

Title: *"What do You want from me?"*

No. 201413

Venue: Tyrrell Baptist Church

Date: August 24, 2014

Scripture: John 14v1-21; Mark 12v28-34

Call to Worship: Deuteronomy 6v4-9

Main Idea: God wants us to love Him fully

All Scripture is from the English Standard Version unless otherwise indicated

## **Call to Worship**

### **Deuteronomy 6v4-9**

*"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

When we started this series, the first box in the top line was related to the account of Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night and hearing that he must be born again by the Spirit of God. That was, for Nicodemus as it is for any person, the starting place for new life as a child of God.

<p><b>All</b> (of us)</p> <p><b><i>“You must be born again”</i></b> (John 3)</p>	<p><b>Altered</b> (lives by the Spirit)</p> <p><b><i>The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God</i></b> (Romans 8v16)</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b> (with Jesus Christ)</p> <p><b><i>And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”</i></b> (Luke 9v23)</p>
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Today, we are on the first box of the row of Cs and I regard this as the starting place for Christian ministry.

<p><b>Commandment</b></p> <p><b><i>“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”</i></b> (Mark 12v30)</p>	<p><b>&lt; GREAT &gt;</b></p> <p><b>Jesus put love of God and love of neighbour as of first importance and then, at the last, sent out his apostles with a purpose and a plan</b></p>	<p><b>Commission</b></p> <p><b><i>“In your going make disciples, baptizing . . . teaching”</i></b> (Matthew 28v18f)</p>
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Listen to my conversation with God. *“God, you have sent your Son to be my Saviour. You have wiped clean the slate that was a record of all my sin. You have adopted me to be a child of yours. Now, What do you want from me?”*

So often as Christians—and I would even include those who are not Christians—we turn to God with our needs and expectations and ask Him to perform things for us.

How often do we say to God, *“What do you want from me?”*

Our awareness of the existence of God can generate a lot of questions but this one might be the most important one, *“God, what do you want from me?”*

Well, we know that He gave Moses the Ten Commandments. They even made a movie about it so it must be true!

There are people who say that they try to keep the Ten Commandments. They're important but would that be the answer to the question, "God, what do you want from me?"

Let's read from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 12:

*28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

*29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' There is no commandment greater than these." 32 "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask Him [Jesus] any more questions.*

At this stage of Jesus' public ministry the religious leaders have become hostile towards Him. Jesus, the so-called "carpenter's son from Nazareth" has been causing quite a stir among the religious leaders and the teachers of the law. What He said sparked all sorts of debate.

You should imagine these teachers of the Law debating about the laws and commandments of God. They had, by the time of Jesus, come up with all sorts of rules about how Old Testament Law was to be applied. For example, there were rules about how far one could walk on the Sabbath without breaking the instruction to keep the Sabbath as a holy day.

Then there appears a latecomer to the gathering described in Mark and he asks a question of Jesus: *"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

Which of the Ten Commandments does Jesus choose?

Actually, none of them.

Jesus responds by quoting from Deuteronomy 6 and what is called the Shema. That is what we read in our Call to Worship.

*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

This was a very important passage for the Jews.

*These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

We tend to think of the law as something we obey because it is out there like a book of regulations and statutes. But the word of God says that what He prescribes is to be on our hearts. Remember that because it becomes a very important aspect of what I will say shortly.

You will hear people say that the Old Testament was all about Law and the New Testament is all about grace. Certainly, the apostle Paul, as an example, wrote many passages about the difference between the Law and the gospel of grace. It was a lively discussion after the public ministry and crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord.

But to say that the Old Testament was all about Law needs to be reconsidered in light of these words of Jesus.

Here, when given the opportunity to talk about strict observance of the Old Testament Law—when given the opportunity to highlight a particular law—what does Jesus do?

He says, *“Love God . . . love God with the fullness of your being. Then love other people as you love yourself.”*

He goes outside of the Ten Commandments and holds off legalism and its rules and He says *“Love God fully.”*

Remember, the gospel has not been written. The church has not been formed. There are only the writings of the Old Testament. The supreme expression of Jesus' love for us has not yet been seen. Nobody is aware that He will ascend to be with the Father. There is no developed Christian ethic of love.

And Jesus says to the inquirer and to the others who were listening, THE most important thing is to love God.

There is a popular song of the last century. It is not a song of the church but it is a song that has some instruction for Christians and for anybody who cares to hear.

*To know, know, know him is to love, love, love him  
 Just to see him smile, makes my life worthwhile  
 To know, know, know him is to love, love, love him  
 And I do.*

Do you remember that song by the Teddy Bears? It came out in 1958.  
 It wasn't a religious song. It was a girl-boy love song.  
 But the message "*To know Him is to love Him*" applies here.

There's a world of a difference between knowing the Law of God and knowing God.  
 Perhaps that, in part, explains why the religious leaders so hated Jesus.

Think back to our Scripture reading. Jesus said to His disciple Philip:  
*Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*

To know Jesus is the way to know the Father.

So when Jesus is asked what He thinks is the most important thing to obey, He says,  
*"Love God fully."*

This is important to me.

A few years ago, I was reading a book that pointed to having a life mission statement.  
 I thought about it and thought about it. What is a mission that would be good for that  
 day and for many days to come?

After a lot of consideration, I came up with one. It is a rewording of Jesus' words in  
 His Great Commandment.

*"I will strive to love the Lord God with my whole being and to care for everyone I encounter  
 as I care for myself."* I haven't been perfect in doing it but I know what I am aiming for.

If I were to ask you to write down your life purpose statement, what would I read?  
 It is so good to have clarity about our purpose and mission as a child of God.

Now, let's take a reality check.

Generally, we focus on what we want from God.

When we are in need . . . when we pray . . . we ask Him for something,  
 it is very convenient to know that He is always there and that He hears.

I may be wrong but I think that God gets a lot of attention when it comes to finding a  
 solution for what concerns us . . . for solving our problems. But how often do you  
 hear a person asking God, *"What do you want from me!?"*

So back to the original question, *“God, what do you want from me!?”*

The answer begins with: God wants you to love Him with the full capacity of who you are; to love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

Is that all God wants or expects? No, of course there is more involved in being a child of God and a follower of Jesus but it starts with that “full capacity” love towards Him.

But lacking love you would just be following rules and you would fall into legalistic practice of religion. There were people in Jesus’ time and there are people today who, all they know are religious rules. I remember one Baptist preacher who made a joke about this matter of rules: *“I don’t dance, I don’t chew, I don’t go with girls that do.”*

Following rules without love is cold religion. Breaking rules leads only to judgement.

Loving God reciprocates His love towards you and fosters a relationship that He has made possible for you. It is a special relationship made possible only through the blood of Jesus Christ as you have come to Him as your personal Saviour.

Remember, Jesus encourages us to approach God as our Father. In that relationship, God expects you to behave like a child that honours and respects Him. He expects you to become more like Jesus. But as you can understand, motivated by love, you give yourself to Him—heart, soul, mind and body. It is happy obedience.

You will encounter people who don’t know about God or who care little about God. They don’t know about the opportunity of being in a relationship with Him. So, that is the mission of the church and the mission of the Christian—to let people know that God loves them and to let them know that they can be in a personal relationship with the Creator of All.

## Conclusion

The half-sheet that we handed out has some Life Application questions to help you reflect on how you are loving God.

To love Him with all your heart means that your affection is set on him. If you have loved a person, you know that feeling inside that is the emotion of the heart. You are emotionally involved with a person in a very positive way.

To love Him with all your soul speaks to our specialness as He has created us. The soul is that part of our being that communes with God — that connects with Him in a supernatural way. In books of anatomy, you'll never see something labelled as the "human soul." It is the God-thing within that is eternal and connects a person with the eternal God. Let me suggest that when we pray, we are trying to connect on the soul-level with God.

To love Him with all your mind means that your thoughts are God-honouring thoughts. And while, in the course of a day, you are thinking about a lot of things that you have to do and things that you have to process and remember, thoughts of God repeatedly come to mind.

The Gospel of Mark is the only gospel account that speaks of loving God with all your strength. This suggests things about our physical activities.

To love Him with all your strength means that in your doing, you are honouring and serving God. Scripture tells us *"whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (Colossians 3v17)*. We need to see that all of our activity and strength is applied in service of God.

Today, we won't go into the second part of Jesus' Great Commandment—loving your neighbour as yourself. We'll make that part of the message next Sunday when we consider Jesus' Great Commission

For today, just stop and think—How do you demonstrate your love towards God? And what do you do to foster that love?

(Placed on a half-sheet handout)

### **LIFE APPLICATION**

#### **ALL OF ME**

Jesus taught that love for God involves every aspect of our being.  
As you consider your devotion to God, does He have all of you?

#### ***Your heart***

- Is He the focus of your affections?
- Is your love for him warm and real?
- Do you take pleasure in His ultimate worth?

#### ***Your soul***

- Are you willing to give Him your life itself?
- Does your worship genuinely reflect your inner desires and intentions?
- Do you love Him with your total being?

#### ***Your mind***

- Does your commitment fully involve your intellectual capabilities?
- Is your faith fully informed or based on blind trust?
- Is your mind trained to think of His moral perfection?

#### ***Your strength***

- Do you strive to love and serve Him energetically?
- Have you devoted all your physical and material capabilities to Him?
- Can you sustain intense love for Him even under pressure or when doubts arise?

From the *Life Application Bible Commentary* – Mark.



## John 14 (NIV)

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."*

*Jesus the Way to the Father*

*5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

*6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

*8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."*

*9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."*

*Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit*

*15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."*