind – Some Soul train – groovin

B) **Moment of truth – How many of you used to watch soul train – Kid – How many used to practice the moves?**

C) Soul Music {James Brown / Pointer sisters Josh Stone today

D) Soul Man - Some of our Pastors this week Modeled – the soul man -

Loving God with the your soul is not about having the right dance steps –

A) It is not about a certain style of Music –

B) It is not about – **big hair gold chains** – not about appearance AT ALL!

C) The Greek word translated “*soul*” is the word “*psyche*” which is the **feeling part** of the human personality.

D) The soul includes emotions – our gut reactions.

As we mentioned last week, when the Greeks spoke of *desire* they referred to - **the heart**.

A) Likewise, there was a part of the body associated with the soul – a person’s emotions... and you’ll snicker when I say it... **It was the bowels!**

B) Now if my wife came up to me and said, “**Honey, I love you with all my heart.**” I’d get excited.

1) But if DENISE threw her arms around me and said, “**Baby, I love you with all my bowels!**”

C) *HOLD YOUR HORSES!* I’d wonder about my wife.

Yet, when you think about this, it makes sense that the Greeks associated their emotions w/ their bowels.

A) Have you ever been nervous? When you’re nervous what happens to your bowels?

B) They get irritated. They churn. They begin to move.

1) Afraid? Anxious? **You feel it down low!**

C) Now since many of the people who wrote the Bible lived in the Greek culture, they used the same imagery.

It really shows up when you read the OKJ version...

A) Take for example, Genesis 43:30. We read, “(Joseph’s) bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber and wept there.”

B) When Joseph saw his little brother, Benjamin, for the first time, he was SO moved w/ emotion he cried.

1) His bowels yearned for his brother.

C) Here’s another example, Song of Solomon 5:4. The bride says to her husband, “**My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.**”

D) Seeing **her lover** was entering the room – **Everything in her began to be stirred**

1) ”Men, try this line on your wife one night, “**Honey, you make my bowels gush!**”

So the soul is talking about emotions – butterflies in the stomach – the feelings.

A) See God made us as people and designed us to experience life.

B) **To feel / to taste / to be moved** to experience life thru the deepest of emotions.

Pause and say this – Some of you this morning are going to have a hard time with this message – Not into feelings {Enjoy next week more {Loving ... mind}

C) But we need to hear this: When Jesus said – Love God with all the heart soul mind and strength –

1) He wasn't creating categories – Some heart / others / Soul/ others mind / some strength –

D) No he was hitting on the whole person. He wants all of us to love him in this 4 fold way. –

1) He is interested in the whole man/ the whole woman.

E) That includes the soul – which for some of us – is hard – not into expressing our feelings

But to me, one of the sad by-products of modern life is our failure to embrace our emotions.

A) We're too busy – we're in too big of a hurry... to let ourselves feel.

B) All too often our emotions get in the way of time demands. It is easy to become robotic.

1) We can't stop and feel because of what we need to do.

C) Emotions are sometimes viewed as a hindrance.

1) We can think our way through life, but we don't slow down and feel our way through life.

In July, 2004 World Magazine reported that one of the most popular bars in the Chinese city of Najani

It sports only a sofa, a few tables, and tissues – lots and lots of tissues. It's the city's first "cry bar".

Set up to help people release their emotions/ stress. Customers can sit and cry for \$6 per hour.

It's sad when a society becomes so hurried and hassled that people don't even have time to sit down and cry when they need to shed a few tears.

I ran across a short quote this past week from Scott McNealy, the CEO of Sun Microsystems. His statement wraps up how lots of people live in today's scientific age. McNealy commented, "I don't do feelings, I'll leave that to Barry Manilow."

A good example of our superficial experience of life is funerals and weddings.

A) In Gen. 50, when Isaac died we're told his family mourned for him 70 days – that's a 2mth funeral.

B) The ancients recognized that it took time to navigate a loss. Grief isn't dispensed of easily.

1) You don't run a vacuum over it and it instantly disappears.

C) Work has to be done on an emotional level. It takes time.

D) It's sad that a modern mourner grieves for a day or two... then is expected to get right back to work.

1) **Duty calls.** We're too busy to adequately express our grief.

E) **Just turn off / turn on.** "Come on Snap out of it – it's been 2 weeks" Shame on us

The people of old not only did grief differently than we do – but they also did Joy differently too!

A) Take a wedding for example. In Bible times people took seven days – **a whole week – to celebrate.**

B) They partied and rejoiced for days on end.

1) Today, a half hour is a long ceremony. Add the reception and the most your out is a couple of hours.

C) **Here is the sad result:** Our streets today are full of hollow people going through the *motions* with no *emotion*.

D) For some of us our journey through life is like a rock skipping across the surface of the lake.

1) We never stop for a swim, or to really dive deep into life.

E) Hey that is not the way God intended for us to Live!

1) That is not the way I want to live. If I'm going to be alive I want to experience life.

I want to feel, and taste, and be moved, and express my deepest feelings.

A) If God sends a sorrow my way I don't want it wasted. **I want to taste what's in my cup.**

B) If God overflows my cup with blessing I want to drink deeply. I want to sip and savor every drop.

C) See When Jesus tells us to love Him w/ all our soul, He's affirming that God created our emotions.

1) Feelings are good when channeled in the right direction.

D) God does want us to "**do feelings**". Feelings and emotions are God given.

1) God wants to use - not just our determination, and commitment, and desire – but also our emotions and feelings to glorify Him.

What does that involve?

A) First and foremost, it's the pouring out of our emotions to God.

Psalm 62:8 tells us, "Trust in Him at all times, you people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."

B) God desires that I open up to Him what's on the inside of me. **Cast my cares – bear my heart**

1) Be real -

C) David was called a man after God's own heart –

D) Read the Psalms – He was brutally honest with his feelings and emotions before God. –

1) A Broken and contrite heart he will not despise!

Beautiful example of that in Luke 7

A) A sinful woman with a sordid past - came to Jesus

B) He was dining in the home of a Pharisee named Simon, when this woman walked in uninvited, and just sat down at Jesus feet.

1) She had a small flask of perfume that she used to anoint Jesus' feet.

C) This woman was **weeping uncontrollably**... and instinctively, she started washing Jesus' feet with her tears, and wiping them dry with her hair.

I can't imagine a stronger picture of raw emotion! This woman is sobbing. She's emptying her tear ducts.

A) Partly because **she's sorry for her sin**, but also because she know she is in the presence of Grace personified.

B) This woman is overwhelmed - overcome with emotion.

C) It's interesting everyone present in the house that night was **embarrassed by this woman**... **Simon**, the man hosting the dinner even became **judgmental**.

Only our Lord Jesus delighted in this woman's shameless display of emotion and feeling.

A) Jesus knew she was loving Him with all her soul.

B) Never be ashamed of expressing your feelings in the presence of Jesus.

1) Never be embarrassed about pouring out your soul and emptying your tears to Jesus.

It's been said of prayer, "If given the choice of words without feeling, or feeling without words - God would much rather have the feeling without words."

C) Here's a point we don't often consider. We can love God w/ **our obedience**, w/ **our service**, with our **kind words & good works**, with our self-sacrifice, and with our commitment – *and never love God with our soul.*

D) All the above can be done robotically. You can go through the **motions without the emotion**.

So loving God with our soul is being real/ being honest it is pouring out my soul to the Lord in prayer brokenness.

A) But one of the best ways to love God with our soul is in worship

B) In fact, the Greek word that gets translated in our English Bibles as **"worship"** is **"proskuneo"** - which means *"to kiss toward"*.

C) Our worship of God is the spiritual equivalent of hugs and kisses.

1) Literally, worship is a way to blow God a kiss!
Word that speaks of emotion and affection

D) A group of motion-picture engineers named the ten most dramatic sounds in the movies:

a baby's first cry;/ the blast of a siren;/ the thunder of breakers on rocks;/ the roar of a forest fire;/ a foghorn; the slow drip of water;/ the galloping of horses;/ the sound of a distant train whistle;/ the howl of a dog;/ and the wedding march.

E) And which one of these sounds do you think causes the strongest emotional response?

1) It has the power to conjure up almost every human emotion - sadness, envy, regret, sorrow, tears, as well as supreme joy... It is the wedding march.

Here's a brand new way to think of worship – think of it as a wedding march.

A) We're the Bride walking down the aisle toward our Groom.

B) We're admiring His beauty, and our heart is full of a million hugs and kisses for Him.

1) This is what praise and worship is all about –

C) It is more than singing songs, and clapping our hands, and lifting our arms – it's our opportunity to get emotional with God

D)... We can close our eyes... reach out our souls... connect with our Savior.

1) I think God is pleased when we do that!

E) How would the groom feel if during the whole ceremony – **Bride was stone faced** – no emotion

1) Or vice versa – No weddings are a time for emotions -

Now at this point I want to say that I realize that all of us are going to be different in this area.

A) Some of us are more emotional by nature. I am Italian I am naturally emotional

B) I talk loud if I had a \$100 dollars for every time my wife said to me – you're talking loud I would be a very rich man

C) I get emotional at movies – excited at ball games and I love passionate praise – I love to sing loud!

D) Some of us are emotional by nature and some are not! Like the couple that went to see the marriage counselor after being married 30yrs

1) Wife was I just wish he expressed himself a little more. Counselor asked the husband what He thought – ever told his wife – He loved her.

E) The husband responded – *I told her 30 yrs ago the day that we got married.... changes I will let her know.*

Now I know that is a little extreme but some people are just that way. Not emotional not very expressive.

A) Some people are naturally more reserved. A little stoic – they don't get outwardly excited about much of anything. And that is ok.

B) But here is what I don't understand is the person who is spastic at a basketball game and Stoic in Church.

Friend at trailblazer game

Listen we have a lot to be excited about!

A) We were on our way to **hell – now Heaven** / Enemies of God / now friends

B) We were in **bondage** & now we have been **set free**
We were far from God's heart but now we have been brought near

1) **Dirty now cleansed** / Guilty now forgiven

D) **No hope – No Living hope!**

1) Nothing to look forward to – now everything to

I could go on and on! We have so many reasons to celebrate and to express ourselves in worship

A) **David – was on who also wasn't afraid to express himself in worship! 2 Sam 6**

B) 2 Samuel 6 recounts the day when the Ark of the Covenant – the box that contained the 10 Commandments.

C) It was a joyous day, and David was thrilled that the **Holy Ark** would finally come to rest in the **holy city**.

1) He let it show – He leading the procession by Dancing before the Lord

D) **To get an idea of how radical that was?**

Picture President Bush doing that –

1) Leading some Parade Dancing! David went for it!

E) He threw caution to the wind and expressed himself to God. He poured out His soul – **He jumped for joy – He twirled, danced, and worshipped.**

But here's what happened when he came home that night.

A) His wife, Michal, had seen him flipping and twirling around in front of all the people.

B) His public display of worship embarrassed her royal sensibilities. **She was offended.**

1) Remember, Michal was the daughter of the previous king, Saul. And Saul was the antithesis of David.

C) When God moved David's heart he didn't care what other people might think.

1) He expressed his praise to God. But Saul always cared about what other people thought.

D) To Saul, image was everything, and as a consequence he placed very little priority on worshipping God. **Saul would've never danced.**

When David came home to the palace that night, he shouted, “Hi Honey, I’m home!”

A) And there was his snooty wife - standing with her hands on her hips...

B) She rebuked David for what He did – She accused him of being undignified in the presence of the pp

1) She was embarrassed.

C) But here’s what David said to his wife,

"It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD. And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor." 2 Samuel 6:21,22

D) And verse 23 is the kicker... We’re told, **“Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.”**

E) Because she became embarrassed, and resented David’s emotional display of worship she became a barren woman.

And guys, I believe there’s a spiritual principle here that applies to us.

A) If you’re embarrassed — too dignified to open your heart and pour out your emotion to God... Your life might be marked **by a spiritual barrenness!**

B) Don’t be surprised if the joy, peace, love, and excitement – all the emotions that might provoke worship – *suddenly, dry up.*

C) Now Obviously, there are limits to the kinds of emotional expressions appropriate in the public assembly of the church.

D) When we gather with each other there won’t be the same intimacy and freedom as we might experience in our private devotions.

E) And this is only natural. ***It’s like a marriage.*** What you do in your bedroom is not what you do in the **grocery store...** at least if you don’t want to get arrested.

F) And what we do in the sanctuary is not the same as what we do in our prayer closet.

I hope you realize what I’m talking about really has little to do with **physical postures and outward displays - as much as it does feelings and emotions.**

A person can worship God with his soul and never raise his hands, or move his feet... While a person can dance all over the place and it never touch his soul.

My point is worship and praise should be a time of release – a sacred moment when we can pour out to God what’s inside of us - a time of honest expression.

That type of heartfelt worship is healthy! Spiritually refreshing!

I will close with this:

A) If you look up the word worship in the dictionary you will find that it is between the words – worse and worst.

B) I find that interesting!

1) Guys as we go through life we get bruises, and cuts.

C) We develop emotional wounds that scab over before they heal properly.

1) Or they close up with an infection still inside - a bitterness or resentment.

D) And Jesus our great Physician / the surgeon has to reopen the wound, and clean out the infection.

1) I believe that’s one purpose for worship.

The Great Physician schedules us for surgery.

A) He opens up emotional areas of our lives, and applies His healing balm.

B) Worship is what rescues a person’s emotions and keeps them submitted and obedient to God.

1) Worship corals wayward feelings, and redirects them to God.

If you want to get a grip on your emotions, and keep your life from going from *worse to worst*, then redirect what’s on the inside of you to God.

A) Start pouring out your soul to the Lord. He loves you and heals you.

B) Learn to sort out your feelings in the presence of God.

1) The Prince of Peace has an amazing stabilizing effect. Once there was a conference at a Presbyterian Church in Omaha– the folks in the Omaha church that day were a bit reserved and not used to expressing their emotions to God.

Now the organizers of the conference knew this about the crowd.

So to encourage the worship each person was given a helium filled balloon, and was told to release it whenever they felt like expressing their joy to God.

Instead of lifting hands, or clapping, or closing eyes, or saying “Hallelujah” - they could release a balloon.

Yet at the end of the service over a third of the balloons remained unreleased.

**Here's my point for us, don't leave this morning still
holding on to your balloon.**

Pray!