



# **MATTHEW**

The Savior-King and His Kingdom

## **The King's Love!**

**Matthew 22:34-40**

Message #63 of 80 – S1098

**Sermon given on May 26, 2024**



Sunday Morning Service

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# The King's Love!

*Matthew 22:34-40*

## Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Matthew 22**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Matthew – **The Savior-King and His Kingdom**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

## Teaching

- **The King's Love!**
- Today, we are going to look at the third of three challenges Jesus faces just days before He goes to the cross.
- All three were meant to trap Jesus in His words.
- In the second challenge Jesus told them they didn't know the Scriptures or the power of God.
- So, the Pharisees send an expert in the Scriptures.
- **Matthew 22:34-36**
- This is a debate that had waged for centuries - which of the commandments was the most important?
- We might think he is referring to the Ten Commandments.
- It does include them but over time, many more were identified as commandments.
- At the time of Christ, the Jewish religious leaders had identified 613 commandments.
- They were divided into two categories – light and heavy, or small or great.
- It was taught that if you are focused on keeping the great commandments that it would be okay if you missed some of the lesser commandments.
- This led to confusion because people had differences of opinions on which ones were small and which others were great.
- Jesus is about to turn their world upside down.
- **Matthew 22:37**
- Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:5.

- This is part of the Shema, which every devote Jew would pray twice a day – they still do.
- Obedience to God’s commands is evidence of our love for God.
- Or said another way, if we love God, we will be obedient to His commands (**John 14:15**).

**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**

- When we love someone, it determines how we behave toward them.
- The opposite is also true.
- The way I behave toward someone is evidence of my love for them.
- It is, at the very least, hypocritical to say you love someone and then treat them in an unloving way.
- Jesus then tells them how important this is.
- **Matthew 22:38**
- The sense of what Jesus is saying here is to violate this law is the greatest of sins.
- We were created by God to be the objects of His love.
- It is an expression of God’s love that He created us and made us capable of loving Him back.
- He loves us unconditionally.
- As God’s loving creation it is our highest calling to love God.
- It is through the experience of God’s love and reciprocating in love back to God that we find our fullest sense of being and purpose.
- People look for fulfillment in so many ways that do not involve loving God with their whole being.
- That will always leave them empty and disappointed.
- Sadly, we are fallen beings, we must be commanded to love God.
- Jesus doesn’t stop with just one great commandment.

- **Matthew 22:39**

- ‘second is like it’ – This puts loving others on the same level as loving God.
- Jesus quotes from Leviticus 19:18.
- Jesus also spoke of this elsewhere (**John 13:34-35**).

**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

- The greatest evidence we can give the world of the reality of God and salvation in Christ is our love for other people, especially for other believers.
- It is a contradiction to say that you love God and then not love someone made in the image of God (**1 John 4:20-21**).

**If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.**

- Jesus wraps this up with a statement we might miss the deeper meaning of.
- **Matthew 22:40**
- The Bible teaches us that the very nature of God is love (**1 John 4:16**).

**And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

- As creations of God’s love, we are to abide in, or live in, God’s love.
- ‘hang’ – has the sense of being utterly dependent upon.
- An illustration of this might be a tree.
- Loving God is the trunk and roots – loving others is the branches – the Law and the Prophets are the leaves.
- You cannot obey the commandments of God unless you are loving God with your whole being and loving others as yourself.
- The commandments of God and the love of God cannot be separated.
- Every commandment is a leaf on the branch – every commandment is connected to loving others, which is connected to the trunk and roots – loving God.
- If you separate a leaf from a tree, it quickly becomes lifeless.
- If you separate the commandments of God from loving others and loving God, it quickly becomes legalism or dead religion.
- Legalistic religion focuses on the keeping of the Law as an expression of loving God.
- Others focus on loving themselves as a pathway to loving God.
- Jesus is saying that putting our love for God at the highest place, followed closely by loving others, only then are we able to obey the rest of God’s commands in a righteous way.

- This also means that all God's commands are an expression of God's love and instructive for loving others.
- That means that violating God's laws is contrary to love.
- For example, people who want to be in a same-sex relationship may feel love for each other, but because it violates God's laws, it is not loving God or others, not even the person they say they love.
- Disobeying God can never be an expression of love.
- You cannot truly love God or others and break God's commands at the same time.
- God is love and one of the ways we know we are saved is by the love we have (**1 John 2:5**).

**But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.**

- There are two primary elements in salvation.
- First there is atonement or propitiation.
- The penalty for our sins was dealt with when we believed in the sacrificial death of Christ on our behalf.
- Second, there is regeneration – we are made into new creations – capable of loving God and others (**2 Peter 1:2-4**).

**Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, <sup>3</sup>as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, <sup>4</sup>by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.**

- The divine nature of God is love.
- The essence of true Christian faith and religion is serving God by serving others with a motivation of love for God and others.
- Prior to coming to Christ, we were incapable of loving God or others with God-like love.
- We may have had feelings of love, and we may have strived to act in love but only by loving God first are we imbued with the ability to truly love others as we should (**Romans 5:5**).

**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

- The nature of God is love.
- Because God's nature is love, He loves each one of us.

- He made each of us as a unique object of His love.
- Compared to the other 8 billion people on this planet none of us is very special.
- But God didn't make you like the other 8 billion people.
- He makes each of us experience Him, His love, grace, mercy, peace, power, and presence in a unique way (**Psalm 139:14-15**).

**I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and *that* my soul knows very well. <sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.**

- That does make you special.
- We should regularly pause and think about that.
- God, as an expression of His sovereign love made you exactly the way He wanted to make you.
- Sadly, many in this world despise, reject, and even seek to change how God made them.
- God made us the way He wanted to so He could love us the way He wanted to.
- Our correct response to God's love is to love Him with our whole being.
- Our second correct response to God's love is to love everyone created to be the object of God's love.
- Our highest calling in this life – the greatest work we can do in this world – is to love God and others with the love God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit based on the finished work of Christ Jesus on the cross.
- We do that most effectively through faith and obedience to God's Word – all of God's Word.
- The Worship Team can start making their way up here.
- As we prepare to close – know that God loves you!
- Know that He has filled you with His love.
- And know that the best way to experience God's love is by loving others.
- **Pray!** Worship Team plays the last song!